

**Minutes of the Meeting
of the Board of Directors
HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY
December 10, 2009**

Present: William Breetz, Gregory Davis, Anne Melissa Dowling, Connie Green, Thea Montañez, Brad Noel, Enid Rey, Annette Sanderson, Geraldine Sullivan, and Shawn Wooden

Also present: Matt Poland, chief executive officer; Irene Iwan, chief information officer, and Mary Crean, chief development officer

Absent: Michael Gannon, Stephen Goddard, William Large, Romulo Samaniego, Carlos Valinho and Paul Shipman

1. **Introduction:** President Geraldine Sullivan called the meeting to order at 12:04 p.m.

2. **Approval of Minutes**

Board Action: Motions to approve the minutes of the October 1, 2009 and October 7, 2009 meeting were made, seconded, and approved.

Board Action: Motion to appoint Matthew K. Poland as Chief Executive Officer retroactively based on changes made to the Corporation's by-laws at the Annual Meeting of the Corporation on October 15, 2009 was made, seconded, and approved.

3. **Nominating Committee**

Brad Noel announced that Jackie Lilly submitted her resignation from the Board on November 6, 2009 due to scheduling conflicts with her current job.

Brad Noel presented the proposed slate of officers for the upcoming calendar year:

Gregory C. Davis, *President*
Thea Montanez, *Vice-President*
Geraldine Sullivan, *Secretary*
Paul Shipman, *Treasurer*

Matthew K. Poland, chief executive officer, will serve as *Acting Secretary*

Board Action: Motion to accept the slate of officers was made, seconded, and approved.

Brad Noel introduced two new Board members: William Breetz, who has been appointed to the seat left vacant by Cynthia Reik and Shawn Wooden, who was appointed by the Court of Common Council to replace Jackie Lilly.

President Davis welcomed both Mr. Breetz and Mr. Wooden to the Board of Directors, and expressed the Board's good fortune to have their talent and expertise help shape the future of the Library.

President Davis thanked Gerri Sullivan for her outstanding service to the Library as its board president during a challenging time for the Library, its staff and the Board. During her tenure, branch libraries opened and closed, funding was in jeopardy, safety and security matters challenged the Downtown Library, the capital campaign was completed, the chief librarian retired, by-laws were changed, and a new chief executive officer was appointed. Under Gerri's leadership, the Library's relationship with the City of Hartford improved, particularly with the Mayor's Office and City Council. From a board governance perspective, Gerri did a tremendous job with respect to Board composition and strategic recruitment.

4. Albany Avenue Building Project Review

Diana Lanser of Sevigny Architects presented changes made to the plan since the Board meeting on October 1. Ms. Lanser described changes to the windows and the brick facade that minimized comparison to a school building. She also presented a graphic representation of the monument sign that will be placed on the front lawn. Ms. Lanser also described changes to the program room that would allow community groups to use the facility when the library was closed (security, ingress and egress points, and architectural details on the exterior of the building).

Board Action: Motion to approve the design of the Albany branch project and recommend that next steps be taken to further the project's development was made, seconded, and approved.

Before moving forward with the meeting, Mr. Poland introduced Mary Crean as Chief Development Officer. As a result of the change in the leadership organization, Mary has taken on responsibility for community and civic engagement. In this capacity, Associate Librarian Richard Frieder will report to her. Mr. Poland also introduced Irene Iwan, Chief Technology Officer, who's been with the library for seven years as Associate Librarian for Technology.

5. Strategic Planning

Since the last Board meeting, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving has awarded the Library a \$50,000 grant in support of the upcoming strategic planning process. At a meeting recently, the Foundation expressed their delight that the Library was focused

on a strategic planning process that would help the Library set its path for the future. Poland announced that the Library would hire Deidre Tavera as the lead consultant on the project. Ms. Tavera will meet with the Strategic Planning Committee to begin the process in January.

Enid Rey suggested that a Board retreat might also facilitate our planning process in the near term.

