

New Haven Free Public Library  
Library Board of Directors  
Minutes of Meeting  
June 23, 2020

**Members Present:** Ms. Schneider, Dr. Anderson, Mr. Cruz, Dr. Garcia-Blocker, Mr. Giering, Alder Morrison

**Staff Present:** John Jessen

Guests: Scott Jackson, Sean Koehler, Lauren Bisio (minutes)

**Welcome**

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

**Update on Board Members**

Ms. Schneider gave an update on Susan Lamar's nomination process. Ms. Lamar was interviewed by the Aldermanic Affairs Committee, and her nomination will now go before the full Board of Alders. One position on the Board remains open, and Ms. Schneider, Dr. Anderson and Mr. Giering met with a candidate, Irene Logan, a bilingual reading specialist at Columbus Family Academy. The Board discussed Ms. Logan's background and commitment to the New Haven community, and Ms. Schneider asked for a motion to nominate Ms. Logan to the Library Board of Directors. Mr. Giering moved, Mr. Cruz seconded, and the Board voted to approve the nomination.

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

Ms. Schneider asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, including the May 2020 Minutes and June 2020 Agenda. Dr. Anderson moved to approve the Consent Agenda, Mr. Cruz seconded, and with no questions or comments the Board voted to approve the Consent Agenda.

**Treasurer's Report**

Mr. Jessen delivered the Treasurer's Report, reviewing the May 2020 financial reports.

Board Budget

The Board budget reflects income and expenses from earlier in the quarter that were recorded in May as select library staff began returning to the building, including some fines and fees that were paid in March. Credit card expenses from the past two months were also recorded in May, though the statements were paid automatically. Restricted funds have been spent down over the fiscal year, and the collections fund will be spent down in June after the City finalizes their contribution to the collections budget.

Foundation

The Foundation budget reflects Ives Squared expenses to spend down CTNext funding this fiscal year. In addition, Mr. Jessen reevaluated the system for recording unrestricted income from the NHFPL Foundation and will revise the procedure to bring the financial reports into better alignment with best accounting practices.

### Endowment

The endowment has suffered some declines, but the losses are in line with expectations given recent market conditions. Ms. Schneider reminded the Board that the funds are invested for long-term growth, despite recent fluctuations.

### Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Budget

Mr. Jessen gave an overview of the proposed FY21 Board Budget. Income from fines and fees has been eliminated, and he expects that NHFPL Foundation fundraising along with other fee-based services in development can supplement this income stream in the coming years. The collections budget was increased by cutting other expenses. The Board discussed more conservative income projections for the fiscal year given uncertainty around Covid-19, specifically income from meeting room reservations and fees from copiers and printers. Mr. Jessen will revise the proposed FY21 budget for the Board to review in July. He reminded the Board that while the Board Budget must balance income and expenses, the Foundation Budget can supplement decreased income.

Ms. Schneider asked for a motion to approve the May Financial Reports. Mr. Cruz moved, Dr. Garcia-Blocker seconded, and the Board voted to approve.

Mr. Jessen presented two transfers from the NHFPL Foundation: \$16,500 from the NewAlliance Foundation for READY for the Grade and \$300 from Girls Who Code. Ms. Schneider asked for a motion to accept the transfer, Mr. Cruz moved, Dr. Anderson seconded, and the Board voted to accept the funds from the NHFPL Foundation.

### **Reopening**

Mr. Jessen reported that Library staff have begun returning back to library buildings on a modified A/B schedule this week, with staff working part-time on site and part-time from home. Staff with medical exemptions are allowed to postpone on-site work and work from home instead, and some staff are taking federally protected leave. By July 6<sup>th</sup>, all staff without pre-arranged and approved exemptions are expected to be back on-site for their regularly scheduled hours, and work areas are being modified to maintain social distancing. Staff are planning to launch curbside pick-up services the week of July 6<sup>th</sup>, with an ambitious goal to reopen Library buildings to the public by the end of July. The Library serves as a cooling center in the summer, and warmer weather has highlighted this critical role the Library plays in the city.

Mr. Jessen outlined the cleaning protocols for the main library and the branches, both now that staff are back in the building and for when the libraries open to the public. Scott Jackson gave additional details on the cleaning protocols for City facilities. The Board discussed the reopening plans and concerns regarding the timeline for public access, as well as ideas to collaborate with other City departments facing similar challenges and looking for innovative solutions. Mr. Jessen and the Library administration team will watch Covid-19 developments closely and follow public health directives from the City and State, and Mr. Jessen will distribute to the Board the most recent draft of the reopening plan, which will be approved by the City's Covid-19 Departmental Taskforce and the Health Department.

## **Director's Report**

### Staffing

Xia Feng has accepted the position of deputy director and Marian Huggins has accepted the position of Mitchell branch manager, concluding the hiring process for these two key openings. Additional positions remain open and the Library will evaluate critical needs going forward to prioritize open positions, including the two new Stetson positions.

### Grants

Mr. Jessen distributed a list of current and prospective grants, including \$161,000 recently awarded from CTNext. Mr. Jessen will continue to disseminate this information to the Board, updated on a monthly basis.

### Stetson

Mr. Jessen is reviewing the FF&E purchase orders, as well as evaluating updates to the space to promote social distancing. Construction is proceeding on schedule with a projected opening date in Spring 2021, and Stetson Branch Manager Diane Brown is inventorying Stetson's current collection to identify areas for growth in order to place orders for the opening day collection.

Dr. Garcia-Blocker left the meeting at 7:00pm.

### **Public Comment**

On June 29<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Jessen is leading a conversation with Library donors, advocates and stakeholders to provide an update on how the Library has responded to Covid-19 and the plans to resume public access and circulation. Board members have all been invited and are encouraged to attend.

Ms. Schneider thanked Mr. Jackson for joining the meeting to discuss the City's plans and provide additional insight on the Library's reopening plans.

The Board entered executive session at 7:10pm and exited Executive Session at 7:30 pm. Ms. Schneider asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Anderson moved, Alder Morrison seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 7:31pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren Bisio  
Director of Advancement, NHFPL Foundation