

**CITY OF NORWALK
LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 8, 2025
VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

ATTENDANCE: Moina Noor; Chair, Patsy Brescia; Vice Chair, Alex Knopp, Janie Williams, Haroldo Williams, Mary Mann (7:01 p.m.)

STAFF: Sherelle Harris; Library Director

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Noor called the meeting to order at 7.00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Ms. Noor Called the roll as reflected above.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: 4.10.25

B. Acceptance of 3.19.25 Special Meeting Minutes

**** MR. KNOPP MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.**

Ms. Mann joined the meeting at 7:01

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FIVE IN FAVOR AND ONE ABSTENSION (MS. MANN).**

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no one present to comment at this time.

V. REPORTS

A. President

1. Charter Revision Update

Ms. Noor provided an update on the charter revision, reporting on the recent Charter Revision Committee meeting, where both she and Ms. Peterson spoke. Two primary questions were raised: one regarding events at the previous meeting, and another concerning the authority to appoint the Library Board. Ms. Noor noted a shared concern among attendees about safeguarding the Library Board from undue mayoral influence.

She also discussed her conversation with Tyler Fairbairn, Chair of the Charter Revision Committee, emphasizing the importance of protecting the library from external political pressures and maintaining a balance of power.

Ms. Noor referenced a letter from the Association of Connecticut Library Boards in support of the proposed charter change. She stated that the letter, along with examples from other municipal library charters, would be submitted to the committee. Further updates are expected at the next board meeting.

2. Strategic /Building Planning

Ms. Noor had no comments at this time.

B. Library Director

1. Main Library Parking Update

Ms. Harris provided an update on the parking situation. She stated that there are currently three parking lots used for library parking and stated the number of available spaces in each of them. She also noted that there are dedicated spaces at the Yankee Doodle Garage for library staff to park, thanks to the work of the Library Board.

Ms. Harris mentioned that some staff feel unsafe walking to the Yankee Doodle Garage when they work evening hours. As a potential solution, she proposed that staff park there during the day and relocate their vehicles to the Eagles lot after dinner. She stated that there was support for this idea during a community services meeting.

Addressing the Eagles lot, Ms. Harris reported that it currently has 30 spaces, some of which can be allocated for staff use in the evenings. While the goal is to retain all 30 spaces, since the Wall Street Project will no longer need 13 of them, only 17 have been budgeted. Discussions are ongoing to explore funding for the additional 13.

Ms. Brescia noted that up to 20 employees sometimes use the lot and emphasized the importance of maintaining sufficient parking at the Eagles lot, Yankee Doodle Garage, and the Library's own lot.

Ms. Harris reviewed the recent improvements, including signage and striping. She reported that the 3 Belden lot still requires significant work, with striping being the only progress so far. She also stressed the need for directional signage at 3 Belden to prevent accidents and to enhance safety and discussed removing the fence addressing the egress issues between the 3 Belden lot and the library property.

She added that they would follow up on a recommendation to meet with the Parking Authority to revisit the idea of the department managing Library lots.

In response to a question about patron feedback, Ms. Harris said that patrons are generally satisfied unless there is a large program, and many are unaware that the Eagles lot is available.

Ms. Brescia inquired about removing the social distancing markers left over from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to Ms. Noor's question about funding the remaining 13 parking spaces, Ms. Harris said that no decision had been made yet.

2. Library Landscaping Update

Ms. Harris reported that funds are available in the budget for landscaping at both library locations. She stated that the Department of Public Works (DPW) is now responsible for snow removal in the parking lots, while a landscaping company handles lawn care. Their services include spring cleanup, plant and flower bed maintenance, debris removal, weekly lawn care, shrub trimming, and fall cleanup. The current contract runs from April through October. Ms. Harris said that they are trying to pinpoint consistency in their coming so that maintenance can plan between their visits.

Ms. Noor asked whether the landscaping company had begun work. Ms. Harris replied that they had not and, to prevent complaints, internal staff had handled mowing. She added that she hoped to have a formal schedule by the following week.

