



New Haven Democracy Fund

"To ensure that all the citizens of New Haven have a fair and meaningful opportunity to participate in the election of mayor."
New Haven Code of General Ordinances, Chapter 2, Article XI, §2-821 • Established in 2007 • democracyfund@newhavenct.net



DEMOCRACY FUND BOARD MEETING

6:00 pm Wednesday July 20, 2022

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

New Haven Democracy Fund Board, Sergio Rodriguez, Chair

Members: Aaron Goode, James O'Connell, William Wynn, James Bhandary-Alexander

Democracy Fund Administrator: Alyson Heimer

To join the meeting please use one of the options below:

Web Browser: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82382679039> ; Meeting ID: 823 8267 9039

Phone: Please dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592 US (New Haven, CT) Meeting ID: 823 8267 9039

+1 312 626 6799 US (Outside New Haven) Meeting ID: 823 8267 9039

In person: Mayor's Conference Room 2, 165 Church Street New Haven CT 06510

AGENDA:

- I. Call to Order & Attendance - James Bhandary-Alexander absent.
- II. Approval of prior meeting minutes. 4-0-0.
- III. No Public Comment.
- IV. Report from the Chair
 - A. The RFQ documents will be sent around digitally for Board members to review. Example documents were presented in June. The final submission to the Purchasing Department (Shawn Garris) will be on or around August 15. Tentative timeline was discussed. The RFQ will be available online through the city's Bonfire portal for two weeks.
- V. Administrator's Report
 - A. Administrator's conference in Albuquerque, NM
 1. The public campaign finance administrator's conference was held on July 14-16 in New Mexico. There were over 20 individuals representing both municipal, and statewide programs from across the nation (HI, CA, ME, CT, NY, AZ, NM, OR, WA, CO, MN, and DC). Board Member Aaron Goode and Administrator Heimer attended. Four key topics were discussed:
 - a) What is the right match/grant amount?

- b) How are programs managing audit or enforcement of program rules, complaints, or when there is fraud detected or alleged?
- c) How is outside spending affecting programs and what tools do programs have to keep participants interested amid the influx of outside spending?
- d) How do programs measure success? Are there definitions and metrics programs can agree on?

For each of these conversations there were excellent takeaways for our own program. For example, as the only program in the country with a hybrid grant and matching fund system, it was interesting to learn that many other programs struggle with finding the correct balance for grants and put limits on expenditures that are too often met. In New Haven we have not yet had any candidate max out the allowable matching funds.

Goode noted that Michael Brandy from Connecticut's SEEC was present and the discussion about what was coming down the line in Connecticut regarding the responsibility of political consultants on legal expenditures and maintaining compliance, rather than putting the onus of violations on the treasurers. He was also very impressed by the number of programs administered directly by the City Clerk's offices in municipalities, as in D.C. Their program director for public finance also worked on general elections finance compliance.

Success measures was another area where New Haven could learn a lot - the difficulty is in determining if the measures are campaign-oriented, donor-oriented, or community-oriented. I.E. more donors being from formerly under-represented areas may be a measure of success for one locale, but more candidates of varied backgrounds, or a decrease in the amount of people using traditional financing would define success for other programs. It is important for the Fund to identify some key areas it wishes to measure so we can gauge success as it matters most to New Haven.

VI. RFQ details:

The proposed timeline is release of the RFQ on the 1st of September with 14 days for applicants to submit. The first three days will allow clarification questions for the position (city standard). The opportunity will close on September 15 at which time the results will be sent to the Board Chair.

Candidates will be invited to an interview with a final application being chosen and voted on by the board at the October monthly meeting. Special meetings may be needed to interview candidates and those interviews will not be noticed to the public, but rather be held in executive session as personnel management is a qualifying category. Should members of the public have questions for any applicants they can submit them in writing (email ok) to the Board Chair.

VII. New Business

After the summer is over we will push harder to rewrite the ordinance with the Board of Alders. Due to some scheduled medical treatments, the August meeting will be canceled.