

**CITY OF NORWALK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

ATTENDANCE: Moina Noor, Chair; Patsy Brescia, Vice Chair; Ralph Bloom, Alex Knopp, Mary Mann, Laurel Peterson, Haroldo Williams, Jannie Williams

ABSENT: Thomas Cullen

STAFF: Sherelle Harris, Library Director

OTHERS: Vladimir Mariano, Fairfield County Maker's Guild

This meeting was held via Zoom

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Noor called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

• July 11, 2024

**** MS. BRESCIA MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 11, 2024 MEETING.**

**** MS. PETERSON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 11, 2024 MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

• September 12, 2024

**** MS. BRESCIA MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 12, 2024 MEETING.**

**** MS. WILLIAMS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 12, 2024 MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There was no one from the public in attendance.

FAIRFIELD COUNTY MAKER'S GUILD:

Vladimir Mariano

Ms. Noor introduced Mr. Mariano, who is the President of the Fairfield County Maker's Guild. She said that Mr. Mariano had been invited to the meeting to speak about the programs.

Mr. Mariano said that his Guild moved in next to the Library. He spoke about the history of the Guild and how the group began. He said that for some time, they had met at various members' homes. He said that he had reached out to Chris Bradley, who was the Head Librarian at the time, and the Guild began to offer a variety of programs. In 2014, they acquired their own space until recently. They have just moved into 3 Belden Avenue. On Tuesdays, they have open nights where the members work on their projects.

Mr. Mariano spoke about the variety of tools such as laser cutters, vinyl cutters, sewing machines and 3D printers. On Open Nights, people can be working on a leather project while someone else crochets or someone is writing code, making jewelry or using the 3D printer. The idea is to provide access to these resources. Many people can't afford a laser cutter or a 3D printer. It encourages people to try a variety of different things. It can also remove the barriers to acquiring a new skill. There are people around that help each other out. Often libraries will reach out to ask for a particular class or having a maker in residence.

Ms. Brescia asked about the demographics of the group. Mr. Mariano said that it was basically adults. Members have to be over the age of 18 because there is an electronic key for access.

Ms. Brescia asked if they do programs for students. Mr. Mariano said that when they do workshops they are open to all ages, but their main focus is on adults.

Mr. Knopp said that this was a surprise to them since the Library wasn't told by the City. He asked about the lease agreement. Mr. Mariano said that it was a license agreement for three years with an option for a one year extension. He said that the Library was expanding, so he hoped that there would be no hard feelings in four years when they have to move again because the expansion might require the demolition of 3 Belden.

Ms. Noor asked Mr. Mariano to review the hours. Mr. Mariano said that they are volunteer run and would like to have regular staff. He said that it was from 7 to 11. Tuesdays are 6:30 to 10. Most of the events are in the evenings since the members are adults. There is actually an agreement with the City that includes rent plus five events a month. The Tuesday Open Nights count towards this.

Mr. Williams asked if there was a Membership Fee. Mr. Mariano said that it was \$50.00 a month.

Mr. Williams asked if a background check is done on those applying for membership. Mr. Mariano said that they don't do background checks, but they do require training on certain pieces of equipment.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

(Moina Noor)

A. Main Library Renovation and Expansion

Ms. Noor said that one of the main City contacts for the Library, Jessica Vonachek, has left the City. She shepherded many of the projects through the processes. There is a search underway to fill the position. Ms. Noor said that they will be bringing the Board into the conversation.

B. Ordinance Review

On September 26th, the Common Council started their second phase of the Charter Revision. They will present their recommendations in May 2025. She said that this would be a good time to reactive the Governance Committee to update things. She said that the current Committee was Ralph, Laurel and Janine.

C. Café Pre-conference

Mr. Williams then updated the Board members about the status of the Café. They have reached out to Ms. Connors about the RFP and discussions are underway about when they should start working on this. Discussion followed about the process for the potential vendors.

