

New Haven Free Public Library
Library Board of Directors
Minutes of Meeting
August 25, 2020

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

Staff Present: John Jessen

Guests: Kristin Pantelis (minutes)

Welcome

Ms. Schneider called the meeting to order at 5:33pm. A quorum was present.

Update on Board Members

Ms. Schneider gave an update on Irene Logan's nomination process. Ms. Logan was interviewed by the Aldermanic Affairs Committee, and her nomination will now go before the full Board of Alders.

Approval of Consent Agenda

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

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Jessen and Ms. Lamar delivered the Treasurer's Report, reviewing the June and July 2020 financial reports.

Board Budget

Mr. Jessen reviewed the board budget for both June and July 2020, which reflects both income and expenses. In June, both revenue and expenditures were under projected budgets. Mr. Jessen reported that although the carryover this year is higher in past years, the City is still reconciling their accounts and the Library can expect to spend down the carryover early in the new fiscal year.

The July financials showed lower than average revenues due to Covid-19 restrictions. The Library has received an LSTA grant of hotspots and Chrome books that will be circulated to customers who lack access to steady internet.

Foundation

The Foundation budget was as expected. Mr. Jessen discussed the distribution of the recent unrestricted revenues from the Library Foundation Board to specific Foundation budget fund lines. CTNext fund line showed a negative, but Mr. Jessen explained that money is expected to come in from the CTNext grant toward the end of the 1st quarter.

Endowment

The endowment has had a small increase, but it is still slightly trailing beginning of the year levels.

Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Budget

Mr. Jessen gave a brief overview of the revised proposed FY21 Board Budget. The Board had requested a more conservative approach with the uncertainties of Covid-19 pandemic. Both unrestricted and restricted income and expenses were discussed. After brief discussion, Ms. Schneider asked for a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Budget as well as the June and July Financial Reports. Dr. Garcia-Blocker moved, Alder Morrison seconded, and the Board voted to approve.

Mr. Jessen presented a transfer request of \$100,000 from the NHFPL Foundation. These are unrestricted funds. Ms. Schneider asked for a motion to accept the transfer, Ms. Lamar moved, Dr. Garcia-Blocker seconded, and the Board voted to accept the funds from the NHFPL Foundation.

Reopen Updates

Mr. Jessen reported that the Ives branch is looking to open a study area in the lower level. Target date for this opening is September 8th. Customers will be allowed to use the area by appointment. The appointment structure will be similar to what is already established for those utilizing the Library for their technology needs. All other Library branches are creating scenarios and timelines where they can open physical spaces safely at this time. The Board discussed protocols established for reopening the physical spaces. Presently, the staff of the Library are especially focusing their outreach efforts on the customers who are not interacting with the library digitally.

In addition, all branches are currently open for curbside pick-up. Ives Main branch is also still open on an hourly basis for technology use on the lower level. Masks are required for entry, but if a patron does not have one, then one will be provided. Points of service are in the process of getting plexiglass set up. The Library system continues, when needed, to serve as a cooling center. Alder Morrison requested that the Library create a clear and concise flyer that explains how the Library can be used at this time. Mr. Jessen stated that this collateral will be prepared and broadcast widely.

Director's Report

Staffing

There are 12 positions currently posted. Arealiys Fernandez, a bi-lingual Librarian II, will be starting at the Fair Haven Branch on August 31st. Other employment notices will close in early September. Staff gathered last week to celebrate Xia Feng's retirement and Ashley Sklar's new position at the CT State Library.

Grants

Mr. Jessen distributed a list of current and prospective grants, including receiving \$37,000 from the Yale Community Fund, which will be used to purchase hot spots and to beam WiFi off the Ives Main Library and Wilson Branch.

Community Learning Hubs

Mr. Jessen reported that he has connected with a group of school activists and other nonprofits to assist children as they return to school virtually. He will update the board as this initiative develops.

Staff Outreach

Teams have been reviewing past efforts. There are school cluster lists – based on branch neighborhoods already established. Library staff are adding other organizations to form a more complete picture of each location’s responsibilities and capabilities for bringing the library’s services to the community. The Library is looking to solidify partner relationships, consider special events and projects, including eventually using the Readmobile to assist in efforts. There will be a report at the September meeting on these outreach efforts.

Other Updates

The Staff Lounge renovation project at Ives Main Library has been completed. Staff will be able to use the space for professional development, have lunch, and socialize on breaks. Common Ground’s mobile market will be at Fair Haven on August 26th from 3-5pm. Wilson Library has been working with the Yale Architectural School to create special outside furniture that can be used for popup story times and other events.

Ms. Schneider left the meeting at 6:45pm.

Public Comment

Alder Morrison shared news of a new skate park in Scantlebury Park, near the Stetson Branch, that will have a grand opening on Thursday, August 27th at 12:00pm and Alder Morrison invites all to come. Around 1:45pm there will be a skate clinic for children. The Board discussed the possibility of having the Readmobile at the park.

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Alder Morrison moved, Dr. Garcia-Blocker seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 6:56pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristin Pantelis
Part-Time Library Aide