

New Haven Free Public Library
Library Board of Directors
June 25, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Directors Present: Lauren Anderson, Lee Cruz, Giulia Gambale, Andrew Giering, Susan Lamar, Claudia Merson, Jeanette Sykes

Directors Absent: Alder Jeannette Morrison, (vacancy waiting for appointment)

Staff Present: Maria Bernhey, Luis Chavez-Brumell

Welcome

President Andrew Giering called the meeting to order at 5:37 PM.

Approval of Consent Agenda and Minutes

Vice President Claudia Merson moved to approve the June agenda and May minutes. Lauren Anderson seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Susan Lamar presented the Treasurer's Report. A discussion followed.

Director's Report

City Librarian Maria Bernhey presented the Director's Report.

Staffing

Ms. Bernhey shared that all full-time positions are filled and noted that there are four part-time positions which remain open.

Facilities/Capital

All Library buildings activated as cooling centers in mid-June. The new Emergency Operations Director, Patrick LaBuff, has reached out to Ms. Bernhey to learn Library needs.

Elevator issues continued in June, including a day when all three elevators were out of service.

The contract for new phones is on the agenda for review by the Board of Alders on Monday, July 1. This need was anticipated and forecasted in the last capital and general budget requests. Funds for this project will be drawn from capital and general funds.

Community Impact

Digital signage will be purchased in new fiscal year to display multilingual signage.

The Library is in the process of finalizing resource material in the major spoken languages of New Haven, including English, Spanish, Arabic, Pashto, and Mandarin.

Junior Librarian Manuel Romero attended a breakfast with Congresswoman DeLauro on Hispanic Services in June.

The Library is looking into creating citizenship classes through grant funds in the upcoming fiscal year.

New data software LibApps launches next week. New features will provide more analytical functionality for patrons and allow Library staff more efficient use of statistics. Ms. Bernhey highlighted gate count datasets from the new software.

The soft launch for the Digital Navigator program is scheduled for July 8. There will be a promotion event in October during Digital Equity week. 28 devices will be given to people who are willing to commit to ongoing programs with the Navigator.

Summer Learning

There have been 603 participants in the Library summer learning program since June 1. We have had many successful programs to date including a Pride Month drag queen story hour at the Mitchell Branch which was covered in the New Haven Arts Paper.

READY for the Grade kicked off at the Wilson Branch and Stetson Branch on June 24.

Strategic Planning Update

Maureen Sullivan will attend the upcoming Library Managers' Meeting on June 27 to facilitate a community engagement training. The Strategic Planning Committee will be leading the Library needs assessment in September.

Naming Rights Committee Update

The Naming Rights Committee met on June 13 and their next meeting is scheduled for July 8. Current naming policies will need to be reviewed and updated by the Board.

Financial Account Updates

Ms. Bernhey and the Board discussed necessary updates to New Haven Free Public Library accounts.

First Data/Integrity Merchant Solutions request the removal of Mark Valiuso and adding current Library Director, Maria Bernhey as the legal signer to the account. The Board approved these changes by unanimous consent.

Board Member Terms and Nomination Updates

Proposed Board Members

Mr. Giering shared that the Mayor's nomination of Dijonée Talley to the Library Board was recently approved by the Aldermanic Affairs Committee of the Board of Alders.

Public Comment

Ms. Gambale shared that she is a Master Gardener with the UConn extension Master Gardner program. Ms. Gambale shared that the UConn program will support an *Ask a Gardener* intern program at the Library including books to be purchased for each location.

Mr. Cruz shared that Lisa Hernandez from Yale School for the Environment thanks the Library for supporting the creation of an online resource for New Haven environmental issues.

Dr. Anderson shared upcoming events including A Night of Poet Laureates on the New Haven Green on June 25 and the Caribbean Festival on the New Haven Green on June 29.

Dr. Anderson also highlighted the Little Free Libraries focusing on authors of color around the City and offered to accept book donations.

Adjournment

Ms. Merson moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Giering seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Luis Chavez-Brumell
Deputy Director