CITY OF NORWALK
LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 13, 2023

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

STAFF: Sherelle Harris, Library Director

OTHER: Amanda Cleveland; Nina Safane; Vanesha McGee

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Noor called the meeting to order at 7:03 P.M. There was a quorum present.

APPROVAL OF MARCH 9, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

**** MR. KNOPP MOVED TO TABLE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 9, 2023.**
**** MS. MANN SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There was no Public Comment.

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

There were no additions at this time. Chairman Noor said they would be reordering the agenda.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

SONO REPURPOSING PROJECT UPDATE

Ms. Cleveland came forward to discuss this item. She said they had been to both Council meetings and the project went out to bid in February. They have been through both Councils for approval of the funding. They have been granted appx. $314,000.00 for construction. It was noted that the information was in a packet distributed by Ms Harris for board review.

Ms. Harris noted that she was in receipt of the $91,041 check from SNEW for the lighting part of the SoNo repurposing project.

Ms. Brescia suggested that they send a thank-you letter to the Second Taxing District for the donation. Further discussion followed.

A request for information regarding the status of moving the books was given. Ms. Harris said the staff could move them and have them in the auditorium. The children's department would remain open during the project and she would also like to have new books available for adult staff in the vestibule.

LIBRARIES WITHOUT BORDERS

Ms. Harris reported that there were two people from Libraries Without Borders (LWB) who would be with Norwalk Public Library for a year. They have started interviews with staff and with the community. They will help them identify ways to partner with other community agencies to serve the population that is not being served and to reach people who do not utilize the internet.

Ms. Safane and Ms. McGee came forward to discuss this information. They provided a slide show with further information regarding Libraries Without Borders including the following points:

- A map showing LWB program cities.
- A review of their operations history and plans for the future.
- An overview of what they do.
- Their phase plan and the deliverables that they offer.

They are currently working on data collection, which Ms. Safane provided more information on. Mr. Knopp asked what other communities in Connecticut were recommended. Ms. Safane said East Hartford, Norwich, the Otis Library, Willimantic, West Haven, and Falls Village. Mr. Knopp asked if there was a contract/agreement/memorandum that the State library had sent to Norwalk. Ms. Safane said that their contract was with the State Library System itself. Further discussion followed.

Ms. Peterson asked for examples of things they have done with other libraries. Ms. Safane brought up their efforts with the Watch and Learn initiative. Ms. Mann expressed her eagerness to meet with them. Further discussion followed.

Mr. Williams asked if they had a contracted time period in which they'd engage with the City of Norwalk. Ms. Safane said it was a one-year contract. Part of their goal is to create a sustainable structure that will last beyond the one-year contract. Further discussion followed.

NEW CANAAN LIBRARY – DEBRIEF

Chairman Noor came forward to provide a debrief on the visit to the New Canaan library. Further discussion followed as the members discussed their opinions of the visit. Ms. Williams felt they should turn the old library into parking. Mr. Knopp expressed positive impressions of the services being integrated together. Ms. Brescia recounted her own impressions. Mr. Williams said they had a clear idea of how they wanted to operate it. Ms. Peterson said she found it inviting except for the lobby which she found to be echoey. Chairman Noor explained how the architecture group had worked with the local populace for the library. She said they had also activated all their space for the public. Ms. Harris agreed with what others had said and complimented the Director's energy and focus in sticking to her guns. She commented on the cozy living-room areas and the different size meeting rooms stating that meeting rooms are important to the Norwalk community. Ms. Harris stated that the surrounding towns that have renovated did a great job of capturing the unique needs of their residents—Darien is more conservative and eco-conscience, Westport is fancy bring an artistic town and New Canaan is chic—but she is looking forward to capturing the unique needs of Norwalk's diverse community.

EAGLES PARKING

Chairman Noor said that the Common Council had approved the leasing of 30 parking spaces for $12,600. She felt this was a great opportunity for them to expand their car parking. Mr. Williams wanted to know when this would become available. Chairman Noor said it would become available on July 1st .

