

**Town of Hamden
Library Board Commission Meeting
Minutes of a Regular Meeting
Tuesday, April 13th, 2021
7:00 pm**

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Minutes

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

Also In Attendance: Melissa Canham-Clyne, Library Director

1. **Call to Order:** Chairwoman Glover called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm.
2. **Approval of Past Minutes**
 - a. Ms. Hatkin made a motion to accept the minutes from the March 9th, 2021 meeting. Ms. Esposito seconded and all were in favor.
 - b. Chairwoman Glover posed the question about potentially meeting in person for the May meeting. All members are fully vaccinated, or will be fully vaccinated by the May meeting. The substitute clerk, Liana Paglia, will not have received her second vaccine shot until after the May meeting.
3. **Correspondence:** N/A
4. **Public/ Media Comments on Agenda:** N/A
5. **Meet the Staff**
 - a. No staff were available to meet with the commission.
6. **Old Business**
 - a. Financial: (Ms. Canham-Clyne had previously sent the commission some financial documents.)
 - i. Library Budget FY 2020/21 Update
 1. Chairman Glover asked her if there was any information to highlight. Ms. Canham-Clyne noted that the library is on target with their current salary/expenditures budget. As this was a popular publishing quarter, the library materials budget will be used up by the end of the fiscal year. Monies were transferred from the salaries budget to the printer/copier fund. The purchasing department is supposed to be investigating leasing options. Ms. Canham-Clyne is awaiting a response.

Ms. Canham-Clyne clarified that the gift fund quarterly report is covering the period of January 1, 2021 through March 31, 2021. She reported the income for the year at \$8,759.19. A large portion of the income is from the thrift books sale. There was a large payout from the Community Foundation. Another important contributor was fine income. Ms. Canham-Clyne clarified that even though Hamden participates in fine forgiveness, some towns do not. Therefore, if an overdue book, originally taken from a non-Hamden library, is returned to a Hamden library, Hamden receives that fine money. Ms. Canham-Clyne noted that many of the donations are specifically intended to aid the hotspots in the library.

- ii. Library budget FY 2021- 2022
 - 1. Ms. Canham-Clyne has nothing to report at this time, as the budget is currently up for deliberation.
- b. Status of Library during Covid Update
 - i. Ms. Canham-Clyne announced that the Miller library will be partially reopening on 4/19/21 at 1pm. The library will be open to the public Monday through Friday from 1-4 pm. The Town will be providing a security guard during these times. The guard will screen each patron; this will involve a temperature check and a medical short form/ questionnaire. Ms. Canham-Clyne went on to say that 14 public computers, as well as two internet express computers have been distanced.

Quinnipiac University had previously loaned Miller Library two booths. Ms. Canham-Clyne noted that they are very useful for interviews and providing a quiet place to study. Quinnipiac advised her to keep both booths, as they are too difficult to remove.

Ms. Canham-Clyne noted that while there is no official time limit for in person visits, long stays will not be encouraged. The furniture has been stored for this reason. Mr. Kuchuk asked how many patrons can be in the library at one time, to which Ms. Canham-Clyne responded 20 patrons. Ms. Hatkin noted that the North Haven library gives each patron a 30 minute time limit. Ms. Canham-Clyne agreed that generally, patrons want a quick indoor experience. Ms. Fiss commented that the library may face criticism for not remaining open after 5pm. Ms. Canham-Clyne responded that the Town can only afford to have security during the hours of 1-4pm, Monday through Friday. She explained that it is too expensive to hire the security guards for weekend hours, but all town buildings will have at least one stationed guard during the week. The library will not be taking appointments. Ms. Canham-Clyne has spoken to other library directors, who have had issues with an appointment-based system.

