

**Minutes of the Meeting  
of the Board of Directors  
HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY  
September 3, 2009**

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

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

Absent: Michael Gannon, Thea Montanez, Brad Noel, and Enid Rey

1. President Geraldine Sullivan called the meeting to order at 1:25 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

**Board Action:** Motion to approve the minutes of the March 5, 2009 meeting was made, seconded, and approved.

3. Announcements and Communications

Sullivan introduced Chief Development Officer Mary Crean to the Board.

4. President's Report

Sullivan expressed appreciation for the calm summer due to good management of the Library. She commended the Interim Directors and library staff for the success of "One Big Summer Night." She reported that she had received many compliments on the event, including the attractive displays and the inclusion of books for the silent auction.

She expressed concern about the Library on Wheels, which once again has had days of non-operation during the summer. She stated that the value of the service is high in the community because many residents depend on it. She requested that replacing the bookmobile be a high priority for the Library this year.

5. Nominating Committee Update

In the absence of nominating committee members, Matt Poland and Sullivan gave the report. Poland stated that three Board members' terms are up for renewal this year: Steve Goddard, Cynthia Reik, and Annette Sanderson. He announced that both Goddard and Sanderson have agreed to serve another term, while Reik has graciously agreed to step down so that the Board can fulfill its quota for Hartford residents. Reik will continue her long service to the library by serving on the Hartford History Advisory

Council. Sullivan commended Reik for her contribution over the years and the Board expressed their appreciation with applause.

By the next Board meeting, the nominating committee will have a slate of officers to recommend for the Corporators meeting.

#### 6. Interim Directors Report

Poland reported on the success of the summer lunch program, which the Library was able to provide due to the additional appropriation from City Council. The Library served over 8,000 meals to Hartford children this year, which is quadruple the number served since four years ago. He mentioned that the Library's program is open to all children on a walk-in basis; no registration is required like with other youth service provider sites in the City.

Poland commented on the fiscal section of the report. He stated that the City has not yet reconciled the year-end figures due to still lacking information on medical benefits, and pension, as well accounting for the State Grants. He assured the Board that the Library is under budget, and may even have a surplus. He said that the finalized report would be presented to the finance committee later in September.

Jenny Benedict drew attention to the Hartford LEARN project, a new public service launched in July. Hartford LEARN is a referral and assessment network for adults in need of literacy services formed in collaboration with public and private nonprofit organizations in Hartford, including Hartford Public Schools--Adult Ed., Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), Literacy Volunteers of Greater Hartford, and the Community Renewal Team (CRT). The network takes the traditional referral function of the library and moves it into a web-based interactive format where other agencies can participate. Early evaluation results showed that 70% of the adults who entered the system completed an assessment in comparison to a benchmark study that demonstrated as high as 57% of adults are lost in the referral process. The network has provisions for following up with the 30% who have yet to complete an assessment.

Benedict announced that the One Book for Greater Hartford author event will take place on Friday, October 23. Junot Diaz, the author of *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, is this year's speaker. She also invited Board members to the 8<sup>th</sup> annual Connecticut Book Awards on September 20. Bessy Reyna will be receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award, and Tomie dePaola will be the keynote speaker.

Large asked about the level of awareness among library staff about Hartford LEARN and that Hartford Public Library had created something new. Benedict recounted that one professional librarian had spontaneously said "groundbreaking" during an all staff meeting, and that the professional librarians are aware of the innovation. Poland pointed out that while Hartford Public Library was instrumental in the project that Hartford LEARN is not solely our invention. Benedict clarified the leadership partner structure between Hartford Public Library and Literacy Volunteers of Greater Hartford. She stated

that evaluation would be conducted throughout the fall, and then a public release will be made.

Davis asked about safety and security at the Downtown Library. Poland reported that sixteen incidents were reported in the 4Q at the Downtown Library, which is comparable to other quarters. None of the incidents were significant. He stated that the primary improvements are in the coordinated effort and in the professional execution of the staff's response to incidents.

Davis asked about progress on the Albany Branch. Benedict reported that the plan is very close to being presented to the Board. The design phase is almost complete, following which the first Planning meeting will take place to ensure that the project will come in under budget. Once the plan is viable, it will be presented to the Mayor and then to the Library Board for approval, hopefully at the October meeting. The design should then go out for community review in late October. Ground-breaking is scheduled for May 2010 and completion for January 2011.

Reik asked about closing the Arch Street entrance of the Downtown Library. Poland reported that the entrance is not creating a security problem, and that the cameras and surveillance are sufficient protection. Sullivan asked about the Main Street entrance desk. Poland stated that the plan for the new service desk would be presented at the next Board meeting and that a single station would be near the Arch Street entrance. Reik expressed concern about the theft of materials. Benedict clarified that security gates at the entrances are part of the service desk plan, and that high theft items are being tagged, including new books and reference books. Sullivan requested an update on security at the October meeting.

Sullivan asked about the handicapped access. Poland clarified that the door is working.

#### 7. New Business

**Board Action:** Motion for Interim Directors to receive incremental raises on an annual basis was moved, seconded and approved.

Large announced that the Board had appointed a select committee to meet with each Interim Director. He will schedule them through Andrea Figueroa.

#### 8. Old Business

Sullivan requested that the schedule for committee meetings be sent out to all Board members.

The meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jenny Benedict, Acting Secretary