CAPITAL BUDGET – FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Chairman Noor said that the capital budget had been passed. She said that the carpet and indoor furniture were part of the budget. She recommended that the facilities committee work together to see what different kinds of furniture and carpet were available.

Ms. Harris thanked Ms. Noor for the letter she wrote on behalf of the Board to get some of the items put back into the budget. She said the Integrated Library System (ILS), the Norwalk Newspaper Digitization project and the technology upgrades for 3D printers were approved initially and that the carpet and indoor furniture were not initially approved, but were added to the recommended budget.

GOVERNANCE

Chairman Noor said that there was a meeting scheduled for next week.

BLUE TEAPOT RFP DRAFT – IN PROGRESS

Chairman Noor said that there had been a meeting between herself, Mr. Williams, and Ms. Harris. The Blue Teapot is closed as of March 30th . They have reviewed the RFP line by line and are in the process of making edits. Further review followed. She said they would need guidance from the City regarding the official move-out date.

ACTION ITEMS

UNATTENDED ADULT POLICY

Ms. Harris said this was a request from Children's department head Vicki Oatis and felt this item was necessary as a stand-alone or addendum to the unattended child policy.

ROOM BOOKING POLICY

Ms. Harris said that this policy was very old and needed to be updated. She reviewed the details of the policy for those present. Chairman Noor requested that this item be tabled until next time so she could read it.

Mr. Knopp said that they shouldn't charge non-profit groups for using the room unless they intended to do fundraising in it. Ms. Harris stated that non-profits are not charged. Further discussion followed.

**** MS. BRESCIA MOVED TO TABLE THE ROOM BOOKING POLICY.**
**** MR. KNOPP SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

WEBSTER LOT APARTMENTS PARKING (LETTER FROM BOARD)

Chairman Noor said that a letter had been drafted by Ms. Williams on behalf of the board requesting that parking spaces be reserved for the South Norwalk Library as plans are made for the apartment complex that will replace the Webster Street parking lot. Ms. Williams provided further information regarding the letter and the need for the parking spaces. Further discussion followed. Mr. Knopp suggested that they ask for more spaces. Ms. Harris stated that the Webster Street parking lot presently has 650 spaces and the proposed building will have 1,100 spaces, almost double. Chairman Noor said they would be requesting at least 20 spaces.

GNLV RENOVATION UPDATE

Ms. Harris provided information regarding the GNLV project in a packet for those present. Information regarding the capital budget for the project was provided for those present. A review of the information in the packet followed. There will be a pre-bid conference on April 20th . The deadline for questions will be April 27th . Electronic submissions will be due by May 2nd . Hard copy submission deadline will be May 4th . The Common Council Review will be May 9th . They are looking to start by June 19th and be complete by August 25th . Discussion followed regarding the bidding process.

SNEW CHARGING STATION AT SONO

Ms. Harris said that the Second Taxing District had been looking at having electric charging stations in SoNo. One of the areas chosen was the South Norwalk parking lot. The chargers would have to be open to the public. They had consulted Guarding regarding this plan and she is waiting for feedback. Ms. Brescia said she wished they could control it to ensure that people using the stations were visiting the library instead of just charging for free. She expressed concerns over potentially diminished parking as well. Mr. Knopp said that reading and charging the car was a great way to combine the two activities. He felt there may be enough charging stations elsewhere to mitigate the problem. Chairman Noor expressed reservations regarding the charging noting the lot was frequently full and it would take a while to charge cars. She felt that, while the PR might be nice, losing a spot for hours every day would not be worth it. Discussion followed.

ESPECIALLY FOR NORWALK SENIORS NEW PROGRAM SERIES

Ms. Harris said a program series titled Especially for Norwalk Seniors is underway. She had been considering questions asked by senior citizens when she works the public desks and after working with a group of ladies they came up with the series. Housing options for senior citizens, cataract seminars seniors armchair travel and estate planning are some of the programs with the series that she mentioned.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no Old Business at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no New Business at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. PETERSON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
**** MS. MANN SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:36 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ian A. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services