

New Haven Free Public Library
Library Board of Directors
Minutes of Meeting
October 26, 2021

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

Members absent: Mr. Cruz

Staff Present: John Jessen, Luis Chavez-Brumell

Welcome

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

Approval of Consent Agenda and Minutes

Dr. Anderson moved to amend the agenda by adding the item “Board member terms and reappointments” and moving Executive Session to the front of the meeting.

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, with the amendments to add an item addressing Board member terms and reappointments and to shift Executive Session to the front of the meeting, and the September 2021 Minutes. Ms. Schneider had a correction for the September Minutes, stating that her comment about KNOWN co-working space collaboration should be fixed to say it already exists. Ms. Merson moved to approve the Consent Agenda, with stated amendments, and Minutes, Mr. Giering seconded, and with no further questions or comments, the Board voted to approve the Consent Agenda, with amendments, and Minutes.

Board Members Terms and Reappointments

Several NHFPL board members have term limits ending in January, including Dr. Garcia-Blocker, who will be finishing her terms of eligibility. In addition to this, Dr. Anderson, Ms. Merson and Mr. Giering are up for reappointment. At least one new member will need to be appointed to keep at current board levels. Board members can serve three consecutive terms in a row for three-year terms. Members with expired terms can return to the Board after taking at least one year off.

Dr. Anderson asked for volunteers for a subcommittee to find future appointments for the NHFPL board. Dr. Anderson, Ms. Schneider, and Ms. Logan volunteered to serve as the board subcommittee.

Dr. Anderson called for a motion to move into Executive Session. Ms. Schneider moved to approve Executive Session, Ms. Lamar seconded, and the Board voted to move into Executive Session at 5:42 pm. The Board came out of Executive Session at 6:08 pm.

City Librarian Reappointment Update

The subcommittee from the Board, which includes Mr. Giering, Ms. Merson and Dr. Garcia-Blocker, have completed their efforts in reappointment process. They recommend to reappoint John Jessen as City Librarian with an appropriate salary raise. Alder Morrison motioned to accept the recommendation to reappoint Mr. Jessen as City Librarian with a salary raise and to forward his name to the Mayor for approval. Ms. Schneider seconded, and the Board voted to accept the motion.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Lamar reviewed the September 2021 financials, summarizing both the Board and the Foundation accounts. The Quarterly Budget percentage of the Board Budget was explained to the Board. Overall, revenues and expenses are as expected. The endowment saw a modest increase.

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to approve the September 2021 financials, Mr. Giering moved, Ms. Schneider seconded, and with no questions or comments the Board voted to approve the September 2021 financials.

Mr. Jessen presented four transfers for a total of \$563,526.09. \$3,000 from CT State Library ARPA funds for the Book Bike \$3,851.20 from CT Humanities for Q House Museum, 521,000 in Stetson Capital Campaign Funds, and \$35,674.89 in CTNext Grant reimbursement from Economic Development Corporation of New Haven for Ives Squared Programming. Each transfer will be voted on separately.

Dr. Garcia-Blocker left the meeting at 6:30 pm.

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to approve the \$3,000 transfer from CT State Library ARPA, Ms. Lamar moved, Ms. Merson seconded, and the Board voted to accept the funds.

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to approve the \$3,851.20 transfer from CT Humanities, Ms. Lamar moved, Ms. Merson seconded, and the Board voted to accept the funds.

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to approve the \$521,000 transfer in Stetson Campaign Funds, Ms. Lamar moved, Alder Morrison seconded, and the Board voted to accept the funds.

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to approve the \$35,674.89 transfer from CTNext Grant reimbursement, Ms. Lamar moved, Alder Morrison seconded, and the Board voted to accept the funds.

Director's Report

Covid-19 Update

Mr. Jessen reported that there have been some incidents at the Library where patrons do not want to wear masks. To address this, Library Administration met with security and Ives staff as well as assigning de-escalation webinars. The Library is also working on improving orientation for new staff to be prepared for these situations.

Staffing

The Library has been hiring new staff. Mr. Jessen was happy to report that staffing levels are getting closer to 100%.

All staff have attended an active shooter training took place.

Programs

There have been 103 programs in October, including virtual and on-site. Story times are being held at the Library and off-site in places like neighborhood parks. Technology help, Book Clubs, and Ives Squared events are also still being offered.

One highlight has been *Make to Sell*, which helps entrepreneurs who have a product learn how to sell it. This event had 90 people apply, which was narrowed down to a cohort of 20. The Library is looking to host another 20 people in the future.

A *Death and Dying* series has also been popular this past month, totaling over 50 people in attendance.

Stetson Library Update

Opening

A soft-opening of the new Stetson Library location at the Q-House is expected to be held in the beginning of January 2022. Smartboards, white boards, and other materials are being installed. The first set of books on pallets will arrive soon to begin processing materials to be shelved.

Naming Rights

By November, the Board should be receiving a complete list and contract of the names of donors to be placed around the new location.

Signage for the Stetson Library on the outside of the building is also in the works.

The ribbon cutting ceremony for the new building will be held on October 30th and already has over 700 RSVP's. Guided tours are also being offered after the ceremony.

Alder Morrison left the meeting at 6:40 pm.

Closed Stacks Internet Archive Digitization Project

The Closed Stacks are 90,000 volumes that can be mechanically pushed together in order to make space. There are 44 ranges, double-sided, in a room 50 x 100 feet. The system in place has become obsolete and currently does not work. Since the volumes are not in an environmentally controlled space their condition is also worsening. Circulation of the stacks has been less than 2,000 since 2010. Books have not been added to the closed stacks for approximately 5 years.

The Library would like to use a company called the Internet Archive to digitalize most of the collection currently in the stacks. 10-15% of the collection that is significant to New Haven and the Library will be kept. Once the collection is digitized, the area the stacks are in would be turned into space usable by the public. The Board will have further discussion and give feedback to Mr. Jessen.

Public Comment

Dr. Anderson thanked the Board for their time and participation.

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Merson moved, Ms. Schneider seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 6:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

John Jessen
City Librarian