Ms. Caanham-Clyne noted due to the shortage of security guards, the other branches will not open to the public, but will maintain contactless pickup. She also noted that due to staffing logistical issues, it is not realistic to provide contactless pickup when the library is open to the public. Mr. Kuchuk agreed that it is best to keep the two operations separate. Ms. Esposito questioned where the patrons' temperatures would be taken. Ms. Canham-Clyne said the security guard will be stationed inside, by the Thornton Wilder statue. Ms. Esposito asked for

some clarification regarding the monitoring of the patrons. Ms. Canham-Clyne explained that the maximum amount of patrons allowed in the library is 20. Upon entry, each patron is given a relatively large visitor's pass. Upon exiting, the pass is returned to the front desk, then to the security guard, to be given to the next patron. The patrons can enter the library between 1-4 pm Monday through Friday. Patrons will not have a time limit. Ms. Esposito questioned if an announcement would be made if the library is at full capacity and there are patrons in line. Ms. Canham-Clyne said if necessary, "diplomatic" announcements would be made.

Chairwoman Glover concluded by saying if there was anything the board could do to help with the reopening, to let them know. She was quite impressed with the staff's ability to reorganize the library to comply with Covid protocols. Ms. Canham-Clyne expressed her gratitude in having the in-service stay to prepare for the reopening. She had almost 100% attendance, with the exception of those not fully vaccinated.

Ms. Fiss questioned the protocol if and when a patron arrives at the library without a mask. Ms. Canham-Clyne commented that the security guard will have some disposable masks available, but generally, patrons must have a mask to gain entrance. She affirmed that numerous signs in the entrance area outline the requirements.

Ms. Esposito asked if all of the staff are working. Ms. Canham-Clyne explained that staff have been working in staggered shifts, in an effort to ensure social distancing. Some staff are able to work at home, purchasing books, working on grants, and developing programs. Ms. Canham-Clyne has extensively documented the shift arrangements during the pandemic, for any commissioners who wish to view it. Chairwoman Glover noted the historical and archival importance of documenting how the library and staff were affected by the pandemic.

c. Charter Revision

- i. Chairwoman Glover previously listened to the Charter Revision commission deliberations about other boards/commissions. One Charter Revision commissioner questioned the governing aspect of the Library Board commission. Overall, the Library Board commissioners expressed some hesitancy regarding the efficacy of the group. Chairwoman Glover noted that she will continue to check the charter revision webpage for any updates.

d. Advocacy: Library Giving Day, April 7, 2021

- i. Ms. Canham-Clyne had modest hopes for Library Giving Day. The library made a few announcements and issued some bookmarkers. The initial goal of \$700 was surpassed. As of this meeting, \$1200 has been donated thus far, and several additional donations have been promised. All donations go into the gift fund. Ms. Canham-Clyne noted that the majority of donations were made via Paypal and online, as opposed to the more traditional checks. She did send thank-you notes to the donors and asked the commissioners if they would be interested in sending

their own as well. Chairwoman Glover and the rest of the commissioners enthusiastically agreed.

e. Status of Associate Director Position

- i. Ms. Canham-Clyne gave an overview of the interview process for the position. Three candidates were interviewed by a panel consisting of Ms. Canham-Clyne, the Library Director, Ms. Julie Smith, the Acting Director of Community Services, and Mr. Don Nevall. Each candidate had to submit a writing sample prior to the interview, which lasted 90 minutes. Ms. Canham-Clyne acknowledged that each candidate has a very unique skillset, however she does feel one individual is better suited for the position. The final, albeit tedious step in the hiring process, is the approval of the Civil Service Commission.

f. Saturday Holidays 2021

- i. [Please note, a document Ms. Canham-Clyne previously sent to commissioners petitioned for the library to close on the following Saturdays: May 29th, July 3rd, September 4th, and January 1st]. Chairwoman Glover asked Ms Canham-Clyne why she felt it necessary to close on these specific Saturdays. Ms. Canham-Clyne attributed the need to several reasons, namely staffing logistics. Firstly, one part time branch position, and one full time LTA position were eliminated due to budget cuts. Both positions were of significant help on weekends. Secondly, Ms. Canham-Clyne expects a majority of staff to be using their legitimately earned vacation/personal days over the next several months, specifically, on the weekends. Due to the staff contracts, vacation days must be used by June 30th, the end of the fiscal year. She is hopeful that next year will be “more normal,” especially after the vaccine rollout. She also is hopeful to regain the lost positions mentioned above.

