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Operating Funds Request FY 2024-2025

Mission Statement and Program Description

Goals and Purpose

Stamford History Center: A Resource for All of Stamford's Citizens

The Stamford Historical Society, Inc. d/b/a The Stamford History Center, the Municipal Historian of Stamford, is an educational and research institution, whose primary functions are to collect, preserve, conserve, interpret, and exhibit materials relating to Stamford, Connecticut and our region in order to engage all citizens in the telling of their stories.

The Stamford History Center ("SHC") seeks to serve all of the people of the Greater Stamford area through our educational programming, on-site events, exhibits and by making our resources as available as possible.

Educational Programming

SHC has resumed offering a variety of educational programs to the Stamford Public Schools at no charge. These programs designed in conjunction with the SPS Department of Teaching and Learning and with input from classroom teachers, are linked to the school curriculum and cover topics from one's understanding of the local community, the Colonial Period of Stamford and the ongoing history of immigration. The programs are especially targeted for the elementary school grades. The Center was awarded a number of grants in prior years enabling us to hire a part-time Educational Coordinator to oversee and administer these programs. The grants in the current year are below the costs of the program and we are relying on donations to supplement our funding. We intend to continue the program and will continue to seek out additional grants.

To provide a few highlights on this effort, during the prior school year 2023-2023, we offered three social studies enrichment programs to elementary students, based on grade level and curriculum:

- We presented our curriculum to children at 12 of 13 public elementary schools, one private school and one home school cooperative, which a total of 1600 children attended; teacher evaluations for our programs were very positive

For the school year 2023-2024, we have offered five social studies enrichment programs to address specific curricula (adding "Stamford's First People" about Stamford's Native American tribes; and "Our City of Immigrants" about the labor and industries that fueled the city's growth)

- At this writing we have/are scheduled to present programs at 11 of the 13 public elementary schools, many with multiple programs, and are on track to serve an estimated 1750 children this year; one teacher at Strawberry Hill School said “the curriculum meshed perfectly with our IB Inquiry curriculum about communities and was absolutely appropriate for 2nd grade.”
- 350 children will have toured the 1699 Hoyt Barnum house this year to experience colonial life.

On Site Events

SHC offers a number of events to the public during the course of each year. These include our “Haunted Stamford” program in October at the Hoyt-Barnum House, our annual Victorian Tea, the reading of the Declaration of Independence on the 4th of July and our spring Cozy Sunday talks and workshops. In addition, we have programs around our exhibit openings. SHC mounts an annual exhibit dealing with a different facet of Stamford’s History as well as mini-exhibits in our Halliday Gallery or Halls.

Resource Accessibility

SHC has gone to great lengths to make our resources available to the public. While our budget precludes our being open more than 3 days a week, all of our library materials have been linked to the catalog of the Ferguson Library. Anyone visiting our library will be helped in their research by one of our library aides at no charge. SHC volunteers help people doing genealogical research as well as those investigating the history of their homes. We also often help realtors with property histories. We also served all independent researchers and scholars who come to use our library. Our photo archives collection is also a mine of data and volunteers help patrons regularly with finding images.

Exhibits

SHC mounts one major exhibit in house annually, and we also at times have a secondary minor exhibit. Our current exhibit: *Keeping Stamford Healthy* highlights the history of medical practices in Stamford from 1641 to 1970. The exhibit includes loaned artifacts from individuals, objects from the museum collections, and photos drawn from our photo archives. In the past, SHC has mounted exhibits on Entertainment in the City, the history of WWII veterans of Stamford, Sports in Stamford, The Fabric of Stamford and Women in the Home and Community, and the histories of the Police and Fire Departments. SHC has also mounted off-site exhibits at the Ancient Order of Hibernians Hall, the Italian Center, the Palace Theater, the Ferguson Library and the Government

Center. We have also helped other organizations mount exhibits using objects loaned from our collections. In addition, we have repurposed areas within our building and now have permanent exhibits of portraits in our library annex, landscape paintings in our library and a special exhibit of the painting of Stamford artist Delos Palmer in our lobby area.

The Stamford History Center is just that, a Center for research by all from elementary school children working on a class project to long time Stamford residents researching their own pasts. SHC centers the community by preserving its past and engaging all citizens in the process of recording its history.

Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Operating Results

- Revenue increased by 41% due to higher tag sale revenue and recognition of deferred grants. The grants were used to offset Educational Expense and Operating Costs.
- Expenses were 9% higher than the previous year due to expenses of the Education Program.
- We recorded a small operating profit for the year, an improvement of \$25,500 from the previous year.
- We originally budgeted an Operating Loss of \$27,000 for the past year. The salary cost for the Education Director was lower than expected and Information Technology spending has been deferred until we can raise funds to support the spending.

Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Operating Budget and Forecast

- We are now projecting total revenue for the year 22% ahead of last year. We are planning on having a Fundraising Gala this year. Grant Income is expected to be lower and Tag Sales may not reach last year's level due to timing.
- Expenses are expected to be 34% higher than last year due to Gala Expense and Collection Expenses. Higher Collection Expense is due to conservation work done on significant documents in the collection that was only partly offset by grants.
- We expect an Operating Loss of \$17,000 for the year which is \$18,500 worse than the prior year.

2024/2025 Proposed Operating Budget

- The 2024-2025 Budget is roughly in line with our expected 2023-2024 results with the exception of the elimination of the one-time Collection Expense.
- Revenue Budget is 3% higher than 2023 projections due to small increases in some line items.
- Expenses are lower due to the above-mentioned reduction in Collection Expense to normal levels.
- The projection results in a small Operating Profit for the year.