

New Haven Free Public Library

Library Board of Directors

Minutes of Meeting

March 26, 2024

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

Members Absent: (vacancy waiting for appointment)

Staff Present: Maria Bernhey, Luis Chavez-Brumell

Guests:

Welcome

Dr. Anderson called the meeting to order at 5:31pm

Approval of Consent Agenda and Minutes

Ms. Sykes motioned to approve minutes and seconded by Ms. Lamar

Treasurer's Report

Library Board Financials and Budget

Review of February Financials

Ms. Lamar shared that total income is 80% of the budget. The purchase order for books is at 100% of annual allocation and that \$1,257 was received from city special funds. Running behind on restricted funds.

The Endowment is continuing at a slow and steady pace. Capital expenses came to \$153,068, highlighting the expenses shared at the last meeting.

City's Proposed Budget did not include special funded position for technology supervisor. Ms. Bernhey shared that she heard from the City Budget Director and that the Technology Supervisor would be funded via special funds in the upcoming budget year.

Director's Report

Ms. Bernhey delivered the Director's Report.

Staff vacancies

- Ms. Bernhey shared that there is a vacancy for the Circulation Supervisor and that interviews are underway with the hope of hiring in early April.

Budget Workshop

Library workshop and final public hearing is on April 18th. The Library's focus will be on one percent of general funds. The mayor has mentioned the population growth in the city which highlights the need to support the public library with 1% of general funds. New Haven is still receiving the least amount in city budget allocation compared to peer Libraries. Stamford, Bridgeport, and Hartford all receive more than 1% of funding from their cities.

E-Grants and Fiber to the Library

Ms. Bernhey shared that the Library received funds for Fiber to the Library and E-rate funds to support digital inclusion efforts. The Fiber to the Library funds would extend the Library's Wi-Fi across the green and provide a splash page where patrons can see who is providing the Wifi. E-Grant funds will improve wi-fi droppage issues in Library buildings.

NEA Big Read

NEA Big Read Kickoff at Stetson will be on April 3rd. *The Best We Could Do* by Thi Bui is this year's Big Read and there will be system-wide programming around the Big Read.

Naming Rights

Ms. Bernhey was informed of donors' interest in requesting naming rights at the Library Foundation meeting such as named programs and spaces. Ms. Bernhey would not change any names of any existing branches but would instead incorporate them into namesake history projects so that the public could learn about the historic figures the libraries are named after.

Ms. Bernhey shared that there is an interest in discussing the renaming of the Noah Webster award and for establishing award criteria. Ms. Bernhey will add the library municipal board agenda for the discussion on naming rights.

Sunday Hours

No updates on Sunday hours. Union contracts must be considered. Ms. Bernhey shared that only opening one location (most likely Ives Main Library) would be sustainable.

Hoopla

The Library is meeting with e-book vendor Hoopla as increased usage (a 28 to 30% growth increase per month) has led to increased costs. The Library pays a base cost *and* cost per item. To continue at the same pace, the Library would need an additional \$28,000.00. Reducing tier options would limit titles available to the public. Ms. Bernhey has reached out to the Library Foundation for support to sustain Hoopla.

This situation reflects current purchasing barriers among public libraries across the country as Amazon kindle does not provide library lending. Ms. Bernhey will share relevant updates on e-book legislation at the Connecticut State Capital

Strategic Planning Update

Ms. Bernhey shared the Strategic Framework scope of work RFP (Request for Proposals) for 2025-2028 with Jeannie Esposito from Innovation Builders and Maureen Sullivan.

Ms. Esposito shared that library workers have trust levels equivalent to nurses in the medical field in their work. Ms. Bernhey hopes to have the proposals from the consultants on April 3rd.

Ms. Bernhey shared a Strategic Framework wrap up plan that was created by the Library Communications team based on the 2018-2023 Strategic Framework and past annual reports to visually communicate the Library's progress over the length of the plan to new staff members.

A Core team of library staff will work on the strategic planning process.

Dr. Anderson shared that at the next board meeting there would be a call for a board subcommittee participation on the strategic framework process.

Board Member Terms and Officer Nominations

Dr. Anderson contacted City Hall in December 2023 about the appointment of Ms. Merson and Dr. Anderson. Dr. Anderson was on the agenda for board reappointment on 3/26/24 but there is no status update for Ms. Merson.

Dr. Anderson shared that a potential board member whom they thought would move forward in the approval process was contacted recently and was told ineligible due to overrepresentation of one political party on the board. The board was operating under the understanding that all potential candidates for board membership would not pose a conflict due to political party affiliation.

Alder Morrison shared that she and Mr. Cruz were reappointed by the Board of Alders.

Dr. Anderson shared that as the board chair, it is important to have a full board and is hopeful that the approval process will not extend beyond April.

Public Comment

Alder Morrison shared that this year is the centennial year of the Q-House which will have numerous programs throughout the year. There is a community archives day at the Q-House from 1pm-4pm on April 6th in collaboration with the Beinecke Library, where community members will bring in historic artifacts from the Q-House to be archived. Alder Morrison also shared that on September 27th there is a Q-House Gala.

Mr. Giering motioned to adjourn, and the motion was seconded by Alder Morrison. Meeting Adjourned at 6:37pm

Respectfully submitted,

Luis Chavez-Brumell

Deputy Director