CITY OF NORWALK
LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 9, 2023

ATTENDANCE: Moina Noor, Chair; Ralph Bloom, Patsy Brescia, Alex Knopp, Mary Mann, Haroldo Williams, Jannie Williams; Tom Cullen (7:08 p.m.)

STAFF: Sherelle Harris, Norwalk Public Library Executive Director

OTHERS: Amanda Cleveland

This meeting was held via teleconference.

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Noor called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- February 9, 2023 meeting minutes

**** MR. KNOPP MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 9, 2023 MEETING**.

The following corrections were noted:

Page 1, under the Blue Teapot, please change the following from:

“on March 31st.” to: “on March 31st for financial reasons.”

Page 2, under SoNo Library repurposing project update – please change the following from:
“recent job description had been posted internally.”
To: “recent job description had been posted.”

Mr. Cullen joined the group at 7:08 p.m.

**** MS. BRESCIA SECONDED**
**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE AS AMENDED PASSED WITH FIVE (5) IN FAVOR (BLOOM, BRESCIA, KNOPP, MANN, AND J. WILLIAMS) TWO ABSTENTIONS (H. WILLIAMS AND CULLEN**)

SoNo repurposing project update – Land Use & Building Management committee meeting

Ms. Cleveland said that she had presented the project to the Land Use & Building Management. The Committee was very excited and supportive of the project. It was announced that Titus Enterprises was the low bidder and the next step will being entering into contract. Material samples will be provided for purchase approval. Discussion followed about the contract approval. Mr. Knopp asked why they had not called a special meeting to approve the recommendation of the Titus Enterprises as the contractor. Ms. Cleveland apologized that she was unaware of that process. Ms. Harris said that she would take responsibility for that due to the tight time constraints. Ms. Brescia added that this is a city project and that the proposal had been handled by the Purchasing Department. Mr. Knopp expressed concerns that the Board had not been consulted on this. Ms. Cleveland again apologized for this oversite. She said that they would make sure that the Board was presented with any changes in the futures.

The discussion moved to the “add alternates” and what they entailed. Ms. Cleveland said that these items were on a “wish list” that could be added into the project at a later date if they come in under budget. Discussion of the project details followed. All of the bids were reviewed with the Purchasing Department and Mr. Lo. It is hoped that the construction will be completed within 90 days of the signing of the contract.

Ms. Cleveland suggested that she attend the monthly meetings to give the Board updates on the progress. Ms. Harris will send a list of the meeting dates. She then gave a brief overview of how the supervision of the project is done and requisitions for payments are submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Noor asked if there was anyone present who wished to address the Board.

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

There were no additions to the agenda at this time.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

- **New Board member**

Ms. Noor introduced Mr. Haroldo Williams as the newest member of the Board. Mr. H. Williams said that he has been a resident of Norwalk since 1983 and immigrated from Panama. He gave a brief history of his family and his contributions to the City of Norwalk in various roles, such as tutoring, and Ethics Commissioner.

- **Governance**

Ms. Noor explained that Mr. H. Williams had asked a number of thoughtful questions about governance and she has now asked him to join the Governance Committee.

- **Budget letter**

Ms. Noor said that she had sent the Board Members copies of the letter to the Mayor about their budget and would welcome feedback.

- **Library Café**

Ms. Noor reminded everyone that the Blue Tea Pot was closing on the 31st and the City has been in touch with her about the space and her investments. Once this has been settled, the Board should discuss what they would like to have in that space. Ms Harris suggested having another food vendor take over the space. She said she and Lamond Daniels had discussed a satellite space for and established vendor.

Mr. Knopp said that the reason they put the Blue Tea Pot in was because the survey indicated that it was the second most important area of interest. He said that they should start the search for a new vendor now. Discussion followed. Ms. Noor said that she and Ms. Harris would speak with Lamond about the needs of the Library and report back to the Board. She said that she would find copies of the previous RFP for review.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- **Webster Lot apartments (SoNo**)

Ms. Harris said that she sent out an article on the proposed 500 unit Webster Lot apartments. Ms. Brescia said that Ms. Harris should write a letter to the Redevelopment Agency to protect the parking agreement they have with the Webster Lot.

- **Capital budget (Van was not a new request)**

Ms. Harris said for the record, the Capital Budget had the van listed as a new item, but it was not. It was requested last year, but not approved. She then reviewed the items that were approved, including the digitalization of the newspapers as a multi-year project. She noted that the ADA door handles were not approved for the Main Library, but the City has a new ADA Compliance officer has visited both library sites and who may include this as part of a City wide project.

Ms. Brescia said that several Board Members should plan to attend the Budget Public Hearing. Ms. Brescia asked the Board to prioritize their needs. It was the consensus of the Board that the top priorities would be carpet and furniture followed by the Business Center.

**** MS. BRESCIA MOVED TO FORMALIZE THE FOLLOWING AS THE LIBRARY'S TOP PRIORITIES.**

INDOOR CARPET, FURNITURE, BUSINESS CENTER, OUTDOOR CARPET AND A TRUCK IN THAT ORDER.
**** MR. KNOPP SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

- Operating budget

Ms. Harris said for the record that the Library did not merely request increases to the Operating Budget but in an effort to be fiscally responsible and play well on the team in this fiscal environment, cuts were made where possible in order to offset some of the requests. The total reduction in Operating was roughly $26,000. Ms. Harris will be submitting a request to open the passport agent. The revenue that the Library generated from this program went to the City was roughly $35,000. This program would provide another form of revenue.

She spoke about the need for a third janitor because there was a period when both full-time janitors were out simultaneously for medical reasons. However this request was not approved. Mr. Williams asked about a part-time janitor that might be able to fill in if the full-time is not approved.

Ms. Harris said that they need a Communications staff member. Ms. Brescia said that she would go to the Operating Budget Finance Meeting. Ms. Harris said that they had asked for an increase in the budget due to contractual rising costs for things like garbage pick-up. Recently, the pick up costs increased due to fuel increases but this was not included in the budget. The latest increase was $60. She added that other library supplies such as the clear label protectors that are used on the books more than tripled in price. She also spoke about using a cataloguing and preprocessing service rather than having the staff perform the task since it give uniformity to the catalog and saves the staff time.

- **Aquarium press conference**.

This will be held on March 23rd at 12:30 p.m.

- **New Canaan Library tour**

Ms. Harris said that it looked like they had a consensus for March 31st, but the New Canaan staff member will not be available then. They would like to hold the tour on April 3rd. Ms. Harris will check with library about the dates.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to consider at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to consider at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. NOOR ADJOURNED THE MEETING.**
**** MR. KNOPP SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services