

**CITY OF NORWALK
PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 12, 2025**

ATTENDANCE: Moina Noor, Chair; Haroldo Williams; Patsy Brescia; Mary Mann; Alex Knopp;
Jannie Williams (present during the meeting, but not at Roll Call.)

STAFF: Sherelle Harris, Norwalk Public Library Executive Director

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Noor called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM

II. ROLL CALL

Ms. Noor called the roll as listed in the Attendance section. Ms. Williams was not present during Roll Call, but was present during the meeting.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Regular meeting: May 8, 2025

**** MS. MANN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.**

**** MR. KNOPP SECONDED THE MOTION**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public participating.

V. REPORTS

A. President

1. Charter Revision

Shortly before the meeting, Ms. Noor emailed this Board with the language proposed by the Charter Revision Commission. The Library Board had previously sent a letter to the Charter Commission with the Board's suggested language on three items. Two of the items regarded the budget. Charter Revision said the Board was part of the ordinance, but the main topic was the appointment of the library director.

At the May 15 meeting, Charter Revision voted to include the Library Board in a consultative way. Per Ms. Noor's email, the language in their draft is that the library director will be appointed by the mayor following consultation with the Library Board and confirmation by the Common Council, and to serve as specified by this charter ordinance and until a successor is duly appointed and qualified to serve, unless otherwise terminated in accordance with this charter or as otherwise set forth in law. This is the language that the Council will vote on, on approximately July 8, with a public hearing prior, said Ms. Noor.

Ms. Noor acknowledged that this language doesn't go as far as the Board would like. It doesn't follow the example of many other Connecticut municipal libraries, and doesn't follow the language proposed in the Board's letter. However, it does put the Board back in the appointment process; the Board previously had no mention in the charter.

Mr. Knopp said these revisions are meaningless, a disappointment, and don't go far enough. The Charter Revision Commission is ignoring the Board's request. Ms. Noor said that these revisions bring the Board back to baseline, which is the common practice.

2. Strategic Building Plan

Ms. Noor said that she and Ms. Harris had been in touch with Sharon Connors in Purchasing about funding a strategic plan and a building plan. Approximate budget is \$15,000. They were told by Ms. Connors that that amount is well under the purchasing threshold, and they can open a public RFP (request for proposal) process. Ms. Connors reached out to Ellen Paul, a purchasing colleague at the Connecticut Library Purchasing Consortium, who is amenable to being a resource.

Ms. Noor said the next step is reaching out to Ms. Paul over the summer, with a goal of starting the process in September. Ms. Harris said she had already previously reached out to Ms. Harris and will reach out again.

Ms. Brescia asked if there were plans to do another survey; she thought it would be good to get the concept in front of people. Ms. Harris was favorable to a survey because people are using libraries differently than they did during Covid. She mentioned that for previous public feedback there were focus groups. Mr. Knopp recalled paper copies of the survey at the libraries, senior centers, and community centers. There was discussion about online surveys.

Ms. Noor said the next question was how to make a survey part of the strategic planning process.

B. Library Director

1. Main Library Parking Lots (Director's Monthly report)

Ms. Harris shared on her screen the Board Report, dated June 9. She, Ms. Williams and Ms. Harris met with the Parking Authority last August to do a walkthrough of the lots to see how they can be combined. The challenge is that the lots are separate. Mott Avenue (entrance on Belden) has 37 spaces, 3 Belden has 11, Eagles lot has 30. The late Dick Brescia secured spaces in the Yankee Doodle Garage for staff when he was Parking Authority chair. Board agreed during the last meeting that staff can park in the Eagles lot at night on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Ms. Harris said the Wall Street improvement materials were originally going to be put at the 3 Belden or Eagles lots, but they moved the staging site to the old courthouse lot. So the library will have the 30 Eagles spaces for an additional year at \$12,600 per the contract.

Ms. Harris said the "library parking" will be installed in the Eagles lot per the consent of the Eagles Treasurer.

Directional signs were added to the 1 Belden lot. Ms. Harris requested an additional “library parking” sign be placed on the Eagles fence; sign has been paid for. Lots have been restriped, including directional arrows at the library parking lot (Mott Avenue entrance).

