

New Haven Free Public Library

Library Board of Directors

Minutes of Meeting

January 24, 2024

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

Members Absent: (one vacancy waiting for appointment)

Staff Present: Maria Bernhey, Luis Chavez-Brumell, Robert Kinney

Guests: Manmita Dutta

Welcome

Dr. Anderson called the meeting to order at 5:32pm and welcomed board members.

Approval of Consent Agenda and Minutes

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda and the November 2023 minutes. Ms. Gambale motioned to approve minutes and seconded by Ms. Lamar.

Treasurer's Report

Library Board Financials and Budget

Ms. Lamar shared the financials at six months which included variable expenses at 53%. Ms. Lamar shared that we are at 100% of the book purchase order allocation. Anticipated book expenditures will come from the library board funds. Ms. Bernhey noted that fluctuation in book budget is due to the distributor Baker and Taylor cancelling back orders. The Library has also received a \$10k restricted donation from the Elizabethan Fund to support programming and collections.

Ms. Lamar raised a question of the City capital expenditures changing from \$97,925 encumbered in September and dropping to \$3,068 in December. Ms. Bernhey is in the process of following up with Budget Director Gormany.

Endowment has been stable with an uptick in January.

Mardi Gras updates

Ms. Dutta shared updates for Mardi Gras 2024 February 13th at Ives Main Library from 5:30pm-8:30pm. Sponsorships have raised forty-two thousand thus far from thirty-nine sponsors of which thirty are new sponsorships.

Two individuals will be honored this year, U.S. Senator Chris Murphy, as thanks for supporting the library and nominating NHFPL for the IMLS medal in 2019 and Ray Boyd, Program Manager at the Law, and Racial Justice Center at Yale Law School. Mr. Boyd was incarcerated for thirty years and founded Skills for Socialization program and then wrote the book *Model Inmate*. State Senator Gary Winfield will present the award to Mr. Boyd.

Catering for Mardi Gras will be provided by Garden Catering, Ricky D's, and Katalina's Bakery for dessert. Musicians and decorators are returning from last year.

Accessible ticket prices will prevent alcohol from being included in the ticket price and guests will have the option of a cash bar at the event. Ordinary is open to providing a cocktail for this year's Mardi Gras and Ms. Dutta will follow-up.

The Mardi Gras committee has expanded their marketing plan this year to include promotion in *The New Haven Independent*, *Daily Nutmeg* as well as Library email blasts and socials. Posters with QR codes for ticket purchased were shared with Board attendees for their networks and will also be advertised at all five locations. Fifty-eight tickets have been sold so far. Alder Morrison informed the board that she would be unable to attend due to a schedule conflict.

Director's Report

Ms. Bernhey delivered the Director's Report.

Staff vacancies

Ms. Bernhey shared that all full-time positions are currently filled. There are several part time aide positions in the pre-hire process with expected start dates at the end of February. The current Circulation Supervisor, and longtime NHFPL employee, is expected to retire at the end of February. Plans to celebrate and recognize their service to the Library are underway. The position is expected to be posted by the end of January. The job description has been updated to allow for those with advanced degrees outside of Library Sciences per the New Haven Charter.

Ms. Bernhey introduced Robert Kinney, the new Librarian IV and Public Service Administrator for Young Minds and the Branches.

Facilities and Capital projects

The Ives Main Library Fire Panel experienced a total failure in December and required replacement. Library Facilities and Securities teams performed routine monitoring inspections in accordance with Fire Marshall guidance, and installed temporary audible alarms until the panel was replaced.

Fair Haven Gas piping replacement project is underway to remedy a low-pressure issue at the Fair Haven Branch. Extreme temperatures cause lower pressures in the pipe and prohibits proper function and the ability to maintain proper temperature in the branch.

Power washing of the Ives Main Library has begun and is expected to be completed before Mardi Gras.

OSHA made a visit to the Ives Main Branch to review a concern for the Makerspace Laser Cutter. OSHA thoroughly reviewed the equipment and issued one citation for the exhaust tube. The manufacturer issued duct tube was replaced/abated per OSHA's required safety standard and the case was closed as of January 2, 2024.

City of New Haven Risk Assessment Consultants, PMA Associates, conducted walkthrough assessments of all locations during the week of January 15th. Safety recommendations were shared for each location including a suggestion at the Stetson Library that if the Foote Street stairwell door is to be a regular access point then an additional security guard is needed to secure that point of entry. This is critical as Library incident reports have increased 73% systemwide.

Ms. Bernhey also shared that an MOA between all of the partners in the Q-House was underway. Alder Morrison shared the importance of access within the Q-House and that budgetary needs to address safety and access issues should be communicated. The library is awaiting the final recommendations and report before communicating any additional needs to the budget office.

Staff Development

Elm City COMPASS will provide de-escalation training and scenario walkthroughs for all staff in the last two weeks of January.

Staff development for Ives Branch Staff and Library Managers will take place at Ives Main Library during closure for Mardi Gras preparations.

World languages/Language accessibility

Mr. Chavez-Brumell and Ms. Gonzalez are working with Jessica Haxhi from the New Haven Public Schools to translate library card applications to include Pashto and Arabic. This is a welcomed addition to current offerings in Mandarin and Spanish. The Admin team will work with IRIS and NHPS on having Seal of Biliteracy students create a Library International Team, (L.I.T.) to support in-person translation services in Pashto at Wilson and Spanish at Fair Haven.

The Library Communications team is currently working with a third-party, translation services vendor to make critical library resources available in languages including Pashto, Spanish, Mandarin, and Arabic to better serve all community residents.

Library Welcome Portal

Ms. Bernhey shared a new internal library portal or staff dashboard launched mid-December 2023. The site, built internally by Karina Gonzalez and the IT team, consolidates all relevant

tools and resources for staff in a single solution to streamline staff access. The library currently utilizes multiple software platforms for critical library functions making onboarding and daily access cumbersome. The staff dashboard streamlines internal communication and standardizes information disseminated to patrons.

Board Member Terms and Nominations

Dr. Anderson shared that no updates were received on the reappointment letters of current board members and names of potential board members, and that she will follow up again with the Mayor's office on the status of the Board's nominations.

Public Comment

Mr. Cruz suggested the film *Origin* by Ava Duvernay.

Dr. Anderson shared Kulturelly LIT's "100 years of Baldwin" in honor of author James Baldwin's 100th birthday will include monthly book clubs at Possible Futures on the third Thursday of each month this year.

Dr. Anderson shared that Possible Futures received a grant for Little Free Libraries featuring authors of color. The grant will support ten little free libraries around the City and the initiative is open to location suggestions.

Dr. Anderson highlighted new local businesses to support Muslims of the World Café on Chapel Street and LaundroMax Laundromat on Whalley Ave.

Ms. Merson motioned to adjourn and seconded by Ms. Lamar.

Dr. Anderson called for adjournment at 6:59pm

Respectfully submitted,

Luis Chavez-Brumell

Deputy Director