

New Haven Free Public Library
Library Board of Directors
Minutes of Meeting
June 27, 2023

Board Members Present: Dr. Anderson, Alder Morrison, Ms. Schneider, Mr. Giering, Ms. Lamar
Members Absent: Mr. Cruz, Ms. Logan, Ms. Sykes, Ms. Merson
Staff Present: Maureen Sullivan, Luis Chavez-Brumell, and Maria Bernhey
Guests: Regina Rush-Kittle

Welcome

Dr. Anderson called the meeting to order at 5:32pm.

Approval of Consent Agenda and Minutes

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda and the May 2023 minutes. Ms. Schneider motioned to approve and Ms. Lamar seconded.

Treasurer's Report

Library Board Financials and Budget

Ms. Lamar provided an overview of the Library financials for May 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.

Foundation Transfer READY for the Grade

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.

Director's Report

Ms. Sullivan and Ms. Bernhey delivered the Director's Report.

Move to Community Services Administration

Ms. Sullivan shared that she is optimistic about the move to the Community Services Administration. Ms. Sullivan thanked Chief Administrative Officer Regina Rush Kittle for her guidance over the last year.

Memo of Understanding New Haven Free Public Library Foundation

Ms. Sullivan reported that she is working with New Haven Free Public Library Foundation President Mary Ellen Savage on a revision of memo of understanding (MOU) between the

Library and the Foundation. The MOU outlines the relationship and agreements between the two organizations. The Foundation Board determined the need to revise the MOU at its April 2023 meeting.

Tenor of the Library

Ms. Sullivan described her view that staff morale has improved. She cited several internal promotions of staff, highlighted by Ms. Bernhey's appointment to City Librarian; the library administration team's responsiveness to staff issues and concerns; and the approval of union contracts which include salary raises for staff.

Ms. Bernhey's transition to City Librarian

Ms. Bernhey thanked the board for her selection. She reported that she had met with Mayor Elicker who asked her about the library's needs. Ms. Bernhey told the Mayor that some ways to support the library include an increase in the Library's budget and the addition of more staff to support expand services. Ms. Bernhey cited the capital needs of the historic Ives building and the need to support digital equity.

Ms. Bernhey then described her plan to hold community open houses across the Library System early in the Fall. These meetings will be an opportunity for members of the community to meet her; to learn more about community needs and interests; and to sign up more individuals for library cards. Staff development is a critical goal for Ms. Bernhey and that playing to staff strengths will be a focus of her leadership. She informed the Board that her first official day as City Librarian on July 3 will include a Storytime with local press invited.

Privacy Policy Review

Ms. Sullivan reported that the formatting changes proposed by Ms. Schneider will be acted on following the meeting. Ms. Lamar recommended that a grammar review be done for subsequent policy documents. Dr. Anderson suggested that in the future two versions of a policy document be submitted - a clean version and one that shows the various tracked changes. Ms. Lamar moved to approve the Privacy policy and Ms. Schneider seconded the motion.

Board Member Terms and Nominations

Mr. Giering presented Leslie Blatteau as a Board member candidate to fill in the vacancy for outgoing Board member Irene Logan. Ms. Blatteau is a library patron, educator, and current president of the New Haven Federation of Teachers. The nomination was moved forward by Ms. Schneider and seconded by Mr. Giering. Dr. Anderson will write a letter to the Mayor on behalf of the Board to appoint Ms. Blatteau. Ms. Blatteau may attend meetings as an observer before the official confirmation comes through.

City Librarian Portrait

Dr. Anderson reported that the John Jessen portrait is finished and will be delivered to the Library shortly. Everyone is invited to the unveiling celebration on June 30th in the Ives Squared Cafe at 5:15pm. There is a plan for the portrait to visit the four library branches during the summer and early fall.

Board Member Officer Nominations and Elections

Dr. Anderson next month's agenda board member slate of officers. Mr. Giering will assume the board chair role.

Public Comment

Alder Morrison congratulated Maria Bernhey on her selection as City Librarian, thanked Ms. Sullivan for her support over the last year, and expressed her appreciation to Dr. Anderson for her leadership during a trying year for the Library. Alder Morrison also said that the move to the Community Services Administration will be a great chapter for the Library as the Library will have access to critical supports.

Dr. Anderson called for adjournment at 6:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Luis Chavez-Brumell
Deputy Director