



# 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, §2-321 • Established in 2007 • democracyfund@newhavenct.net



## DEMOCRACY FUND BOARD MEETING

6:00 pm Wednesday, August 25, 2021

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

New Haven Democracy Fund Board: CNN

Sergio Rodriguez, Chair

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

Democracy Fund Administrator: Alyson Heimer

### AGENDA:

1. Call to Order 6:07pm. (Wynn joined at 6:30pm)
  
2. Approval of previous meeting minutes July 2021, motion made by O'connell, approved 4-0-0.
  
3. Public Comment - none.
  
4. Report from the Chair
  - a. Board member guidelines for conduct during the General Election

As we are entering into a new situation that The Fund has not seen, an opposition party election with two participating candidates, the Chair reminds the Board (and the public) that it is the intention of Democracy Fund Board Members to act in as unbiased a manner as possible. Since James O'Connell is going to appear on the ballot for Board of Education this November, and will have his name appear alongside one of the mayoral candidates as part of a party slate, the chair requested feedback on what would be considered appropriate behavior by the Board. Goode wishes O'Connell the best of luck but suggest that O'Connell recuse himself from any votes related to the General Election until after the election, especially if it is going to affect the monetary distribution to any of the candidates. Doing this, Goode suggested, would be enough to show an average reasonable citizen that it is O'Connell's intention to maintain his unbiased objectivity. He agreed to recuse himself from candidate-related votes and in some cases the entire discussion of certain topics (such as candidate document and funding approval votes). Additionally, O'Connell stated that it is his intention to always operate in the best

interest of all New Haveners, party politics aside, and in the best interest of The Fund. Further, he agreed to make efforts to limit public events and campaign photography where he is with the Republican candidate, so that even the optics reflected his true intentions of remaining an unbiased Board Member. The chair agreed that these parameters were acceptable and perhaps should be added to the bylaws in future revisions.

#### 5. Administrator's Report .

- a. Contested General Election - For the first time in the Fund's history we have a contested general election with two candidates from different parties both participating in The Fund. Both candidate teams have completed NHDF training and are in possession of the candidate contracts and affidavits needed to be submitted by September 3, 2021. The representatives from the two campaigns were present at the meeting, in a show of dedicated intent to use the fund.
- b. Financial Accounting Update - Karen Dubois-Walton Campaign returning excess funds. The campaign will return the \$20,000 grant and did not accept the second round of matching funds from NHDF. The campaign will close out their books and intends to make efforts to repay all matching funds that they received.
  - i. Total account balance: \$320,415.46 - the Board of Alders' approved budget gave the Democracy Fund it's requested allocation of \$250,000.00. This money has been transferred to our account in the Finance Department and will remain liquid through the completion of the election cycle.
  - ii. (pending deposit from KDW campaign of \$20,000)
  - iii. OurWebster Bank CD has matured after 15 months (purchased in 2020) with total interest earned: \$518.75

Motion to approve the report was made by Bhandary-Alexander 4-0-1. O'Connell abstained in conjunction with the code of conduct outlined prior.

#### 6. New Business

General election Debate. The Administrator has begun the process of scheduling and planning the NHDF Debate for the General Election. The Shubert Theatre is looking into getting permission from the Board of Education to host the event at the CO-OP Highschool theater downtown. This location still remains the most centralized and the most technologically advanced public space available for a reasonable price. Details to follow at the next board meeting.

Wynn motioned to adjourn 5-0-0, 6:52pm