

BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY
REPORT OF THE CITY LIBRARIAN
February 16, 2022

The library has received grants from the FCC's Emergency Connectivity fund to purchase laptops and hotspots, a grant from the CT Humanities for a microfilming project of rare newspapers, and a grant to continue a chess program at the North Branch.

An all-day Staff Development Day was held virtually on Friday, January 28. Staff benefitted from presentations by Lt. Grech, who discussed general safety while working, an AED (defibrillator) overview by our Cintas rep. Jackson Correia, and a PowerPoint presentation on keeping our workplace safe from biohazards. We will be following up with each presenter as we continue to offer First Aid & CPR Training for staff, update our Emergency Preparedness Plans and conduct various drills at all library locations. Staff presenters included Children's Librarian, Bina Williams who discussed evaluating library books for youth, and Teen Librarian, Adam Cleri, who led a live demonstration of Kahoot! – a mobile gaming program that can be used for interactive programming virtually or in-house. Staff also offered suggestions on how we can improve services to the public during a break session. Staff were overwhelming positive about this day.

As we work towards staffing Newfield Branch and replacing staff lost due to attrition over the past year, it has become clear that there is an immediate need for an MOU that gives the library the ability to use a two-signature form (see draft) to expedite what is an extremely slow process. In addition, it will be necessary to stipulate that the library will handle its own hiring process, from soliciting candidates to interviewing and selecting candidates. The library has proved to be very efficient in doing its own hiring, rather than relying on the City's HR department to lead this process and also deal with the many other departments needing to fill positions at this time. In September, the library requested permission to fill twenty-two positions, and to date we have only received nine approved requests. I have asked HR for copies of all approved forms for my records; note that I have not received any declined requests. With seven signatures required on a Permission to Hire Form, there are many opportunities for requests to be misplaced as they make their rounds for signatures. I am very concerned that we will be told the forms have expired, and whether the forms have been misplaced or declared expired, the process will have to be started over. I have less concerns about the purchasing process since communications between library staff with purchasing responsibilities and our buyer have improved over the year. Our efforts in securing an MOU from the city should focus on the hiring process and a document should be obtained post haste since the CAO cannot enforce anything in this matter without a document in hand. The library needs to maintain adequate staffing levels as we open two new branches this year and continue to deal with COVID-19.

Respectfully Submitted by
Elaine Braithwaite
City Librarian