

New Haven Free Public Library
Library Board of Directors
Minutes of Meeting
February 23, 2021

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

Members Absent: Ms. Schneider, Alder Morrison

Staff Present: John Jessen

Welcome

Dr. Anderson called the meeting to order at 5:33 pm. A quorum was present.

Approval of Consent Agenda and Minutes

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, including the January 2021 Minutes. Ms. Merson moved to approve the Consent Agenda and Minutes, Dr. Garcia-Blocker seconded, and with no questions or comments, the Board voted to approve the Consent Agenda and Minutes.

Treasurer's Report

January 2021 Summary

Ms. Lamar reviewed the January 2021 financials. As of January, the Library is still running a net positive from revenues and expenditures. Most expenditures are from the book and material fund line. In the coming months, there will be more book purchases using monies from the Restricted Fund lines of Bittker, Greisinger, and Pierce.

The Library's Foundation Fund Restricted income line account continues to be drawn down as the Library spends the first and second installments of the Everybody Learns grant. This money has gone toward a variety of issues the Library needed to address to make its facilities as safe as possible to expand building access as COVID-19 numbers stabilize. These enhancements include installing hands-free fixtures in bathrooms, purchasing additional PPE, replacing and adding security cameras, installing a new ADA compliant door, and much more.

Endowment

The Endowment's net worth continued to improve its positive position. Currently the value of the Endowment is just over \$3.2 million.

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to approve the January 2021 financials, Dr. Garcia-Blocker moved, Ms. Merson seconded, and with no questions or comments the Board voted to approve the January 2021 financials.

Mr. Jessen presented a transfer from the NHFPL Foundation: \$24,161.62 from the CT Next grant. Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to approve the transfer, Ms. Merson moved, Ms. Lamar seconded, and the Board voted to accept the funds from the NHFPL Foundation.

Mardi Gras 2021 Recap

Mr. Jessen reported on the success of the 2021 Mardi Gras event. This year's Mardi Gras was the second most successful Mardi Gras fundraiser the Library has seen in the past five years. The Library raised just over \$50,000 in sponsorships and donations. Mardi Gras was a free live virtual event this year. Donations made up for the loss of ticket sales. Expenses were less this year for the virtual event and included an honorarium to the poets who participated.

The Library Board of Directors congratulated Mr. Jessen, his staff, and the Library Foundation for an excellent program highlighting Cave Canem and African-American poetry in the United States. The Board also commented that it was wonderful to see longtime Board Director and past President of the Library Board, Elsie Chapman, win the Mary Ives award.

Policy Review

Mr. Giering reviewed some changes made to the Unattended Children Policy. After Board discussion, the section that refers to the Connecticut State Statute of leaving children under 12 unattended will be kept in the policy. The Board discussed removing a section about the use of the Children's Room by adults and creating a new policy for it, as this does not pertain to unattended children.

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to approve the revisions of Unattended Children Policy brought to the board by Mr. Giering. Mr. Cruz moved, Mr. Giering seconded, and the Board voted to approve the Unattended Children Policy with discussed edits.

The Unattended Children Policy includes a section about the use of the Children's Room by adults. The Board continued their discussion of the policy and decided it would be best to separate that section from the Unattended Children Policy and create a new policy about the use of the Children's Room by adults.

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to create a separate policy for Use of the Children's Room by Adults, Mr. Cruz moved, Mr. Giering seconded, and the Board voted to separate the previous Unattended Children Policy and the Use of the Children's Room by Adults into 2 policies. Mr. Giering will supply Mr. Jessen with his approved edited version.

Dr. Garcia-Blocker left the meeting at 6:10 pm.

COVID-related Service Updates

Utilizing information and recommendations from the American Library Association, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Connecticut Library Association, and the New Haven Board of Health, Mr. Jessen has compiled a list of projected dates for expanding in person access to spaces inside the Library. At the end of March, the Library plans to open all locations to about 25% capacity. The public will be allowed limited access at first, permitting them to briefly browse books, receive technology help, and have access to study areas for an appointed time. Based on a February 2021 climate survey of staff, the average staff member is at a 5 out

of 8 on the comfortability scale of allowing public back into the building. PPE equipment and communication from the administration regarding plans and timelines are two of most urgent priorities for the staff when they consider expanding building access and service offerings.

Director's Report

Mr. Jessen briefly shared that the Mayor's City budget for FY21-22 is due to be released soon. Mr. Jessen is unsure of what this will mean for the Library, but he braced the Directors for possible cuts to the Library's General Fund budget.

Staffing

Two out of three higher-level positions have been filled.

Stetson

A pick-up truck drove through one of the entrances of the Stetson building. Thankfully, no one was injured or in the building at the time. However, there was roughly \$82,000 worth of damage done to the circulation desk, computers, floors, lighting, and doors.

The Foundation Board will start sending transfer requests for the Stetson capital campaign money at the end of March or beginning of April, as part of the draw down schedule for purchasing technology and fixtures and furnishings. The new building will be opening late July-early August.

The Board thanked Alder Morrison for her hard work and dedication to the Stetson project as well.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Dr. Anderson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Cruz moved, Ms. Logan seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

John Jessen
City Librarian