

**Minutes of the Meeting  
of the Board of Directors  
HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY  
March 5, 2009**

Present: Gregory Davis, Anne Melissa Dowling, Stephen Goddard, Connie Green, William Large, Jackie Lilly, Brad Noel, Cynthia Reik, Romulo Samaniego, Geraldine Sullivan, and Carlos Valinho

Also present: Jenny Benedict, Matt Poland, Interim Directors, Office of the Chief Librarian

Absent: Michael Gannon, Thea Montanez, Paul Shipman, Enid Rey, Annette Sanderson

1. President Geraldine Sullivan called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

**Board Action:** Motion to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2009 meeting was made, seconded, and approved.

3. Announcements and Communications

Matt Poland announced that the Library had received a letter from Hartford 2000 conveying their strong support and appreciation for Hartford Public Library's continued involvement with Hartford 2000 and its work with the community and neighborhoods.

Jenny Benedict thanked Cynthia, Jacqui, Annette and Connie for attending the opening night of *To Kill a Mockingbird* at Hartford Stage. She reported that the show is such a success for Hartford Stage that they will be commissioning a stage adaptation of next year's The Big Read selection, *Tom Sawyer*. She stated that the Library would send condolences to Hartford Stage on the passing of Horton Foote. Horton Foote's last public interview took place on January 12, 2009 as the Kick-off for The Big Read, and will air in the near future on CPTV.

4. President's Report

President Sullivan reported that she continues to hear positive comments about improvements at the Library, and thanked Matt Poland and Jenny Benedict for their leadership. In particular, Steve Goode has noted the change in staff morale and customer behavior at the Downtown Library. Sullivan also conveyed two suggestions from Dara Ribicoff: to add a suggestion box at all locations, and to increase branch hours.

5. Committee Reports

### *Finance*

Anne Melissa Dowling gave the Finance Committee report in Paul Shipman's absence. She stated that the committee had received an update on the Capital Campaign Fund, including upcoming projects. Poland confirmed the outstanding expenditures, as well as gave a recap of projects that will still need to be addressed, such as the tread on the stairs and re-upholstery of chairs. Benedict clarified the "punch list" that is still outstanding on the completion of the building, which is awaiting a resolution between the City, the bonding company and the contractor.

Dowling confirmed that the 2009-2010 Budget had been submitted to the City. Benedict reported that Rick Galarza had commended the library on the excellence of the submission. Poland added that the Library was not scheduled for a meeting with the Mayor; however, Galarza thought the Library should have that opportunity and a meeting will be scheduled within the week. Sullivan and Greg Davis agreed to meet with the Mayor and will call to schedule a meeting.

Dowling reported that the Endowment Fund has been negatively impacted due to the economic downturn, although results have performed slightly better than the market. She conveyed that the committee will review the investment strategy and the management contract as a matter of best practice to assess if other options would serve the portfolio better.

Poland gave the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Budget report. Both personnel and non-personnel are slightly under expended as of the end of the quarter. Some categories, such as Library Materials, are below projections due to orders outstanding and delays in invoicing. Personnel Services are less due to unfilled positions and projections regarding retirements that were anticipated earlier in the fiscal year. Expenditures will be closely monitored through the next quarter to assure that the Library is balanced at year end.

Poland presented updates for two branches: Dwight and Blue Hills. The Interim Directors will meet with Tony Matta, the DPW manager assigned to the project, and the architects to resolve the various issues raised at the Parkville NRZ meeting and voiced by Councilman Ritter. The issues all appear manageable, including the location of the bathrooms; the doorway between the senior center and the Library; and the selection of trees for the plaza. At the Blue Hills Branch, the landlord has completed the remediation of the building's basement. The results of the air quality will be released by March 16 and the branch re-opened, presuming a positive outcome. Poland will release an update to key stakeholders on the progress.

### *Strategic Planning*

Jackie Lilly reported that the committee recommended approval of the 2009-2012 Technology Plan. She stated that the work that the committee had requested to simplifying the plan and provide more information about its implementation had been completed to the committee's satisfaction. Benedict presented a report of the Plan,

pointing out the required components of the plan; the process used to create it; the structure of the goals; and an overview of the funding sources.

**Board Action:** Motion to approve the 2009-2012 Technology Plan was made, seconded and approved unanimously.

#### 6. Interim Directors' Report

Benedict gave an overview of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Strategic Performance Report. She stated that the reduction in library hours at all branch locations have negatively impacted objectives that support Hartford Public Library's mission. System wide, the Library was open a total of 113 hours a week less than the previous year, and 45 hours less than the previous quarter. Objectives that help people participate in our democratic society continued to see growth primary due to the presidential election, and also because most of this activity occurs through the Downtown Library. Free and open access to information and ideas was diminished due to the loss of hours. While visits to the Downtown Library have stabilized with 118,000 per quarter, all branches except Goodwin experienced declines. Losses in PC use at the branches was somewhat offset by increases at the Downtown Library with adults altering their visiting patterns.

A recent user survey of the Downtown Library revealed that 40% of visitors come to the Downtown Library to use a computer, 20% to borrow a book, 13% to borrow a DVD or CD, 11% to ask for information, and 10% to return library materials. A presentation of the survey will be made at the June meeting.

Benedict reported that the loss of branch hours has had its most significant impact on objectives that promote and support literacy and learning. In particular, Youth Services have experienced a triple effect with staff reductions, the loss of a grant funded program, and the reductions in branch hours. Losses are evident across the board from the numbers of programs, attendance at them, materials' circulation, as well as reading guidance, homework assistance, and questions asked. The impact to Adult Services was less dramatic.

Sullivan expressed concern over the loss of services to Youth. Benedict added that the summer is particularly distressing because 5,400 summer lunches were served last year at our locations and six of those locations would not be able to do so this year because of the restriction in hours. After discussion of the continued impact of reduced income for 2009-2010, Sullivan requested that the Interim Directors prepare a statement about the losses and funding needs so that Board members can advocate for more revenue.

#### 7. New Business

Benedict requested that a date be set for the Annual Corporator's meeting and presented the options of three Thursdays in October.

**Board Action:** Motion to approve Thursday, October 15 for the Corporator's meeting was made, seconded and approved unanimously.

Sullivan announced that the Library had received a request to provide office space for the Registrar of Voters, Urania Pettit. Poland clarified that the request had been made by Clarence Corbin, Director of the Department of Public Works. He conveyed that Corbin had assured him that this would not be setting a precedent that would be followed by further requests, and Pettit had stated that she did not require support services. Poland acknowledged that the Library did wish to be cooperative with the City, but that this would inevitably be disruptive for staff. Goddard expressed concern about the partisan nature of the request and its appropriateness for the Library. Large advised that space should be allocated to accommodate the request.

**Board Action:** Motion to offer some space for the Registrar of Voters was made, but not seconded.

Sullivan will convey the Boards' opinion to the Mayor.

#### 8. Other Business

Benedict requested approval for the Holiday Calendar 2009-2010.

**Board Action:** Motion to approve the Holiday Calendar 2009-2010 was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenny Benedict, Acting Secretary