Ms. Esposito vehemently opposed closing on Saturdays. She acknowledged the staffing concerns, but is sympathetic to the fact that the patrons have been unable to physically visit the library for over a year. Ms. Fiss steadfastly agreed with Ms. Esposito, and added that the public should be able to enter the library on those Saturdays. She suggested closing one day during the week, to facilitate opening on the Saturdays in question.

Ms. Canham-Clyne clarified that the library will not be open to the public on any Saturday between mid-April through July 3rd, as the security guards are only contracted to work weekdays. Chairwoman Glover believes contactless services should be provided on the Saturdays in question, regardless. Ms. Fiss asked if it was possible to offer some sort of online programming, in an effort to soften the blow of being closed to the public on these Saturdays. Ms. Canham-Clyne replied that the wifi in the building is not reliable for the programming, and it would be difficult to plan with the expected weekend staff shortages. Chairwoman Glover clarified that all programming has been done at home by staff due to the insufficient wifi in the building. Ms. Canham-Clyne clarified that the issue with the Saturdays in question is having enough staff to run the programming from home and enough staff in the library to provide contactless services. Ms. Fiss commented that it is important to provide information about family friendly entertainment/programs. Ms. Canham-Clyne confirmed that information and

“grab and go” activities have been provided throughout the pandemic, specifically in the newsletter. Ms. Fiss thinks it important to advocate for a security guard on Saturdays, to meet the needs of Hamden families.

Chairwoman Glover reminded commissioners that the issue at hand is strictly whether or not to close on the four Saturdays in question. Ms. Fiss and Ms. Esposito agreed that the library should remain open for contactless services and prerecorded content, if staff shortages prevent live programming. Ms. Canham-Clyne emphasized that the staff is grateful for the commission’s support throughout the pandemic. She is hopeful that next year, the logistics will be less difficult to reconcile. Mr. Kuchuk was unsure of what the best course of action is.

Ms. Canham-Clyne clarified that it is unclear whether the contract with the security guards will be extended until September. Therefore, it is unclear how that will affect future Saturdays. Chairwoman Glover commented that she does not expect many, if any patrons to visit the library on January 1st, and is in favor of it being closed. Ms. Esposito wishes to revisit the January 1st closing, in the fall. The other commissioners agreed to vote about closing on January 1st at a later meeting. Ms. Esposito made a motion to remain open for contactless services and prerecorded programming on May 29th, July 3rd, and September 4th. Ms. Hatkin seconded. Chairwoman Glover abstained, but the rest of the commissioners were in favor.

7. New Business

- a. LTSA Grant: review RFP and comments
 - i. Chairwoman Glover noted that Ms. Canham-Clyne’s report explained the proposal in detail. Ms. Hatkin asked how the consultant, Ms. Sullivan would be paid. Chairwoman Glover reminded commissioners that the accompanying document outlines that the consultant’s fee is \$15,000 and \$5,000 will be funded from grant monies. She added that the remaining \$10,000 would come from the gift fund. Ms. Hatkin suggested contacting Wallingford and West Hartford, to see how Ms. Sullivan performed. Ms. Canham-Clyne agreed it was a good idea to check references. Ms. Hatkin asked if it was even necessary to hire a consultant. Chairwoman Glover said hiring a consultant is best practice, especially with devising the strategic focus plan. Ms. Esposito questioned if the \$15,000 fee is typical of this type of project. Ms. Canham-Clyne assured the commissioners that the proposed fee is reasonable; typically this project can range from \$20,000-\$25,000. She also vouched for Ms. Sullivan’s skillset and knowledge of Hamden. She explained that only one consultant submitted an RFP. Ms. Hatkin asked about the duration of the contract. Ms. Canham-Clyne said the contract will last six months. Throughout the six months, the consultant will help develop conversations, complete community need assessments, write up reports, which could be used to leverage budgetary negotiations.