Ms. Harris said the leaning pole in the 1 Belden lot was removed and the hedges were trimmed, but she would suggest further trimming, so that motorists in the lot can see pedestrians/cyclists walking on the sidewalk before they get to the entrance/exit to avoid potential collision.

Guardian, the building management team, is working on a proposal for fence removal between the 1 and 3 Belden Avenue parcels; it should be ready by June 13. Ms. Brescia brought up drainage needs that she has been working on for many years. Ms. Harris said that she would mention this issue again along with the egress issue. She explained that the money to pay for the project was rolled over from the FY2024-25 operating budget and needs to be in processed by June 30.

Mr. Knopp asked if Public Works or the Parking Authority could do this infrastructure work. Ms. Harris explained that she has made the request several times, but nothing had been decided. She further stated that she met briefly with Jim Travers about taking over the lot, which Mr. Knopp has been advocating for. He mentioned the money-making aspect. She mentioned the previous discussion of the lot remaining free for up to The Parking Authority’s three-hour limit, to stay consistent with the Parking Authority’s three-hour limit and those staying longer would be fined. She the supervisors’ recommended a four-hour limit so that patrons who attend programs and then want to use the library, would have more time to use the library, but she would understand if The Parking Authority wanted to maintain consistency.

2. Capital Project Updates

Ms. Harris screen shared information on Capital Projects, noting that she included items for the next fiscal year: Main library ADA-compliant door handles, the library van, Norwalk newspaper digitization, laptop vending machines, exterior security cameras for both libraries and one internal hallway camera at the recommendation of board members due to the thefts from her office. Cameras haven’t been turned on at either library. Ms. Harris recommended that the cameras go to the police station so they can immediately see issues they need to respond to.

From the previous year, ADA-compliant doorknobs were not approved, but an additional sliding door was. They are still working out details for the paving of the SoNo parking lot and the installation of the EV chargers.

The van was approved for the coming fiscal year. She said that the only option is rear wheel drive, vs. the preferred all-wheel drive. They will need a small ramp that can be stored in the van. Cost is approximately \$51,000. There will be some money left over to add the logo to the van.

Main library ADA-compliant door handles quote is for \$500 per lockset for 60 interior and 3 interior, for a full project cost of \$31,500. Guardian and William Hnatuk, Norwalk’s ADA compliance coordinator, collaborated on the project and are point people for the project.

3. Reinstating Main Library as Polling Site

Ms. Harris said the Registrar of Voters office reached out about using the library as a polling site again. Polling had been changed to Jefferson School because they expected a larger turnout during the last presidential election. Residents expressed their preference for the library.

Mr. Knopp pointed out that Jefferson is logistically difficult for seniors. Ms. Brescia said when they were at the library, the signage was terrible and police coverage was inadequate.

Ms. Harris said she had mentioned these issues to Diana Paladino at registrar's office. Diana said signage was her forte and that she would speak with police chief Walsh about internal and external police coverage. Ms. Harris said she would follow-up with both of them in August.

Library will be a polling site for the municipal primary on Sept. 9 and Nov. 4 municipal elections and subsequent general and primary elections.

Ms. Noor asked about the elevator. Ms. Harris said the main library elevator and roofs at both libraries are in the Guardian budget, and that it may be best to wait until after the elections to have those replaced.

4. SimplifyCT Probono Tax Preparers Report

Ms. Harris said SimplifyCT reported that between the two libraries about 1,800 tax returns had been filed, resulting in almost \$3 million in refunds, which was a bit less than the previous year, likely due to a two-day snowstorm closure. The Norwalk Public Library is their third largest site.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Harris shared a 3D rendering of the new furniture for the main library reading room CAP project. It includes a high-back couch, chairs, work tables with double-sided electrical outlets and data ports. She said the project was cleared with Bill Hnatuk for ADA-compliance.

Final price is approximately \$32,000. The project was budgeted at \$20,000. Ms. Brescia proposed asking the library foundation to pick up the shortfall. Ms. Noor said that was on the agenda for the foundation meeting. There was discussion about a need for quality furniture.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

No new business was discussed.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:46 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

*Jo Bennett
Telesco Secretarial Services*