**Friends of the West Haven Library Meeting Minutes 2/17/21**

In attendance: Colleen Bailie, Catherine Bushman, Pat Donnelly, Alan Olenick, Bill Heffernan, Kym Powe, Maureen Ulsamer, Sue Bonci, Andrea Mears, Angela Invernale

**President’s Report:** Five kits for the Paint Night Fundraiser have been purchased to be donated to children/families in the Graham room. We are still working with EveryLibrary and Friends are encouraged to attend the meeting Thurs 2/19 to discuss advocacy, budget, city council, and ways to try being “politically involved but not political”. An update was made to the Friends website to include an advocacy section, an infographic detailing how libraries get books into the hands of patrons, and a funding section showing a graph that depicts the drastic drops in our funding.

**Director’s Report:** WHPL had the awning installed in the back of the building and has received new furniture. Dividers we set up in the basement to create two privacy “study rooms”, one foe 2 people and the other for 4 people. These can be reserved by appointment only and are great areas to conduct our Tech Help appointments. We are exploring many possibilities to replace the Allingtown branch—looking at different spaces, plots of land, perhaps getting a bookmobile in the meantime. The VetNow and HelpNow software has been officially purchased. The library assessment suggested our collection could use a bit more care, but people are overall happy with the staff. We are doing more programming than other libraries, but our attendance is lower. Also, they deemed 3 library locations based on West Haven’s layout to effectively serve our whole community. It was made very clear that the library is being run extremely efficiently (our costs are approximately one third of that of comparable libraries that have a bigger budget than us). The requested budget for next fiscal year at $1.5 million which will allow us to maintain status quo, hire two new full timers, and increase library hours. We were able to operate at 1.2 million this year because of COVID—being closed for 3 months, fewer programs, and decreased library hours (this won’t work post-COVID).

**Membership Report:** Total of 113 members and 68 paid dues since July 1st. Total dues: $1063.67. VIA Annual Appeal didn’t do as well this year, but we received 42 donations via check for a total of $2695

**Treasurer’s Report:** Read and approved

Friends are purchasing banner for National Library Week (April 4th to 10th) to be hung near City Hall. April is also Military Saves month—great opportunity to boost VetNow, partner with the VA, and get some community engagement. Joe Weber is very involved with the military and is a great contact to have. When we *do* start thinking of a big annual fundraiser, we should think April. Friends are to send out two cards: a get well card for Cutris Hodgekins and a condolence card for Belinda Bass on the passing of her daughter. Paint Night fundraiser ad to be put in the paper; Friends do not need to write any sort of check—Picasso Parties deducts our costs from the total amount raised and will send us the check.