6. Chief Executive's Quarterly Report

Visits

- 218,000 visits in the first quarter of the fiscal year to the Downtown Library and the nine (9) branches throughout the City. Visits have tracked at this number for more than a year.
- PC activity down at the Downtown Library over the same period last year due in large measure to effective filtering of the Internet throughout the system.

Adult Programs

- Workshops have increased substantially due to funding from the Gates Grant for computer classes. Also the demand for job and career services has increased for the second year in a row.
- A variety of public programs that support literacy and lifelong learning continue to offered throughout the system, from Zumba to veteran's health benefits to mortgage/foreclosure guidance.
- The Library is testing another new way to communicate with our customers in the social media network through a new program called *Text a Librarian*.

Youth Programs

- Services up year over year, particularly since a return to full programming at Blue Hills and Mark Twain this year.
- Programs were produced in collaboration with City departments on healthy choices for parents and children.
- Outcomes as confirmed by an outside evaluator found that with the intervention of librarians there were significant gains in every identified aspect of early literacy support.

Readers Services

- System wide adult circulation remained stable compared to 1Q 08-09 and is on track with the activity forecast for number of items borrowed this fiscal year. Both book (+4%) and media (+3%) circulation were up slightly Downtown. Increases in fiction (+40%), musical scores (+34%), Spanish language (+18%) and nonfiction (+16%) on the main and ground floors indicate that customers are finding materials once they are shifted from the new book area and are using subject collections throughout the building. Large overall increases in adult circulation at Blue Hills (271%) and Mark Twain (289%) reflect comparison with the period they were closed last year. Albany suffered a big decline in adult activity (-33%), which may reflect the closure of the neighboring Fox Middle school and fewer adults coming in to pick up their children at the end of the day.
- Next quarter we will be bringing Library 2.0, or the next generation, to our online catalog with the initial implementation of *LibraryThing for Libraries*. This enhancement package will provide title ratings and reviews from readers, similar reads, tag-based searching and links to related editions and formats in our collections.

Community Development and Youth Services

- This fall's *Democracy in Action* programs and activities got off to a strong start. In collaboration with the American Civil Liberties Union and Hartford 2000, we held a very successful Banned Books program on September 29th. Approximately 50 people came to hear Scott Haney (WFSB TV), Hartford Fire Chief Charles Teale, Susan Campbell (Hartford Courant), Mayra Esquilin (community activist and president of the HART Board), and Matt Poland read passages from banned books. The program received significant media coverage, and the video of the event has been aired repeatedly on Hartford Public Access TV. Based on this year's success, we plan to repeat the program next year. As part of the *Democracy in Action* initiative, the Library has taken a leadership role in the formation of the Hartford Votes/Hartford Vota Coalition, a group of about a dozen organizations working together for the purpose of increasing voter turnout in Hartford. A very successful planning meeting and training session was held on September 15 to plan activities for October, including Voter Registration Day, a candidates' forum, and voting on Election Day in November. Use of

HartfordInfo.org continues to increase (+18%), supported by marketing through our public programs, collaborating organizations, and on Hartford Public Access TV.

- Votes/Hartford Vota Coalition has been established within HartfordInfo.org. July marked the beginning of the new community outreach model, which is being designed to make community engagement more efficient and effective. For the first quarter, library staff engaged in relationships, such as collaborating on programs, and attended meetings, with non-profit organizations 67 times, with community organizations 49 times, with government agencies 17 times, and with seven youth service providers and organizations.

