



RUSSELL
LIBRARY

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123 Broad Street
Middletown, CT 06457
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russelllibrary.org

**Annual Meeting of the Russell Library Company
Virtual Zoom Meeting 6:00 p.m.
Monday, June 22, 2020**

- I. Call to Order:** President of the Board of Trustees Wisneski called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.
- II. Public Session/Comments:** There were no comments from the public.
- III. Approval of Minutes from the December 2019 Special Meeting:** President Wisneski asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 11 Special Meeting; Debby Shapiro so moved and the motion, seconded by Diane Rubacha, passed unanimously.
- IV. Welcoming Remarks:** President Wisneski welcomed the members of the Russell Library Company and thanked them for attending the first ever Russell Library Company Zoom meeting. He mentioned that the library's strategic planning process has been slowed by the COVID-19 pandemic but that progress is still being made.
- V. Year in Review: Annual Highlights and Aspirations:** Director Burkey began by thanking the Board, volunteers, Friends, and staff for their hard work. She noted especially that Assistant Directors Dattilo and Doyle have worked diligently to update the library website and increase on-line programming. A video crafted by Trustee Duggan was shown, featuring snippets of board members talking about why they serve, and including snapshots of patrons involved in library programs as well as drone shots of the library façade and the view towards the Connecticut River. Library Director Burkey then presented a slide show of the eventful year 2019-20. Notable events included success in receiving grants, the purchase of a Charlie Cart for food programs, the elimination of overdue fines, loaning mobile wi-fi hotspots, and enabling credit card payments. New staff members were hired and others were promoted. The Friends' book sorting space was cleaned, painted, and re-organized. Then: the coronavirus hit. Library service rapidly tilted to on-line resources. E-book and cloud activity increased dramatically, story times and book discussions took place on Zoom, and with the cooperation of Oddfellows Children's Theater, *A Midsummer Night's Stream* was offered to the community via Zoom. Social media engagement was up, and over 300 new library cards were issued after on-line applications. Staff, in addition to working remotely, sewed over 100 masks, made over 1,000 phone calls, and wrote 435 postcards in aid of the Senior Center effort to reach out to the elderly. Project READY was initiated to increase equity and access; curbside pick-up began June 8; the library was spruced up with new paint and carpets; and the network infrastructure is being overhauled in preparation for a new phone system. Plans for the future include: continual planning for restoring library access during the COVID pandemic; carrying out strategic planning; fund-raising; technology upgrades; improving the organizational structure of library staff; facilities assessment (a grant will be submitted for lobby improvements), and escalating racial equity work.



VI. New Business:

a. Executive Committee:

i. Board President Wisneski asked for a motion to accept the Executive Committee's recommendation to elect Alison Williams as a member of the Russell Library Company; Trustee Berlind so moved, and the motion, seconded by Trustee Atherton, was unanimously approved. Alison Williams is Wesleyan's Vice President for Equity and Inclusion, a former university professor of chemistry, and is a classically trained oboist.

ii. President Wisneski called for a motion to accept the recommendation of the Executive Committee to re-elect Company-appointed nominees Wendy Berlind and Bryan Skowera to the Russell Library Board of Trustees for new three-year terms through June 2023. Dane Santostefano so moved, and the motion, seconded by Trustee Nelson, passed with the abstention of Bryan Skowera.

iii. President Wisneski called for a motion to accept the recommendation of the Executive Committee to approve the nomination of Alison Williams as a Company-appointed trustee to fill the term vacated by the resignation of Trustee Murdock. Trustee Hadley so moved, and the motion, seconded by Trustee Atherton, passed unanimously.

- b. Finance Committee Update: Andrew Becker, Chair, reported that the closure of the library has not strained its budget and that the endowment is down somewhat due to recent stock market gyrations but that it is recovering.
- c. Governance Committee Update: Trustee Skowera, Chair, reported that the committee is working with library administration reviewing policy especially as it relates to any disaster or state of emergency, not just to the pandemic. The committee is also working on a formal orientation process for new board members.
- d. Strategic Planning Update: President Wisneski reported that he and co-chair Duggan plan to start again to gather community information in order to push the planning forward.

VII. Old Business: There were questions from the attendees. Trustee Skowera asked if Trustee Duggan's video would be shared on social media, and Director Burkey answered yes. Diane Santostefano asked if she should wait to share it until it is posed by the library; the answer was yes. Trustee Berlind reported on the success of the "Little Free Library" at the end of her driveway. Trustee Becker urged Company members to offer their suggestions and support for the library. Debby Shapiro welcomed Alison Williams to the Company and Board and offered to show her historical Middletown.

VIII. Adjournment: It was moved (Trustee Williams) and seconded (Trustee Nelson) to adjourn the meeting at 7:06 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.



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Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Berind

Wendy Berind, Secretary

Next Annual Meeting: June 15, 2021

Attendees

Allison, Stephan
Atherton, Kellin
Becker, Andrew
Berind, Wendy
Bochner, Mal
Burkey, Ramona
Chafee, Brandon
Dattilo, Mary
Doyle, Brandie
Duggan, Taneisha
Dutcher, Bob
Giglio, Mary
Hadley, Jennifer
Halpin, Myke
Halpin, Noelle
Johnson, Leith
Lawrence, Beverly
McNerney, Rosemary
Miller, Pam
Nelson, Steve
Omphrey, Clay
Rubacha, Diane
Santostefano, Diane
Shapiro, Debbie
Shaw, John F.
Skowera, Bryan
Tsahalis, Cate
Upgren, Joan
Williams, Allison
Wisneski, Eamonn
Zawisky, Tisha