Ms. Harris discussed replanting bushes in the rose garden to help address a mosquito infestation. They had been cut because the maintenance staff said they were infested with mosquitoes that had been a major issue. She noted that their current pest control provider has been ineffective. They are considering hiring Mosquito Swad Plus, which is scheduled to begin treatment on Tuesday, May 13. The Health Department approved their product.

Ms. Brescia inquired about the condition of the drains and whether they had been cleared. Mr. Knopp agreed with her concerns, stating that clogged drains can create ideal mosquito breeding

conditions. He recommended a multi-pronged approach, including the use of larvicide, eliminating standing water, and limited fogging.

Ms. Harris stated that Guarding drops mosquito dunks in drains around the property that have standing water.

Mr. Williams asked whether notice would be given to ensure the area is clear during fogging. Ms. Harris confirmed that fogging would begin at 7 a.m., hours before the library staff enter the building and that mosquito squad staff would notify anyone in the vicinity to vacate the area.

3. Norwalk Poet Laureate Updates

Ms. Harris turned the discussion to the new Poet Laureate. Ms. Harris stated she has formed a mailing list and created several accounts listed below.

Join the Norwalk Poet Laureate's Mailing List

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf0DKvaVcS3y11XkfseGL3WP344DT9Ms9I2RqogQRJcdMGfmw/viewform>

“Poets of Norwalk” Accounts

Designed to be a hub for posting events/announcements related to the poets and poetry events in Norwalk.

Poets of Norwalk

<https://linktr.ee/poetsofnorwalk>.

@poetsofnorwalk (Instagram)

poets.of.norwalk@gmail.com

4. Evelyn Cunningham, NPL Children's Librarian, Won the Connecticut Library Association's (CLA) Faith Hektoen Award

Ms. Harris announced that Ms. Cunningham, Children's Librarian at the Norwalk Public Library, has received the Faith Hektoen Award. She shared a brief biography, noting that the full press release was created and sent to media.

Ms. Brescia suggested that the Board send a letter of congratulations, and the Board unanimously agreed.

5. FY2025-26 Recommended Operating Budget
[FY 2025-26 Recommended Operating Budget - Final](#)
Library/Starting on page 183 of 306

Ms. Harris provided an update on the operating budget, noting that there have been no changes. She confirmed that the two current funding requests—one for landscaping and the other for books—have been approved. The book request includes \$15,000 to support e-books and digital downloads. She added that in the upcoming fiscal year, they plan to request \$60,000 to accommodate the growing population in Norwalk.

6. Approved FY 2025-26 Capital Budget and Capital Existing Project Updates
<https://www.norwalkct.gov/DocumentCenter/View/35927/FY-2025-26-Approved-Capital-Budget>

Ms. Harris reviewed the items approved through the Capital Budget and provided an update on their progress. She noted the increasing use of electric vehicles and expressed confidence in their preparedness, citing the availability of a charger at the main library and upcoming installation at the SoNo Library. She mentioned that funding was approved in the Capital Budget for a new electric van and sought the Board's input on transitioning to electric vehicles instead of gas-powered ones. The Board agreed that electric vehicles are a more practical choice.

Ms. Brescia added that the vehicles are expected to remain in use for over 10 years and emphasized the importance of making forward-thinking decisions.

Ms. Harris also reported on upcoming capital projects, including roof replacements at both library locations and the elevator cap replacement.

7. Upcoming Programs

Ms. Harris announced an upcoming session with holistic healer Antje Bakalov, scheduled for May 15.

She also highlighted that James Walker—a podcaster and former City Editor at The Hour and Senior Editor at the New Haven Register—has authored a book titled *Dead Windows: My Long Journey Out of Domestic Violence*. He will speak at the library on Wednesday, May 14, from 12:00–1:00 p.m. and again from 6:30–7:30 p.m. His biography is included in the agenda packet.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

- ** MS. BRESCIA MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**
- ** MR. KNOPP SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
China Mayhew
Telesco Secretarial Services