

New Haven Free Public Library
Library Board of Directors
Minutes of Meeting
July 28, 2020

Members Present: Ms. Schneider, Dr. Anderson, Mr. Cruz, Dr. Garcia-Blocker, Mr. Giering, Alder Morrison, Ms. Lamar

Members Absent: Ms. Merson

Staff Present: John Jessen

Guests: Kristin Pantelis (minutes)

Welcome

Ms. Schneider called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm. A quorum was present.

Update on Board Members

Ms. Schneider welcomed Ms. Lamar to the Library Board of Directors as a member and the treasurer. Ms. Schneider highlighted Ms. Lamar's experience and volunteer efforts. There is still one final open position on the Board. Ms. Logan's name has been submitted to the Mayor's office and is moving through the nomination process.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Ms. Schneider asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, including the June 2020 Minutes. Dr. Anderson moved to approve the Consent Agenda, Mr. Cruz seconded, and the motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Jessen and Ms. Lamar delivered the Treasurer's Report, reviewing the June 2020 financial reports.

Board Budget

Mr. Jessen reported that revenues are down again this month due to Covid-related closures. Fines and fees posted a slight negative amount because credit card services incur monthly charges that were not offset by incoming revenue. It was noted that no fines are being collected at this time. Ms. Lamar pointed out an incorrect booking on the revenue side, which will be corrected in the financials next month.

Foundation

Expenses on the Foundation budget are as expected. REAdy for the Grade, the Library's highly-praised and popular summer-tutor program, is getting underway this summer at the Wilson Library – though this year it will be a virtual experience. There were some minor expenses due to programs such as the Summer Reading Zoom meetings. Mr. Jessen reported the Library is expecting a large reimbursement check from CTNext in the 1st quarter of FY20-21. This will cover the purchase of computers and other related technology.

Endowment

The endowment saw a slight uptick in its overall value this month to close at \$2,786,818. Market volatility remains a major driver in the markets and the Library's Endowments funds are not immune to this action.

Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Budget

Mr. Jessen presented a reworked Fiscal Year Budget based on the library fully opening to the public at the end of November. Board discussion followed as to whether the reworked budget is conservative enough with the

likely event that a full reopening as early as November may not be likely and would cause revenue shortages. Mr. Jessen reminded the Board that the Foundation Budget can supplement decreased income. Nevertheless, he agreed to adjust the Board budget more conservatively. Mr. Jessen will revise the proposed fiscal year budget for the Board to review at the next meeting.

Dr. Anderson entered the meeting at 5:53pm.

Alder Morrison entered the meeting at 5:58pm.

Ms. Lamar asked if the board could table a vote on the June financials and the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 until she has had more time to resolve questions that have come up during her initial reading of the documents. The Board agreed.

Mr. Jessen presented a transfer from the NHFPL Foundation: \$30,754.97 in Restricted Funds, which includes \$5,000 from the CT State Library's Urban Libraries Grant program in support of NHFPL's partnership with Liberty Community Services; \$7,000 from an Anonymous Foundation in support of READY for the Grade; \$18,754.97 from the National Network of Libraries of Medicine/New England Region for the project, "Improving Health Literacy of Library Patrons Experiencing Homelessness and Unstable Housing." Ms. Schneider asked for a motion to approve the transfer, Mr. Cruz moved, Dr. Anderson seconded, and the Board voted to accept the funds from the NHFPL Foundation.

Reopening

Mr. Jessen reported the Library's curbside pick-up started on July 6th. Staff have recently begun working on Saturdays to offer curbside services as well. On July 29th, Ives Main will open its Technology Center for computer use. There will be up to fifteen people allowed in the center per hour by appointment only. Each session will last an hour with 30-minutes in between each appointment to allow for complete sanitization. Added security coverage has been contracted to ensure adequate coverage in the Tech Center.

Mr. Jessen reported the unexpected request that the Library open as a cooling center -- though handled extremely well by frontline staff -- raised safety concerns. Board discussion followed. Ives Main was used as a cooling center Mondays and Tuesdays for the past two weeks for City Hall overflow during the heatwave. As a cooling center, Library access is not permitted; customers are limited to the program room, required to wear masks, and required to follow appropriate social distancing guidelines.

Dr. Garcia-Blocker commented about planning procedures for safety protocols in the computer room regarding PPE. Dr. Anderson inquired about utilizing the Readmobile for material and digital access. Mr. Jessen informed the Board that the Library is currently without a driver for the Bookmobile, but that the staff is looking at numerous ways to serve the public outside the Library buildings themselves. The Board expressed agreement and encouraged that these avenues be explored, particularly those that could serve the largest groups of people. Ms. Schneider asked to have a presentation about these other distribution and service channels at either the August or September meeting.

Director's Report

Staffing

Xia Feng will be retiring on October 6th after 26 years with the Library. With accrued time her last day in the building will be August 20th. Ashley Sklar will be leaving the Library on August 21st to accept a position with the

State Library. With a high number of positions now open, the Board discussed hiring priorities. They also emphasized the importance of exit interviews.

Grants

Mr. Jessen reported the Library will be receiving \$10,000 from Comcast's Internet Essentials Partner Program which pays for tech classes. This revenue will be marked as unrestricted funds.

Mr. Jessen announced that, after an extensive search, the Library has chosen Sterling Brandworks to assist in the redesign of the new website. The company matched well with the needs, budget, and timeline of the Library. A new website is tentatively scheduled to launch in Spring 2021.

Stetson

Alder Morrison stated that the opening of the Q House may be slightly delayed from March to April. Mr. Jessen will check back on the planned March 1, 2021 opening date.

Public Comment

Mr. Cruz shared the news that the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism will be co-sponsoring, with other agencies, a city-wide read on racial disparities. He also shared that there will be a public forum in the fall to comment on a document about climate change as it pertains to the city. Date and place to be announced.

Ms. Schneider shared there is a tentative meeting for next month, August 25th.

Ms. Schneider asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Anderson made the motion, Alder Morrison seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 6:48pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristin Pantelis
Part-Time Library Aide