

Director's Report to the Board of Agents

Silas Bronson Library

April 26, 2016

Raechel Guest, Director

FY17 Budget

The City of Waterbury is facing some fiscal challenges for the upcoming year. The Mayor's proposed budget includes a 1.99 mill increase; this was proposed prior to learning about the state cuts to municipalities. As a result, there is a possibility that the library's funding from the city will be decreased in the coming year. Since the city's allocation represents 95% of our operating budget, any decrease will have a significant impact.

It is vital that the library become more proactive in seeking additional sources of funding. We are overly dependent on government funding for our operations. The Friends of the Library plans to increase their fundraising efforts; the library's Board of Agents needs to do the same.

There are two main reasons for the Board of Agents to become more active in raising funds for the library:

1. Our municipal allocation does not provide enough funds for all of the services we should be offering;
2. If the city reduces our FY17 budget, we will have to cut back or eliminate existing services.

The Board's fundraising efforts should be focused on two goals: annual operational support and growing the endowment. A recent study found that the average annual fundraising for public libraries was approximately \$2 million, and the average public library fund was \$12.5 million.

Give Local

The Friends of the Silas Bronson Library are participating in the Connecticut Community Foundation's Give Local campaign on May 3-4. All donations to the Friends will help support the Library's operations. Donations must be made online during the 36 hour campaign period. Prizes are awarded throughout the campaign for various fundraising-related achievements. If you are on Facebook, like and share our information about Give Local.

Exterior Improvements

With the help of the city's Public Works Department, we have made the library's rear entrance more open and welcoming. The row of shrubs which hid the entrance from sight has been removed and a new seating area has been installed. Volunteers from UNICO will be refinishing the benches on the patio next month. Our Maintainers will sand the benches to prep them for the volunteers.

Online Presence

Our Facebook page is reaching more and more people. I ran a \$30 promotion for one week, publicizing our National Library Week programs. We gained 72 page likes during that period, for a total of 350. A short video posted during NLW has been viewed 1,808 times. Some of our civic and community leaders graciously posed for photos holding their Silas Bronson Library cards; those photos have been posted on our Facebook page as part of an effort to encourage people to sign up for a card.

"Share Your Story" Program

We have begun receiving stories from the public, sharing the ways in which the Bronson Library has had a positive impact on their lives. Stories have been sent to us through our website and in the mail. We will be posting them in our newsletter and online.

State Library Book Giveaway

The Connecticut State Library is consolidating their Middletown and Willimantic service centers. As a result, they are downsizing their collections and giving the excess books to public libraries for free. I picked up a couple of boxes' worth of books on Monday this week from Middletown, and I'll be going to Willimantic on Monday of next week to see what they have there. The "new" books will be added to our collections.

Patron Services

We have introduced a set of new informational brochures for the public, informing them of our services. Anyone who signs up for a new or renewed library card will receive a gift bag with the brochures, a Bronson Library bookmark, and a Bronson Library pencil.