

New Haven Free Public Library
Library Board of Directors
Minutes of Meeting
January 28, 2020

Members Present: Ms. Schneider, Dr. Anderson, Mr. Giering, Ms. Merson, Alder Morrison, Mr. Sulpasso

Staff Present: John Jessen

Guest: Lauren Bisio (minutes)

Welcome

Ms. Schneider called the meeting to order at 5:38pm. A quorum was present.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Ms. Schneider asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, including the November 2019 Minutes, December 2019 Minutes, and January 2020 Agenda. Mr. Giering moved to approve the Consent Agenda, Ms. Merson seconded, and with no questions or comments, the Board voted to approve the Consent Agenda.

Director's Report

Staffing

The Deputy Director position has been posted and will close on February 7, 2020. Mitchell Library Branch Manager Sharon Lovett-Graff has been hired to fill the Librarian IV position, filling the vacancy created by Brad Bullis' resignation. Ms. Lovett-Graff has worked at the Library for over 17 years and is an active member of the New Haven community. Her promotion creates a new vacancy and this Branch Manager position has been posted, closing on February 14, 2020. Additional positions currently posted include a Librarian II for Fair Haven and a part-time Teen Librarian.

Facilities

The leak in the Mitchell Library roof is covered by warranty and the Library is moving quickly to repair or replace the affected area. New LED light fixtures have been installed across the system with support from a UI Energy Upgrade grant. This update will save a significant amount of money in the long term. Progress continues in the Ives Main Library Staff Lounge with demolition almost complete. The furniture has been ordered and the wall art will be made on-site with Tinker Lab equipment.

Transition Team Recommendations

The Library submitted a Transition Report to the new mayoral administration in December 2019. The Transition Team report was published in January 2020 with seven recommendations involving the Library, including going Fine Free in the first 100 days. With the growing national trend towards fine free libraries, there are a number of models to study and data to review. The Library has been in communication with the Mayor's office regarding the recommendations and the Library Board's purview of the Library's fines and fees revenue stream.

Mayor Elicker visited Ives Main Library on January 20, 2020 as part of NHFPL's Census 2020 programming. The Library plays an essential role in the City's "complete count" efforts, including continuing job events to meet the Census 2020 hiring goals, poster contests to publicize the census, and staff training to enable staff to assist patrons with filling out census forms. NHFPL will also partner in outreach events in traditionally under-counted neighborhoods to encourage participation in the 2020 Census.

Mr. Sulpasso arrived at 5:51pm.

Grants

The Library will partner with the International Festival of Arts and Ideas to apply to the National Endowment of the Arts 2021 *The Big Read* program. The selected book is *An American Sunrise* by Joy Harjo.

Nominations

Lee Cruz's nomination to the Library Board continues to move through City Hall. Alder Morrison explained the confirmation process through the Board of Alders. Mr. Jessen will stay abreast of the progress of the nomination.

Old Business

Mr. Giering asked for an update on Orchid Café. Mr. Jessen reported that the café has a new manager and some improvements have been noted, though occasional issues arise. The Library has also been working to address requests, including Wi-Fi reception and café speakers for music. The lines of communication are open and the Library has dedicated one staff person to serve as the primary contact. Mr. Jessen asked the Board to continue providing feedback, as comments are recorded.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Sulpasso noted that the 6-month point of the fiscal year is a good opportunity to check in and plan for future goals. He noted nothing of concern as the Library continues to draw down restricted funds and work to control expenses.

Board Budget

Mr. Sulpasso reviewed income by source, noting that both room rentals and café rental income were lower than anticipated. Endowment income from restricted funds does not change. Some expenses are tracking ahead of expectations for this point in the year, including books and AV expenses, programming, staff development, and dues. The Library is aware of these trends, and will adjust spending accordingly in the second half of the year.

Foundation

CTNext funds have recently been updated to better account for spending at the end of last fiscal year and beginning of the current fiscal year. Otherwise, Mr. Sulpasso noted nothing of concern, and the Board raised no questions about the Foundation budget.

Endowment

Mr. Sulpasso met with Drew Alden from the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven to review the Foundation's endowed funds. Despite market fluctuations, fund growth is strong and exceeding benchmarks. The Community Foundation's Annual Summary Report will arrive later in the spring.

Ms. Merson moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. Mr. Giering seconded and the Board voted to approve with no questions or comments.

Policy Review

Collection Development Policy

Ms. Schneider noted that the Board first reviewed this policy at the end of 2019 and commended Mr. Jessen on the subsequent revisions. The goal is to keep the policy as broad and timeless as possible. The Board discussed the inclusion of City demographic information in the body of the policy, as well as additional copy edits. Ms. Schneider asked for a motion to approve the policy with the noted copy edits. Mr. Giering moved, Mr. Sulpasso seconded, and the Board voted to approve with no comments or questions.

Ives Squared Usage Policy

The Board addressed the Ives Squared Usage Policy, which had been previously reviewed but not approved until the space was open and the implications of the policy as drafted could be assessed. The Board noted some needed copy edits and Ms. Schneider asked for a motion to approve the policy with the copy edits. Mr. Giering moved, Ms. Merson seconded, and the Board voted to approve with no comments or questions.

Ives Squared Laptop Lending Policy

The Board reviewed the Ives Squared Laptop Lending Policy, clarifying some aspects of the policy in relation to other Library spaces and policies. The Board also discussed methods to secure the laptops and protect them from malware. In addition, the Board noted some copy edits and needed standardization of language and acronyms throughout the document. Ms. Schneider asked for a motion to approve the policy contingent upon clarification from IT regarding these security concerns. Ms. Merson moved, Dr. Anderson seconded, and the Board voted to approve with no additional comments or questions.

Mardi Gras/George Takei

Mr. Jessen announced that Mardi Gras will return back downtown to Ives Main Library on February 25th from 5:30-8:30pm after two years at Mitchell Library. The annual fundraiser will showcase Ives Squared, with food stations set up in the café. The Library Foundation has had success securing sponsorships, including a presenting sponsorship from a Library vendor. There will be no silent auction this year, but the event will feature a "Fund the Cause" or paddle raise instead. Mr. Jessen asked the Board to help spread the word and thanked everyone in advance for being as supportive as possible. There will be no Board meeting in February due to the fundraiser.

Mr. Jessen announced that George Takei will be at NHFPL for a book signing on February 18, 2020 in conjunction with the International Festival of Arts and Ideas. Mr. Takei will be participating in a number

of events across town that day, and will conclude the day with a book signing only at the Library. Publicity for the event has indicated that priority will be given to patrons that purchase their book through Barnes and Noble. The Board discussed the logistics and optics of this arrangement in a public space, ultimately assenting to the language because the bookstore will donate a portion of the proceeds from the sale of Mr. Takei's book to the Library. The book signing will take place on the first floor and while an exact number of attendees is unknown, the Library is anticipating a large crowd and looking forward to a successful event as well as introducing new people to the Library.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Executive Session

Ms. Schneider, noting the upcoming events listed on the agenda, adjourned the meeting at 7:19pm and the Board went into Executive Session.

The Board came out of executive session and adjourned the meeting at 7:38pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren Bisio
Director of Advancement, NHFPL Foundation