Mr. Kuchuk questioned the deadline and if the consultant is a necessary requirement for grant eligibility. Ms. Canham-Clyne explained that the grant application needs to be in by 4/22/21 and that the state now requires the hiring of a consultant, to ensure that the grant funds are used properly. Chairwoman

Glover offered her personal testimony as to the benefit of hiring Ms. Sullivan. Mr. Kuchuk made a motion to hire the consultant for the assessment project. Ms. Fiss seconded, and all were in favor. Ms. Hatkin made a motion to use \$10,000 from the gift fund to hire Ms. Sullivan to complete the community assessment project. Ms. Esposito seconded, and all were in favor. Ms. Esposito asked Ms. Canham-Clyne if she felt Hamden was likely to receive this grant, and if so when will she know. Ms. Canham-Clyne strongly believes the library will receive the grant, and she would be notified sometime in May.

b. Policy Review: Social Media Privacy Policy

- i. Ms. Canham-Clyne explained that a staff member is currently creating a draft policy for review by the commission at a later date. Mr. Kuchuk asked if the documents would be implemented into the manual, which Chairwoman Glover confirmed.

c. Volunteers (Bookstore)

- i. Ms. Canham-Clyne explained that volunteers have not been allowed into the library throughout the pandemic, but she is open to changing that. She outlined the challenges in opening the bookstore, namely the poor ventilation and the inability to provide separate in/out pathways. She proposed curating a book sale by the circulation desk. It is difficult to accommodate social distancing and other Covid protocols in the History Room. The Garden Club would like to resume tending to the library plants. Ms. Canham-Clyne suggested allowing the Garden Club to volunteer during contactless hours, when the patrons are not allowed into the library. Chairwoman Glover asked for some clarification regarding the logistics of the History Room. Ms. Canham-Clyne explained that volunteers typically only visit the library when the archivist is there, on Tuesdays from 12-4 pm. The room is large enough to house two other, socially distanced, volunteers. It would not affect the library capacity during in-person hours, as generally the patrons do not visit the third floor. If a patron did wish to enter the History room, a volunteer would have to exit. In regards to the bookstore, three volunteers can be inside during contactless hours, as there are three rooms. Ms. Hatkin made a motion to allow the garden club and bookstore volunteers to work during contactless hours, as long as they are socially distanced and adhere to the Covid protocols. Ms. Esposito seconded, and all were in favor. Mr. Kuchuk made a motion to allow the History Room volunteers to work during the in-person library hours, as long as they are socially distanced and adhere to the Covid protocols. Ms. Hatkin seconded, and all were in favor.

8. Library Director's Comments

- a. Ms. Canham-Clyne was excited to announce that Brundage will be getting new carpeting with capital monies. Therefore, the in-person enrichment programs can be held there. She was recently made aware that the Miller roof suffered damage from the last big storm/hurricane. She explained that the tornado emergency fund will likely be used for repairs. Ms. Canham-Clyne also mentioned that the history room may have a mold problem. Ms. Fiss emphasized the importance of identifying and addressing this issue, and suggested the use of a dehumidifier. Ms. Canham-Clyne suggested a professional inspection of the archives collection for the presence of mold. Ms. Hatkin made a motion to hire a professional to inspect the collection for mold. Ms. Fiss and all others were in favor. Ms. Canham-Clyne agreed to provide quotes at the next meeting.

9. Executive Session: N/A

10. Adjournment: Ms. Hatkin made a motion to adjourn at 9:02 pm. Ms. Esposito seconded, and all were in favor.

Submitted by: Liana Paglia, Substitute Commission Clerk