



**Board Meeting  
Russell Library Hubbard Room  
Tuesday, April 16, 2019**

**Present:** Trustees Becker, Berlind, Duggan, Ford, Fulton, Murdock, Nelson (7:00), and Zawisky; Library Director Burkey; Friends President Howard Rulnick; Marguerite Katz

**Excused:** Trustees Hadley, Norwood, Wisneski, Russell

1. **Call to Order:** Acting President Becker called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.  
**Mission Moment:** Trustee Berlind spoke about the lively atmosphere at the well-attended gala opening of the Week of the Young Child Preschool Art Show. Mayor Dan Drew and Superintendent of Schools Michael Conner were in attendance. In addition to admiring their artwork, children were busy at a drawing table, dancing and playing rhythm instruments with Miss Laura, and enjoying the company of Peppa Pig. Attendees were dressed festively, shopping at the Friends' book sale, and signing up for membership with Howard Rulnick, Friends president.
2. **Public Session/Comment:** Marguerite Katz, a Wesleyan student, explained that she was involved in an anthropology research project on how libraries build community and was attending a board meeting to find out how the trustees shape the library's mission. Howard Rulnick, President of the Friends of Russell Library, mentioned that the Friends' recent April book sale had earned \$1,112.10, \$100 more than in April a year ago.
3. **Approval of Minutes:** It was moved (Trustee Berlind) and seconded (Trustee Zawisky) to amend the agenda to include a vote on the April 10 Special Meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously. It was moved (Trustee Murdock) and seconded (Trustee Duggan) to approve the minutes of 3 meetings: those of February 14, March 19, and April 10. The motion passed unanimously.
4. **Administration Report** – Ramona Burkey, Library Director

**Programs and Services**

- Our new website went live on Thursday, April 11. It boasts a cleaner and more mobile-friendly design. Kudos to Mary Dattilo for her many hours of hard work designing it, and to Deb Barberi for orchestrating the technical details of the changeover.

**Personnel**

- Our new Manager of Borrowing and Discovery, Amy Slowik, will begin work on Monday, April 22.
- Please welcome our new security guard, Kim Peterson!

**Facilities**

- The LED lighting retrofit project is nearly complete; we are just waiting for a few fixtures for the Lobby to arrive.
- Our new wireless network is up and running. It provides seamless wireless access for staff and public users throughout the building and is a huge improvement over our old "Small Office/Home Office" (SOHO) setup.

### **Financial**

- Our budget workshop with the Common Council will take place on Monday, April 15 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at City Hall. All Board members are welcome and encouraged to attend and show support for our City funding.

### **Policies and Planning**

- We had a very successful first Board Strategic Planning session on the evening of Wednesday, April 10, at the Middletown Senior Center. We discussed aspirations for the community, how libraries can help achieve those aspirations, and how “People” and “Place” fit in. We will be scheduling a follow-up session again soon.



*Russell Library Board of Trustees members and library staff at the April 10, 2019 Strategic Planning session*

### **Community Engagements/Meetings**

- CDBG Grant presentation
- Chamber of Commerce March Madness event
- Chamber Women’s Business Alliance 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting
- Middlesex United Way
- Friends of the Wesleyan Library
- City Department Heads
- Common Council Questions to Directors
- Chamber of Commerce Central Business Bureau
- CT Library Association Board
- Monthly meeting with Friends President Howie Rulnick

### **Friends of the Library**

- The Friends continue to do a wonderful job of supporting the library. The Lobby Book Sale raised more than \$330 in March. Be sure to join or renew your Friends membership today!

## **5. Old Business:**

- a. Due to improper noticing of the March 19 meeting, it is necessary to re-vote the election of Trustee Wisneski as President. It was moved (Trustee Ford) and seconded (Trustee Fulton) that Eamonn Wisneski be elected president. The motion passed unanimously.
- b. The nominating committee noted that the Board is still in need of a candidate for vice-president.

## **6. New Business:**

- a. Gail Thompson-Allen: Gail Thompson-Allen, Director of Programming and Community Engagement, gave an overview of the work of her department. She praised department staff

members Rolande Duprey, Sue Honer, Mary Healey, Ann Smith, Christy Billings, and Bob Carlson for their work on cultural programming, graphic design and publicity, room scheduling, grant writing, and job and career programming. She mentioned the library's involvement in local and national events such as school library week, teen tech day, parades, cruise night, and Holiday on Main. Areas covered by Programming and Community Engagement include cultural literacy, book discussions, health and wellness, jobs and careers, and community and civic engagement.

- b. Discussion of the FY 2019-2020 Russell Company Budget: Treasurer Becker explained that the Finance Committee at its April 11 meeting had approved the budget for recommendation to the Board. Library Director Burkey explained that there is an increase in the professional development line because next year's Public Library Conference will be held in Nashville TN and she hopes several staff members will attend. There may be a need for higher consulting fees to carry out the strategic planning work, and money may be shifted from other lines if necessary.
- c. Motion to Approve the FY2019-2020 Russell Company Budget: It was moved (Trustee Nelson) and seconded (Trustee Berling) that the FY 2019-2020 Russell Company Budget be approved. The motion passed unanimously.
- d. Staff Professional Development Dates: Library Director Burkey presented a schedule of 4 Fridays in the coming 13 months when she proposes to close the library to the public from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. to engage staff in trainings for diversity education, active shooter drills, customer service, dealing with challenging behaviors, etc. There was a discussion of extending the closing hours to accommodate longer trainings if necessary.
- e. Motion to accept proposal for library closing: It was moved (Trustee Duggan) and seconded (Trustee Ford) to accept the proposal for closing the library for 4 or 5 mornings beginning May 17, 2019 to accommodate staff professional development. The motion passed unanimously.
- f. Holiday schedule added to agenda: It was moved (Trustee Duggan) and seconded (Trustee Ford) to add an agenda item to approve the FY 2019-2020 holiday closing schedule for the library. The motion passed unanimously. It was moved (Trustee Duggan) and seconded (Trustee Ford) to approve the FY 2019-2020 holiday closing schedule for the library. The motion passed unanimously.

## 7. **Committee Reports and Recommendations:**

- a. Finance & Audit Committee Report: Trustee Becker reported that the Finance Committee met on March 21 and April 11 to discuss the audit report and the FY2019-2020 budget; in addition, Bob Marcinek from Essex Financial Services met with the committee to go over the performance of the endowment. In the Company budget, there remains \$33,000 that can be withdrawn from the endowment as it is needed to finish this fiscal year. The city budget has spent 76% of the total at 75% of the fiscal year. The recent growth of the endowment has recovered \$10,000 of the \$20,000 withdrawn recently for this year's company budget expenses.
- b. Policy Committee Report: The committee has not met in the past month.
- c. Facility Committee Report: Trustee Nelson, Chair, had nothing to report.
- d. Human Resources Committee Report: Trustee Zawisky, Chair, reported that the committee will have an evaluation form for the board to use in evaluating Director Burkey's performance by June.
- e. Nominating Committee Report: Chair of the Nominating Committee Duggan reported that they are still looking for a vice-president to step forward and that they need to consult the policy committee to see if it possible for Trustee Becker to return to the board.
- f. Strategic Plan: The full board will meet again on April 22 to finish up the work begun at the April 10 Special Meeting.

8. **Adjournment:** It was moved (Trustee Ford) and seconded (Trustee Nelson) to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

**Next special board meeting:** Monday, April 22, 2019, at 6:00 p.m.

**Next regular board meeting:** Tuesday, May 21, 2019, 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Wendy Berlind*

Wendy Berlind, Secretary