

New Haven Free Public Library
Library Board of Directors
Minutes of Meeting
March 24, 2020

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

Members Absent: Dr. Garcia-Blocker

Staff Present: John Jessen

Welcome

Ms. Schneider called the meeting to order at 5:34pm. A quorum was present.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Ms. Schneider asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda and the January 2020 Minutes. Ms. Merson moved to approve the Consent Agenda and Minutes, Alder Morrison seconded, and with no questions or comments, the Board voted to approve the Consent Agenda and January Minutes.

Treasurer's Report

Board Budget

Mr. Sulpasso reported that the Board's unrestricted income perspective for the month of February is right on track for what we are anticipating from revenues. The Library is in good shape according to our budgeted amounts. Overall February's unrestricted expenses are trending slightly high, so the Library will be keeping an eye on expenses. Mr. Sulpasso noted that from a budget perspective, restricted expenses are in a good position.

Foundation

There was not a lot of activity on the Foundation budget. CTNext grant expenses occurred as expected. Other than that, the Foundation budget was status quo. Ms. Merson asked when proceeds from the Mardi Gras fund raiser will be coming into the Foundation account. Ms. Sulpasso said the Library expects to see these funds next month.

Endowment

Despite market fluctuations, fund growth is strong and exceeding benchmarks. Mr. Sulpasso anticipates this to look different next year based on market realities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Sulpasso commented that Community Foundation has had, historically, very healthy risk positions and he was not overly concerned with long-term market positions for the endowment fund.

Ms. Schneider called for questions and then asked for a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. Alder Morrison moved; Dr. Anderson seconded, and the Board voted to approve the Treasurer's Report.

Mr. Sulpasso informed the Board of two transfer requests from the Foundation. A restricted transfer of \$1,205.10 from the *Girls Who Code* grant, and an unrestricted quarterly distribution of \$122,500 from

the Foundation. Ms. Schneider asked for a motion to approve these two transfers. Mr. Cruz so moved, Dr. Anderson seconded, and the Board voted to approve these two transfers.

Nominating Committee for Officers

Ms. Schneider informed the Board that at the Annual Board meeting in April the nominating committee will present the new slate of officers. Ms. Schneider asked for a motion to approve Ms. Merson and Dr. Garcia-Blocker as the members of the Board's nominating committee for officers. Mr. Sulpasso so moved; Mr. Cruz seconded, and the motion passed.

Director's Report

Covid-19

Mr. Jessen shared how the Library staff prepared to close the buildings to the public. He discussed the work status of all staff – at this time both full and part-time employees are being paid. Mr. Jessen shared ongoing work projects and how the administration was pivoting to address the public's needs virtually. He reported out ongoing facilities maintenance schedules and potential issues. The Board offered encouragement and suggestions around ways the library can maximize their new virtual programming opportunities.

Staffing

Mr. Jessen shared staffing updates with the Board. The positions of Deputy Director, Branch manager of the Mitchell Library, a Bi-lingual Librarian II, and two Library Technical Assistants are still pending. The Board expressed concern that these positions have been open for some time and need to be filled to continue to offer the best library services to the public. Mr. Jessen said he would address these staff shortage issues with the CAO Scott Jackson and with Human Resources. He agreed to share updates with Ms. Schneider prior to the next board meeting.

Budget Workshops

Mr. Jessen thanked the Board for their advocacy work thus far on behalf of the Library. He also shared the news that all budget hearings and workshops will be held virtually using Zoom. He will communicate further developments to the Board as he receives them.

E-rate

Mr. Jessen updated the Board on the E-rate. COVID-19 has pushed E-rate application deadline back by one month and the extra time will help the Library adequately address some final issues that were raised about the applications. The request to undergo updates in the Library's Technology infrastructure have been approved by the Board of Alders, contracts are in the final completion stage and, once complete, will be used to file the Library's application for E-rate discounts for next year.

Stetson Campaign

Stetson staff are working on the opening day collection remotely. Mr. Giering inquired about the Q-House building construction timeline. Mr. Jessen responded that construction is going forward as planned. Currently the opening day will be at the beginning of March 2021.

Library Events

Alder Morrison thanked Mr. Jessen and Library staff for the cooperation they gave putting on a series of film screenings of *Tell Them We Are Rising: The Story of Historically Black Colleges and Universities*. The series was co-sponsored by the Board of Alders Black and Hispanic Caucus.

Board discussed how events like this need to be continue to be supported, but also have some aspects that are re-imagined to offer online participation.

Fine-Free presentation

Ms. Schneider asked for discussion on the fine-free presentation. Mr. Jessen provided a document on the presentation to the Board at an earlier date. The Board asked a series of questions related to aspects of the presentation and Mr. Jessen provided explanations and answers to these questions. The Board requested a detailed rollout process, which Mr. Jessen agreed to supply by the next Board meeting. After thoughtful deliberation of the different perspectives around this initiative, the Board was enthusiastic and supportive of it, the Board was enthusiastic and supportive of this initiative. Going fine-free aligns the NHFPL more closely with its Mission to build community through shared access to resources, experiences, and opportunities for all. Ms. Schneider asked for a motion to ratify the NHFPL going fine-free with the provision of an official rollout dependent upon a full implementation plan addressing organizational and financial impacts. Ms. Merson so moved, Alder Morrison seconded, and the motion passed.

Mardi Gras recap

Mr. Jessen reported out that Mardi Gras raised roughly \$63,000 before expenses. The paddle raise, which was new this year, raised \$8,000 and the gift balloons raised \$1,550. Revenue is still coming in for the event. Mr. Jessen stated that having the event return to Ives helped the event succeed as well as it did this year. The Board was pleased to hear that this was one of the more successful Mardi Gras events in recent years.

Executive Session

Ms. Schneider adjourned the meeting at 6:48 pm and the Board went into Executive Session.

The Board came out of Executive Session and adjourned the meeting at 7:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

John Jessen
City Librarian