

**New Haven Free Public Library
Library Board of Directors
Minutes of Meeting
July 25, 2023**

Board Members Present: Dr. Anderson, Ms. Merson, Ms. Sykes, Mr. Giering, Ms. Lamar, Mr. Cruz

Members Absent: Ms. Logan, Ms. Schneider

Staff Present: Maria Bernhey, Luis Chavez-Brumell, Karina Gonzalez, and Rory Martorana

Guests: Maritza Bond

Welcome

Dr. Anderson called the meeting to order at 5:33pm.

Approval of Consent Agenda and Minutes

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda and the June 2023 minutes. Ms. Lamar provided edits to the June 2023 minutes of all motions passing. Mr. Giering motioned to approve, and Ms. Lamar seconded. Dr. Anderson recommended a slight amendment to the agenda to include board member reappointment update.

Treasurer's Report

Review of June Financials

Ms. Lamar provided an overview of the Library financials for June 2023. Ms. Lamar reported that the endowment increase is due to additions from the Stetson campaign. Ms. Lamar expressed concern over the amount of endowed funds invested in one broker and asked that the full Board discuss this at a future meeting.

NHFPL Budget Overview/Foundation Transfer

The transfer request of a combined \$34,600.00 from the New Alliance Foundation and the Scripps Fund for Family Education and the Arts was approved to support the READy for the

Grade Summer Reading tutoring programs at the Wilson and Stetson Branch Libraries. The Board budget was reviewed with more funds appropriated for staff development to increase the total \$14,000. Ms. Lamar motioned to approve the budget with the amended increase to staff development and was seconded by Mr. Giering.

Director's Report

Ms. Bernhey delivered the Director's Report.

Community Services Administration

Ms. Bernhey thanked Maritza Bond City Public Health Director and Interim Community Services Administrator for attending the meeting. Ms. Bernhey shared that she met with incoming Community Services Administrator Eliza Halsey, and they discussed Library needs around an increased budget to 1% of the city's general fund and a need to increase staffing. Community issues such as a recent incident at the Fair Haven branch where an individual was discovered living on the property was discussed as an example of cooperation between city departments in cleaning up the encampment and highlighting the issues the library must navigate.

Staffing

Ms. Bernhey shared that Michelle Ziogas will transition from adult librarian at the Wilson Branch Library to become the new children's librarian at the Wilson Branch Library on August 10th. Michelle is currently the adult librarian at the Wilson Branch. The Wilson Library adult librarian position will be posted in addition to a librarian vacancy at the Fair Haven Branch Library. The full-time librarian is one of several full-time positions to be hired. Ideally hope to hire a part-time bookmobile driver to get the bookmobile back on the road with extending outreach to Fair Haven Heights.

Computer upgrades

Ms. Bernhey shared that public computer upgrades took place at Wilson, Ives, Mitchell, and Fair Haven Libraries. Positive feedback has been received from patrons. The IT department will be moving forward with upgrade staff computers using capital funds, as some machines date back to as early as 2012.

Bookmobile Back on the road

The Bookmobile attended the Superintendent's Fitness event in July and there are efforts to hire a dedicated part-time bookmobile driver. There are plans to extend mobile outreach to Fair Haven heights.

Staff Development

There is a staff development day scheduled for September 1st where the City of New Haven's Mental Health Services Coordinator will be providing training on boundary setting and burnout prevention for staff. This is a strategic training to help support staff retention.

Ms. Bernhey has completed the American Library Association New Director's Crash Course and discussions are underway for the former Interim City Librarian Maureen Sullivan to continue support in an advisory role to Ms. Bernhey.

Library Open Houses September

Ms. Bernhey then described her plan to hold community open houses across the library system early in the Fall, September 16th-23rd. These events will be an opportunity for members of the community to meet her and learn about library resources while also an opportunity for Ms. Bernhey to learn more about community needs and interests. The timing was selected as it aligns with the start of Hispanic Heritage month, Library card sign-up month, Welcoming Week for libraries, and Pride New Haven week. Each location will provide programming and refreshments to engage the community in library services.

Board Member Nominations Subcommittee /Reappointment Update

Mr. Giering reported that Leslie Blatteau was being moved forward as a possible board member. Mr. Giering reported that Ms. Schneider is moving to Boston and will have to resign from the Library board. Mr. Giering invited board members to find possible names to potentially find a new member of the Library board. Mr. Cruz volunteered to support Mr. Giering in being a part of the nomination subcommittee. Dr. Anderson shared that reappointments for Mr. Cruz and Ms. Lamar have been sent to the City of New Haven but has not heard a response yet from the city. Board members are officially in their roles until their replacements are approved by the city process.

Board Officers Re-Election update

Dr. Anderson invited board members to self-nominate for officer roles. Ms. Lamar self-nominated for treasurer. Mr. Cruz denied to self-nominate for an officer role due to his position at the Community Foundation of Greater New Haven. Mr. Giering proposed keeping the officer

slate in place until April's annual meeting which is listed on the board bylaws due to the need to bring more board members on to serve on the board. The hope is that by April there will more board members able to serve in executive positions. Ms. Lamar motioned to have the officer slate of Dr. Anderson as Board Chair, Mr. Giering as Vice Chair, and Ms. Lamar as Treasurer until the April 2024 meeting. Ms. Merson seconded, and the board approved.

Youth Engagement on the Board

Dr. Anderson and Ms. Bernhey discussed ways of engaging young people on the board to have youth feedback on library services. Dr. Anderson and Ms. Bernhey plan to propose how youth can have structure that connects to the board. Mr. Cruz suggested that Dr. Anderson and Ms. Bernhey meet with Patricia Melton from New Haven Promise, Juan Carlos Soto at the New Haven Pride Center, and Caroline Smith who is working with youth entrepreneurs. Ms. Merson shared that current library patrons are engaged with this opportunity. There is hope to connect with library locations across the city and online engagement.

Public Comment

Dr. Anderson congratulated Ms. Bernhey on her first month in the new role, thanked Library staff for their hard work and wished everyone a wonderful and restorative August.

Mr. Cruz motioned to adjourn and seconded by Ms. Lamar.

Dr. Anderson called for adjournment at 6:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Luis Chavez-Brumell

Deputy Director