

New Haven Free Public Library

Library Board of Directors

Minutes of Meeting

February 24, 2024

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

Members Absent: Alder Morrison, (one vacancy waiting for appointment)

Staff Present: Maria Bernhey, Luis Chavez-Brumell

Guests:

Welcome

Dr. Anderson called the meeting to order at 5:35pm

Approval of Consent Agenda and Minutes

Mr. Cruz moved to approve seconded by Ms. Lamar

Treasurer's Report

Library Board Financials and Budget

Review of January Financials

Ms. Lamar shared that as of February 21st the endowment is doing well, and that budget is right on target with an improvement in the Passport Office.

Ms. Bernhey shared that current capital open purchases orders are \$210,000. Emergency expenses at Ives/Main for the fire panel replacement and electrical wiring in the children's room were costly and unexpected. Additional repairs on the recently renovated roof at the Mitchell Library in June 2022 are required as a water continues to leak in the remedied area, recently damaging a new computer in the library. Updated Capital expenses are not reflected on the recent City Budget report but are available in MUNIS.

Ms. Bernhey informed the Board that spending for the Book Budget is around \$190k with roughly \$46k remaining of the \$240,000 allotment. Board funding will be utilized when City funds are exhausted.

Mr. Giering suggested a review of roof replacement status for all library locations. The Library should consider full replacement costs rather than patch repairs that require ongoing

maintenance. Ms. Bernhey shared that she met with the Library Building Supervisor regarding roofing issues for both Ives and Mitchell.

Ms. Bernhey shared that a capital campaign to replace the rooftop HVAC units at Ives/Main will be needed as these units are reaching their life span limit. This has also been mentioned to NHFPL Foundation President for future consideration.

Mardi Gras updates

170 tickets were sold. Total was \$53,923 dollars raised. Projected expenses are expected to be \$10k. Ms. Bernhey shared that the e-mail blasts were the most successful means of communication for the event. Honoring Ray Boyd brought in attendees who would otherwise not attend Mardi Gras. Ms. Gambale shared that the food was wonderful, and the masks and food were great. Suggestions provided by the board included:

1. Multiple food vendors with vegan/vegetarian, halal, and kosher offerings.
2. Food lines were lengthy and did not leave enough time for dancing.
3. Higher ticket price options for those who can afford it.
4. Logistics check-in with both boards to anticipate any possible issues.

Director's Report

Ms. Bernhey delivered the Director's Report.

Staff vacancies

- Ms. Bernhey shared that the remaining full-time vacancy for the Library Technical Assistant position was filled in January.
- Circulation Supervisor Lore Lichtenberg will retire after 17 years with NHFPL. Retirement party for Lore is Wednesday 2/28/24 at 5:30pm at the Ives Main Library. Interviews for the next Circulation Supervisor will begin shortly led by Mr. Chavez-Brumell.
- The part-time Passport Support agent was hired for Passport Office started on Monday 02/26/24. Ms. Bernhey shared that there is need to still hire for additional part time Librarian, Library Aides and a Readmobile driver.

Facilities

One additional security guard has been added to Ives Library from 12-5pm for additional support during peak hours. NHFPL is piloting direct requests to the City's Crisis Response team, Elm City COMPASS, to support people in crisis in non-emergency responses at library locations.

Mr. Cruz suggested that the Library connect with the City of New Haven's new Community Resilience Director, Tirzah Kemp, as she can be an amazing resource for the library. Ms. Bernhey shared that she has met Ms. Kemp and looks forward to connecting with Director Kemp for additional support on community challenges.

Ives Café Request for Proposal has been sent to the City Purchasing department.

In a related note, Ms. Bernhey did share that she met with new City Controller Kristy Sampieri recently to discuss the library's needs, specifically working towards 1% of the General Funds budget.

The Library has received funding for the Fiber to The Library for \$86,000 to extend Wi-Fi access across the New Haven Green.

Q-House MOU

Ms. Bernhey shared that discussion regarding public access to Stetson through the Foote Street entrance to the Q-House causes a potential risk for library staff and assets due to limited view of the stairwell. Ms. Merson shared how Alder Morrison advocated for access via Foote Street for the elderly visiting the Q-House for accessibility. Ms. Merson asked about a panic button if there were no funds for guards. Dr. Anderson asked if calling or buzzing in could happen ensure access without making staff vulnerable and diminishing anxiety around the issues. Ms. Bernhey will follow-up.

Mr. Cruz shared that City Elderly services and Disability services can be consulted to navigate challenge of making suggestions on ensuring safety and accessibility are considered.

Ms. Bernhey shared that since July 2023, 17,500 people have visited Stetson Library which highlights the importance of ensuring that Library is accessible and secured.

Updating Code of Conduct

Ms. Bernhey has asked Library leadership to review the Code of Conduct to begin the policy review process for the Code of Conduct to be reviewed for Library board feedback at the next Board meeting.

Strategic Planning Update

Ms. Bernhey shared that she shared an all-staff communication inviting participation with upcoming Strategic planning process and is working on developing a short list of possible facilitators to invite for an RFP.

Ms. Bernhey has shared Director goals with Dr. Anderson and Mr. Giering.

Dr. Anderson reminded board members to be ready to support in a subcommittee for the Library's Strategic planning efforts. Dr. Anderson shared that future agenda would incorporate executive sessions to discuss goals with Ms. Bernhey and strategic planning as part of the goals.

Board Member Terms and Nominations

Dr. Anderson shared that Board member submissions are on the radar of the City and is hopeful that we will have a new Board member imminently. Dr. Anderson has not received notification for new candidates. Dr. Anderson and Ms. Merson have been asked to submit paperwork to remain on the Board. Dr. Anderson shared that Board officer nominations will take place in April.

Public Comment

Ms. Merson asked about Mr. Chavez-Brumell and Ms. Bernhey if they responded to Yale Architecture student who is interested in displaying artwork in the Ives Library. Ms. Bernhey responded that she spoke with the student and Public Services Administrator, Rory Martorana, would be meeting with them.

Ms. Merson motioned to adjourn, and Ms. Gambale seconded. The meeting was called to adjourned at 6:47pm

Respectfully submitted,

Luis Chavez-Brumell

Deputy Director