

## Hamden Public Library Board Meeting

Tuesday, July 13, 2021

at 7:00 p.m.

Friends Program Room

### Minutes

In Attendance: Jan Glover, Chairwoman; Philip Kuchuk; Evelyn Hatkin; Christine Esposito; Irene Fiss

Absent: N/A

Also In Attendance: Melissa Canham-Clyne, Library Director; Alyssa Bussard, Assistant Director; Thomas "TJ", Tech. Services; Alisha Martindale, Arts Department; Liana Paglia, Commission Clerk

1. **Call to Order:** Chairwoman Glover called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.
2. **Additions to the Agenda:** N/A
3. **Approval of Minutes:** June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Mr. Kuchuk moved to accept the minutes, which was seconded by Ms. Hatkin. All were in favor.
4. **Correspondence:** N/A
5. **Public | Media Comments on Agenda:** N/A
6. **Meet the Staff:** N/A
7. **Announcements:**  
There was a brief discussion regarding how each commissioner has advocated for the library within the past month. Notably, Ms. Canham-Clyne is applying for a grant, which could potentially make Miller Library a pilot library for a digital navigation program. Essentially, this program will help people better understand their devices and how to exist and interact in a digital world, in Hamden. Chairwoman Glover had written a letter in support of a LTSA grant, which was read aloud at a meeting.
8. **Old Business**
  - a. Financial update
    - Library Budget FY 21
      - a. As this is not officially closed out until mid-August, the library is still spending. This budget is being used to purchase materials, supplies for library processing, and two additional media chairs.
    - Library Budget FY 22
      - a. Ms. Canham-Clyne has begun spending these funds on salaries, some book orders, quarterly dues to Lion and other digital support.
    - Quarterly Gift Fund report
      - a. Ms. Canham-Clyne reported that the CD is doing very well. She noted the generosity of the public during the pandemic. Ms. Fiss suggested marketing to seniors who could potentially leave stock to the commission.
  - b. Policy Review: Policies for the Use of Computers, Internet Use Policy (tabled item from June 8)

- i. The policies still need to be reviewed and approved by several departments, including, but not limited to information and tech. services. Therefore, this agenda item will be placed on the August agenda.
- c. By-laws review: sub-committee update
  - i. Mr. Kuchuk reported that the review is still in progress. One more meeting will take place before the review is published. He will then distribute a copy of the document showing all past and proposed new laws.
- d. Library Director Annual Performance Review: update
  - i. Chairwoman Glover distributed documents to select commissioners.
- e. Expanding library hours and opportunities (tabled item from June 8)
  - i. Ms. Canham-Clyne's presentation gave a statistical overview regarding library/library services usage. She noted that Miller Library is down 113 staff hours a week and anticipates that 2/3 will be filled by the end of the fiscal year. Ms. Canham-Clyne acknowledged that offering the programming has been a challenge at Miller. If all branches are able to offer extended hours, it would allow for more programming opportunities. She highlighted the public's general lack of knowledge about the library and its services as a major reason for low library card registration numbers. She also highlighted the relationship between wealth and library card registration; as wealth increases, so does library card registration. Ms. Canham-Clyne concluded by noting that many community members still do not know that the library exists and emphasized the necessity to collaborate and build relationships with other town institutions.

## 9. New Business

- a. August meeting/time of meeting
  - i. After a brief discussion, the commission decided to hold a meeting on August 10<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. At this meeting, the commission will also revisit modifying the meeting start time, moving forward.
- b. Board In-service day
  - i. Chairwoman Glover hosted a brief discussion regarding scheduling/logistics of a board in-service day. More details to follow.
- c. 39 Murals for 39 years project (Alisha Martindale)
  - i. Ms. Martindale has recently connected with the RiseUpCT mural program, which is on a racial equity tour to paint 39 MLK themed murals around CT. The goal of this all-inclusive project is to find and utilize local artists, conduct racial equity programs, and host a mural opening celebration. SustainableCT, an organization that funds different projects/initiatives with a foundation in racial equity, community inclusivity, and equitability, is in support of the mural project. It will be match up to \$7500, however a certain percentage of funds has to be raised from regular citizens, not corporate entities.

The library staff has suggested three community members to be featured in the mural. One is Lula White, who was involved with civil rights movement, sparked by the Emmett Till lynching, and was also a freedom writer. Another suggestion is Rabbi Goldberg, who was a friend of MLK, and arranged for him to speak at the opening ceremony of the modern synagogue in Hamden. These names will hopefully be presented in a community wide poll, which will ultimately decide which individual is featured. The possible mural locations are: Highwood Square Artist Housing, All Town Fresh, and the Miller Library building (wall facing the police department). There was a brief discussion

regarding the benefit of it being on the library building, aka a municipal building. Aside from the ease of maintenance, a mural of this significance on a municipal building, (ideally) sends a strong message that the Town values and prioritizes racial equity.

Overall, the commissioners expressed excitement over the project, and hope it sparks interest and momentum for future ones. Ms. Martindale concluded by saying that the project needs to be proposed to the project commission, before moving forward. If anyone has any ideas for art programming, please reach out to Ms. Martindale.

- d. Resolution to add Associate Library Director Ms. Bussard to Library Accounts
  - i. Ms. Esposito made a motion to add Associate Library Director Ms. Alyssa Bussard to the library accounts. Mr. Kuchuk seconded, and all were in favor.

**10. Library Director's Report:**

- a. Additional discussion ensued, regarding Ms. Canham-Clyne's proposed new library hours schedule. This new schedule would allow for four evenings of extended hours- two at the branches, and two at Miller. These extended evening hours would allow the branches to offer programming. Ms. Canham-Clyne clarified that this is a working schedule, and is not meant to be a permanent schedule moving forward. Chairwoman Glover commented on the importance of the door counters, and suggested that if they cannot be fixed, the commission should consider purchasing new ones. Ms. Fiss suggested doing some promotional work, such as the distribution of a post card, to notify the town of the hours change. Ms. Esposito noted the potential impact of a press release. Ms. Hatkin made a motion to approve Ms. Canham-Clyne's proposed library schedule, which was seconded by Ms. Esposito. All were in favor. Ms. Hatkin then made a motion to approve the proposed library schedule and to spend up to \$20,000 to promote the new hours, which was seconded by Mr. Kuchuk. All were in favor.

**11. Executive session: N/A**

**12. Adjournment:**

Chairwoman Glover concluded the meeting by commending the staff for their performance throughout the pandemic. Mr. Kuchuk made a motion to adjourn at 8:50 pm, which was seconded by Ms. Fiss. All were in favor.

**Submitted by: Liana Paglia, Commission Clerk**