CITY OF NORWALK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ATTENDANCE: Moina Noor, Chair; Laurel Peterson, Haroldo Williams, Jannie Williams Alex Knopp (7:07 p.m.); Mary Mann, (7:07 p.m.)

ABSENT: Patsy Brescia, Vice Chair; Thomas Cullen, Ralph Bloom

OTHERS: Sherelle Harris, Library Director;

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Noor called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. She called the roll and said that there was not a quorum present.

Mr. Knopp and Ms. Mann joined the meeting at 7:07 p.m. A quorum was now present.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The following corrections were noted:

Page 1, under Approval of Minutes and all other references: please change the following from:
"Janine" to Jannie"

Page 3, in **Ordinance Review**, line 3, please change the following from:

"She said that the current Committee was Ralph, Laurel and <u>Janine</u>."

To:

" She said that the current Committee was Alex, Laurel and <u>Janine</u>."

**** MS. WILLIAMS MOVED THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED.**
**** MS. PETERSON SECONDED.**

**** MS. WILLIAMS MOVED THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED.**
**** MS. PETERSON SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR (4) IN FAVOR (KNOPP, NOOR, PETERSON, AND J. WILLIAMS) AND TWO (2) ABSTENTIONS (H. WILLIAMS AND MANN**).

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There was no one present to comment at this time.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

(Moina Noor)

• **3 Belden Parking Lot** – Ms. Noor said that the Board had been in contact with the City about their decision to use a portion of the 3 Belden parking lot as a staging area for the Wall Street improvement project. Instead, the City will rent 13 spots from the Eagles for the staging area, leaving the Library to rent 17 of the previous 30 spaces rented from the Eagles for parking.

• **Library Café** – Mr. Williams said that he had received some input and guidance from the City about the café. There will be a pre-RFP session that will be held on Monday, December 16th for potential vendors to tour the site. Discussion followed about the details. Mr. Williams said that he would be sending out a copy of the document to the Board Members. Mr. Williams thanked Ms. Harris for staging the café area and compliment the new look. Ms. Harris thanked the custodians and Melissa Mastrianni for the helping.

Ms. Noor recommended that if any Board Members have a favorite café, they suggest that the café staff attend the pre-RFP presentation. Mr. Williams said that there would be an opportunity for potential vendors to ask questions.

• **Charter Revision Report** – Ms. Peterson said that there were four basic changes that the Committee had agreed upon. Ms. Harris displayed the proposed Charter Revisions on screen.

1. The NPL Board of Directors shall appoint the library director in consultation with the Mayor. Ms. Harris asked if the word should be appoint or hire.

2. The City Library Director shall report to and have such duties as are defined by the Library Board of Trustees on matters of library policies and by the City/Mayor on matters of administration. Ms. Harris suggested that they add buildings and grounds in addition to library policies.

3. The NPL Board of Director shall annually prepare a budget, advisory in nature, for submission to the Board of Estimate and to the director of Community Service of the City of Norwalk. Ms. Harris suggested the addition of jointly with the Director.

4. Said Board shall review and update a Library Strategic Plan at least every five years.

A lengthy discussion followed regarding some proposed wording changes. Ms. Noor said that the next Charter Revision would be on the 17th and the next one will be scheduled in January. She suggested that they table the issue to the January 9th meeting.

**** MS. MANN MOVED TO TABLE THE ITEM TO THE JANUARY 9, 2025 MEETING.**
**** MS. WILLIAMS SECONDED**.

Mr. Williams asked if they could meet with the State Library Representative prior to the January meeting. Ms. Noor said that she would schedule a meeting prior to the next board meeting.

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR (4) IN FAVOR (J. WILLIAMS, H.WILLIAMS, KNOPP AND NOOR) AND TWO (2) OPPOSED (PETERSON AND KNOPP)**.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

(Sherelle Harris)

Ms. Harris said that she and Mr. Daniels had met with the new Finance Director earlier in the day about the budget. She displayed the Capital Budget on screen as she discussed it.

