CITY OF NORWALK
PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MAY 11, 2023
VIA ZOOM

ATTENDANCE:	Moina Noor, Chair; Ralph Bloom; Alex Knopp; Mary Mann; Laurel Peterson; Jannie Williams; Haraldo Williams
STAFF:	Sherelle Harris, Library Director
OTHERS:	Michael Discara, SNEW consultant

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Noor called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MARCH 9, 2023 MEETING AND APRIL 12, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

**** MS. MANN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 9, 2023 AS PRESENTED**
**** MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MS. PETERSON)**

**** MR. BLOOM MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF APRIL 12, 2023 AS PRESENTED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public participation comments are not verbatim and represent a summarization of statements unless otherwise noted. Speakers are Norwalk residents unless otherwise noted.

Ms. Diane Lauricella thanked the Board for their hard work. She said she has a growing concern about the purchase the parking lot. It is important for Norwalk to have a first class main library with a first floor auditorium. Ms. Lauricella urged the Board to have a place at the negotiating table with the administration. She added that she is very concerned that the administration insists on doing negotiations in the cover of darkness. She said there is less than one month and the public needs to know about this. She said she believes they should start a capital campaign immediately for an expansion through the Redevelopment Agency. She said they can sell the bank building.

6. **LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

9. **ELECTRIC CAR CHARGING STATION AT SONO LIBRARY (SNEW)**

Ms. Harris introduced Mr. Discara. She summarized last month's discussion about adding an electric car charging station to the South Norwalk Library Parking Lot. She stated that some were in favor of it, but had concerns about losing a parking space, particularly in light of the apartment complex proposed for the Webster Street parking lot across the street from the library. She said that one of the board member proposed the idea of putting the charging station in front of the library.

Mr. Discara discussed the placement of an electric car charging station at the South Norwalk Library. He said this location came up as a good location for a charging station. He said they could install one charging station with two ports. The front of the building is not an option as a location for the charging station because the City is going to realign Washington Street.

The charging station tells the car operator when they reach 80% capacity and noted they will get charged for extra time. Mr. Discara said they understand the parking situation on Washington Street.

Mr. Knopp said that having the charging station near the Library gives people something to do while their car is charging. He said this was a very good idea.

Mr. Bloom asked how long it takes to charge a car. Mr. Discara said these are level two charges and it would take about two to three hours to charge a car to 80%, depending on where they were when they started the charge.

Mr. Williams asked about enforcement if someone uses the charging space and they are not charging their car. Ms. Harris said they have a guard who can take down their license plate number.

Ms. Noor said she was in favor of energy efficiency, but had concerns. In response to her questions, Mr. Discara said a text is sent to the car operator regarding payment. They can set a penalty or no penalty. In addition, SNEW pays for the maintenance contract for the charging station. Ms. Noor asked Ms. Harris about how often the parking lot is full. Ms. Harris said it is full during story time twice a week and when they bigger programs.

Mr. Knopp suggested adding this item to next month's agenda for action. Mr. Williams said they will lose two parking spaces in South Norwalk by installing the car charging station. Ms. Mann suggested negotiating with the City for two additional parking spaces at the Webster lot.

4. **ADDITIONS TO AGENDA**

<u>Webster Street lot letter.</u>

5. **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

1. Blue Teapot/Library Café

Ms. Noor reported that they have been in contact with the person running the Blue Teapot. A move out date will be coordinated with her. Mr. Williams agreed to take the lead on the Library Café Committee. Mr. Williams said he has a lot of experience with RFPs and looks forward to being engaged in this. Ms. Harris stated that she and Mr. Williams worked on the draft RFP.

2. Governance Committee

Ms. Noor said she has been in conversations with another library and asked Dawn LaValle, of the Connecticut Library to come to the next meeting of the Library Board to do a training around issues of governance.

Ms. Noor said she asked the Charter Review Commission when the Library Board could be on their agenda and the process for changing the Ordinance.

3. Facilities Committee

Ms. Noor thanked the members of the Facilities Committee and explained the scope of the Committee. She suggested they meet in person one time over the summer at the main Library so they can have a plan in place for the fall.

Mr. Knopp noted that whoever operates the café may not bring their own furniture.

4. Webster Street lot letter.

Ms. Noor said she will send the letter out in a few days.

Action Items

4. Unattended Adult Policy

Ms. Harris explained that under the Unattended Adult Policy, no adult will be permitted to be in the children's or teen areas unless they are accompanied by a teen or a child. A discussion took place.

**** MS. MANN MOVED AN AMENDMENT TO THE UNATTENDED ADULT POLICY THAT AN ADULT AND OLDER TEENS MAY USE THE CHILD AND TEEN AREA WITH PERMISSION**
**** MOTION AS AMENDED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

5. Room Booking Policy

Ms. Harris reviewed the updated policy that includes updates to the language and includes table graphs for library hours and prices for the rooms.

**** MS. PETERSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE ROOM BOOKING POLICY AS PRESENTED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

6. Sono Renovation Contract

Ms. Noor expressed concern about being able to read and understand the contract. Mr. Knopp explained that it is important for the Board and employees of the Library that the Library will act on this with the good advice from the appropriate City department. Ms. Harris said that she trusted the City attorneys to protect the investment.

**** MS. MANN MOVED TO APPROVE THE SONO RENOVATION CONTRACT**
**** MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MS. NOOR)**

7. Libraries Without Borders MOU

Ms. Harris reviewed this MOU between the Norwalk Public Library and Libraries Without Borders and reiterated her overview from the previous meeting of the partnership with Library Without Boarders. She stated that the contract was with the Connecticut State Library and Library Without Borders said that Norwalk is one of six libraries to participate in this initiative.

**** MR. KNOPP MOVED TO RATIFY THE MOU BETWEEN THE NORWALK PUBLIC LIBRARY AND LIBRARIES WITHOUT BORDERS AS PRESENTED IN THE MEETING PACKET**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

8. Draft Café Vendor RFP

This item was tabled.

6. **<u>LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT (continued)</u>**

10. Solar Charging Station At Sono
Ms. Harris updated the Board and said they have approval for this.

11. GNLV Renovation Update

Ms. Harris said that had circulated the documents to the Board and explained that Guardian had circulated a date to meet that she will send via email.

12. Book Banning

Ms. Harris presented a video on book banning followed by a discussion by the Board. Ms. Noor said it is important to keep themselves informed on this subject. Ms. Harris presented an American Library Association slide that showed 1,269 demands to censor books in 2022, up from 156 in 2020 and 729 in 2021. Included was the top 13 most challenged books of 2022. She said there were 13 titles challenged in Connecticut.

13. Kathy Rauscher Retirement

Ms. Harris said Ms. Rauscher was a City employee for nearly 22 years. She said she was a genuinely nice person, precise, no drama, a phenomenal employee who was behind-the-scenes, but did a lion's share of work. Ms. Harris summed her up with the words she said she shared in an email to the board: A truly great co-worker is hard to find, difficult to part with and impossible to forget. Her last day was yesterday. Her husband, who worked for the City, also retired. Ms. Williams suggested that the board do something to honor her. The Board discussed an appropriate acknowledgement for Ms. Rauscher.

8. <u>**OLD BUSINESS**</u>

Ms. Noor explained that she is in favor of the Sono renovation, but abstained because it is hard to vote on a contract she does not understand.

9. <u>**NEW BUSINESS**</u>

There was no new business discussed this evening.

10. <u>**ADJOURNMENT**</u>

**** MR. BLOOM MOVED TO ADJOURN**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services