Mr. Knopp said that he was frustrated with length of time that everything has taken. He felt that they should do this as soon as possible. He added that with the lease at the Makers Space, they are looking at two to three years.

Ms. Brescia said that she felt that they should move forward as soon as possible. Ms. Harris said that Sabrina was also helping to get the word out about the RFP.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT (Sherelle Harris)

A. 2023-24 Operating Budget Rollovers

Ms. Harris shared her screen showing the rollover requests. She mentioned that the majority of the requests would go toward grounds keeping. She then reviewed the details, such as the parking lot being restriped, adding signage, addressing grading issues between the 1 Belden Avenue and the 3 Belden Avenue properties so that patrons can access the library from the 3 Belden Avenue parking lot. There were a couple of items that were ordered in the previous fiscal year but did not arrive and was not invoiced until the new fiscal year started. She requested to have that money rolled over to prevent shortfall at the end of this fiscal year as those accounts are tight.

The discussion then moved to the fencing between the lots. Ms. Harris mentioned that materials for the Wall Street Improvement Project would be stored along the fence area of the 3 Belden Avenue lot. Ms. Brescia had several concerns about the parking area where construction materials would be stored. 3 Belden was purchased for library expansion and the board would like to join the properties so that is access between the two.

Ms. Brescia asked for a update regarding the maintenance of the front lawn area for the Library. Ms. Harris said that the City wants to have the work outsourced. DPW will not be maintaining it. There are also questions about having the parking lots plowed. Ms. Harris answered that this is another area that the City wants to outsource. Ms. Harris explained that Neil from Guardian provided a quote of \$15,000 as the cost for the maintenance company. Currently the funding will be used to catch up on the maintenance. Later the Library will receive the \$15,000 allocated increase for exterior maintenance in next year's budget.

B. 2024-25 Capital Budget Projects

Ms. Harris said last year, they updated the alarm system for the Main Library last year and this year, they will be updating the SoNo Library system. She said the work should be completed by early November and at that time both systems will be handled by the same vendor.

She also spoke about adding a sliding door for the Main Library that was approved in last year's Capital Budget. She said two quotes were already received and that a vendor was out earlier in the day to review the area for another quote. The power washing has been done at both buildings during the summer. Ms. Brescia said that she had taken some pictures on the west elevation and was not impressed with the results. Ms. Harris said that she would review the list again with Neil.

The discussion moved to pest control. Ms. Harris said that there was a major problem with the staff and patrons being bitten by mosquitoes and they had an expert come out. It turned out that one drain at 3 Belden had not been pitched correctly and this has since been corrected. Once the regular lawn care starts, it should change the situation.

C. Poet Laureate - October 30

Ms. Harris said that they had received two applicants and the submissions deadline has been extended to October 30th.

D. Passport Service

Ms. Harris said the walk through had to be cancelled and a new one for the end of October with a make up date in November. The passport agent comes to inspect the area. This will happen at both libraries.

E. Main Library Parking Lots

Ms. Harris is still waiting for the Parking Authority to provide the quotes.

Ms. Brescia asked for an update on the furniture for the Main Library. Ms. Harris said that she had sent out an email about a new company.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Main Library Partitions

The partitions in the Main Library's auditorium have been repaired and are working fine.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Brescia said that she would like to have a good signage posted outside of the library in advance so that everyone is aware that voting is taking place at Jefferson School and not the library. Mr. Knopp said that the access at Jefferson would be much harder since the parking lot is across a street and the building is up a hill. He felt that the Library was a better site.

Ms. Harris said will ask staff to create flyers and to post on social media, also.

Mr. Williams provided an update about the bid process for a new Café. He mentioned that Ms. Harris contacted the purchasing department with his idea of a pre-bid conference and that they are willing to help with the process and had looped in the Business Development and Tourism department. Ms. Noor said that there were some board members who wished to start on the Café right away. She wished to confirm that they should start moving forward right away.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. MANN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MR. KNOPP SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services