She said the SoNo door levers are American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant, but the Main Library doorknobs are not. The Main Library doorknobs are requested again for 2025-26. She said there were two parts to the ADA-compliant request last year. She said last year the request was for ADA-compliant doorknobs and for an automatic sliding door at the main library. She said the automatic door was approved, but the doorknobs were not. She added that the automatic doors will be a major improvement for disabled patrons.

Ms. Harris said that the current library van is 18 years old and needs to be replaced. She submitted information for both an electric vehicle and a gas powdered van. She said this is the fourth year that the request for a new van has been made.

Ms. Harris gave a brief overview of the request for the digitalization of *The Norwalk Hour*. She said that this is a multi-year funded project as the City opted to pay in installments. If this request is approved, there will be one more request and the "The Hour" would be fully digitalized.

Ms. Harris also reviewed the details for the laptop vending machine contract and noted that these machines should be reconfigured along with having the laptops replaced every five years. This will cost for the project is $17,000.

Ms. Harris explained that the FY2026 Operating Budget was not increased by much. She said there was a requested increase for taking care of the grounds and plowing and a requested increase for renting the 17 Eagles parking spots, which have been reduced to 17 spots, since the City will be taking over 13 of the original 30 spots for the staging of the Wall Street improvement project. Discussion followed about details on the MUNIS spreadsheet.

Mr. Knopp said that he felt it was a tragedy that as the sixth largest city in the State, the libraries were closed on Sundays during the summer. He wished to see this added to the Operating budget and listed a number of reasons why they should be open. He felt that at least one Libraries should be open during the summer on Sundays and suggested that perhaps they could alternate sites.

Mr. Knopp said that he felt that the Library was paying for parking in the Eagles lot when the City had not consulted with the Board originally. He said that the Parking Authority should be paying for it since they facilitated the agreement. The Library is also paying for that parking when they are closed on Sundays during the summer. Discussion followed about the details such as attendance, vacations and staffing. Ms. Harris said she would look into opening Sundays during summer months.

**** MR. KNOPP MOVED TO ADD FUNDING TO THE SUNDAY LINE BUDGET TO BE DISTRIBUTED EQUITABLY BETWEEN SONO AND THE MAIN BRANCH.**
**** MS. PETERSON SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Ms. Harris said that the only other thing that they were going to increase was the book budget. She said that the downloads were becoming more expensive. She mentioned an article and stated that this is not just a Norwalk issue. Libraries are struggling with this across the country. She explained that from one vendor the average cost per usage of a download is $8 and as Norwalk's population increases, the cost goes up and she explained that from another vendor the charge for a book in downloadable format might cost $50.00 where the cost of the same titled hardcover is $20 to $30. She said the book budget has not been increased for at least 25 years and that the request is for an additional $15,000 in the book budget. She said this was not nearly enough, but the cap she was given.

**** MR. KNOPP MOVED TO APPROVE THE OPERATING 25/26 BUDGET AS AMENDED.**
**** MS. MANN SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Ms. Harris mentioned following Roberts Rules of Order in order to be in compliance with FOI. She said nothing was wrong with this mention, but suggested if new topics are introduced that are not on the agenda, they would need to adjourn the meeting to vote on suspension of the rules and the new topic and then resume the meeting.

Ms. Harris presented the homebound delivery policy. Mr. Knopp said that Corporation Counsel should review the homebound policy in case someone has an accident while delivering the books. This item was tabled in order to refer it to the City Law Department.

Ms. Harris presented the Meeting Room Policy.

**** MS. PETERSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE MEETING ROOM POLICY**.
**** MS. MANN SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Ms. Harris said that they were looking at using texting services rather than the current mailing of notices. This will save on postage. They chose a vendor that the library already uses; therefore the systems are compatible. Mr. Knopp said that the catalogue looks great. Ms. Harris said that the patrons like the catalogue.

Ms. Harris said that the furniture committee met with a Robert Lord representative on December 4th to discuss new furniture for the Main Library's reading room. The cost was approved in last year's Capital Budget. She said that the information on fabrics and furniture had been included in the packet. Ms. Harris said that they want to have furniture that is easy to move in the event the reading room needs to be repurposed.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to consider at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:33p.m.

Respectfully submitted

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services