Arts and Cultural Education

- CT Book Awards
- Wallace Stevens Birthday Bash
- One Book for Greater Hartford
- ArtWalk
- American Mural Project
- Jack McConnell Everywhere
- Hartford History Center – Hartford Papers Project

Development

- Pending— Grant applications with a total request amount of \$120,674 are pending approval for FY 09-10. Among the proposals are two requests to **Hartford Foundation for Public Giving** for matching dollars to The Big Read (\$20,000) and strategic planning support (\$50,000); and a request to the Barbara Bush Foundation for a literacy project to help recent refugee arrivals build ESL skills (\$50,674).
- Received—The Library received notification of four awards for a total amount of \$26,034. The awards include \$20,000 from **Hartford Foundation for Public Giving** for an early literacy project, Mother Goose, to increase early

understanding of key math and science concepts; \$3,500 from the **Greater Hartford Arts Council** for the ArtWalk's October exhibition (\$1,500) and for an early literacy program, "What Do You See?" in which the Visual Thinking Strategies approach will be used to increase children's understanding of and engagement with the illustrations in picture books (\$2,000); and \$2,534 from the **Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism** for program support of the Connecticut Center for the Book. Grants confirmed for FY 09-10: \$283,177.

Individual Giving

The 2009 fall annual appeal will kick-off in December with solicitation letters mailed to existing donors and new prospective donors. Recent significant contributions include two donations supporting the **ArtWalk** at from Sevigny Architects, LLC (\$1,000) and Siegel, O'Connor, O'Donnell, & Beck, P.C. (\$1,000).

Facilities/Safety and Security

- Park Street Renovation – year-end completion of new HVAC and ADA bathroom
- 13 reportable incidents – 8 downtown, 5 branches
- Gates at Main and Arch Streets to be installed tomorrow

Staff

- Katy Snell, Americorps Volunteer
- An update on the Chief Financial Officer, the library received about sixty applications; forty of those applicants didn't hit the mark. Overall had some good candidates and will move on the interviews soon. Interviews for a development associate to help in the Development Office will begin next week. On the Library Services Officer, recruiter Monica Marchese has been working with the National Associations for Librarians, and has been in contact with REFORMA and other organizations to find the best candidate for the job. Target for having the first round of candidates is first week of January.

7. President's Report

President Davis thanked Matt and the staff for their work in keeping the library moving forward. Davis also thanked the board for their time and valuable input.

Over the next calendar year, Davis would like to see the board become more focused on the budget. It is important that the board have a clear understanding of the budget. It would be helpful to have a meeting or a retreat to discuss the budget in greater detail.

Davis also stressed the importance of the strategic planning process. Technology enhancements and the future of the branch system are chief among the issues that the Library faces.

He underscored the importance to maintain strong programs and to maintain the quality of all the collections.

8. New Business

Thea Montañez talked about the role of the board: governance, leadership and stewardship. Ms. Montanez also introduced a document outlining Board roles and responsibilities that also suggests a minimum annual contribution by Board member.

Regarding the annual minimum requirement, she stated that if the library is asking the general public and organizations to make financial investments in the Library, it is imperative that the full Board should pledge its financial support. In the past expectations for Board giving were confusing and lacked clarity.

Ms. Montañez said that every effort has been made to create flexibility in how the Board makes its contributions. Mary Crean will manage that process.

Enid Rey said that she appreciated receiving the Board Responsibility document that clarifies the role of the Board member. She also emphasized the importance of the Board's financial support for grant applications and within the community.

Annette Sanderson also stated that document on the roles and responsibilities of Board members was a great idea but believes that a discussion about how much a Board member should give should be between the Board member and the Board president, not printed in a document for distribution to prospective Board members.

Ms. Montañez stated that as new Board members are recruited there would be a conversation with that individual that would help alleviate the concern for the dollar amount. In addition to that amount there may be other things that board members can provide such as personal or professional services or make a connection to a funding source.

President Davis said that other organizations list a suggested amount on their board governance documents. And Shawn Wooden suggested that there was no real difference between asking a board member for a minimum amount orally and writing it down because it is just a suggested amount and not required for board participation.

President Davis thanked the Board for the discussion and would consider their suggestions as we continue to build the Library's development effort.

9. Other Business

The Library's confidentiality policy was not discussed as planned. It will be scheduled for the next Board meeting in February.

The meeting adjourned at 2:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Poland, Acting Secretary