



REGULAR MEETING – LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS AGENDA

JULY 10, 2025, 7:00 PM
BY ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING

To allow public access, anyone may access a meeting by telephone and/or Zoom, or a recording in the City of Norwalk YouTube channel. Specific instructions and links can be found at norwalkct.gov/meetings.



Members of the public may call in to participate. Callers will not be able to see the meeting participants. All participants will be muted upon entering the meeting. To speak, dial *9 on the phone and you will be called on by the host of the meeting during the public comment section. All speakers must state their name and address. Comments must be on a topic on the agenda, and are limited to three minutes. Anyone disrupting the orderly conduct of the meeting, including by using threatening, hateful, or sexually-explicit language, will be removed. Please find the information using the link above.



Members of the public who wish to provide "live comments" may also use the Zoom meeting platform. All participants will be muted upon entering the meeting. To speak, click the "raise your hand indicator" and you will be called by the host of the meeting during the public comment section. All speakers must state their name and address. Comments must be on a topic on the agenda, and are limited to three minutes. Anyone disrupting the orderly conduct of the meeting, including by using threatening, hateful, or sexually-explicit language, will be removed. Please find the information using the link above.



Members of the public who wish to provide public comment are encouraged to submit those via email in advance of the meeting. For these comments to be included into the record, they must be submitted by 12:00 p.m. the day of the meeting. Please email Sherelle Harris at sharris@norwalkpl.org with the subject line "Public Comment" to provide written public comment prior to the meeting.

- I. **CALL TO ORDER**
- II. **ROLL CALL**
- III. **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**
 - A. **Regular Meeting: DATE**
- IV. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
- V. **REPORTS**
 - A. **President**
 - B. **Treasurer**
 - C. **Library Director**

1. Library Without Borders Update
2. Capital Budget Update
3. Operating Budget: Grounds Account Project Update
4. Passport Service
5. Security
6. Pest Control

VI. OLD BUSINESS

VII. NEW BUSINESS

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

LIBRARY BOARD REPORT

Sherelle Harris, Library Director

July 3, 2025



The Norwalk Public Library System, with our open access to diverse resources, is the information and cultural center for Norwalk citizens and businesses.



LIBRARY WITHOUT BORDERS UPDATE



CT State Library

Preserving the Past. Informing the Future.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 14, 2023

Contact: Dawn La Valle
dawn.lavalle@ct.gov
(860) 757-6665

CT State Library in Partnership with Libraries Without Borders US

Hartford, CT – The CT State Library is pleased to announce a joint partnership with Libraries Without Borders US (LWB). LWB is the American branch of the global NGO Bibliothèques Sans Frontières, which delivers knowledge and information to communities in crisis. LWB has worked to assist people experiencing challenges caused by the digital divide, communities living in book deserts, and those who, for various reasons, do not feel comfortable accessing their local libraries.

The CT State Library and LWB US will be working with six public libraries across the state to build trust and grow habits that ultimately help connect new users to permanent resources available through their local public library. This may include creative solutions such as building intentionally temporary library satellites in community spaces; those locations could be anywhere from laundromats to apartment complexes to grocery store parking lots to community centers.

The CT State Library and LWB team will be working with:

- The David M. Hunt Library in Falls Village, CT
- The East Hartford Public Library in East Hartford, CT
- The Willimantic Public Library in Windham, CT
- The Norwalk Public Library in Norwalk, CT
- The West Haven Public Library in West Haven, CT
- The Otis Library in Norwich, CT

This pilot initiative will span about 12 months focusing on meeting the identified needs of each unique community. The phases of the project include community assessment, distribution of resources, implementation of programming, training, and evaluation.

“We are thrilled to be partnering with Libraries Without Borders US on this project,” said **State Librarian Deborah Schander**. “In the same way we must be

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LIBRARY WITHOUT BORDERS OVERVIEW

An invitation to Connecticut Public Libraries *From the Connecticut State Library & Libraries Without Borders US*



COMMUNITY ACCELERATOR

*A pilot project designed to help Connecticut libraries engage **under-resourced and currently underserved or unserved communities – especially rural, low-income, immigrant and refugee communities, and communities of color.***

- To increase and sustain library usage by those with minimal current engagement
- To increase access to and confidence navigating essential information resources among currently underserved or unserved communities
- To diminish digital and other literacy gaps among under-resourced communities

ABOUT LIBRARIES WITHOUT BORDERS US (LWB US)

- Libraries Without Borders US (LWB US) is the American branch of the global NGO Bibliothèques Sans Frontières (BSF), which delivers knowledge and information to communities in crisis.
- **BSF** has worked in 50+ countries and 25+ languages, touching the lives of three million people, from refugee camps in Jordan and Bangladesh to communities in Burundi and Colombia to transit stations in Poland and Ukraine.
- Since 2014, **LWB US** has adapted this mission to the United States – and developed original solutions to the challenges facing people on the wrong side of the digital divide, communities living in book deserts, and those who, for various reasons, don't feel comfortable accessing their local public library.

THE LWB US APPROACH

- We recognize that fundamental barriers inhibit some communities from accessing resources *through traditional institutions*. These barriers can include a lack of trust, inconvenience, awareness and a sense that they are not welcome in formal spaces.
- To reach those with the greatest needs, we need to **meet people where they are**
- LWB US works with residents, leaders, and organizations to make learning resources available in places that are well-known, convenient, and welcoming. Sites have included **laundromats, storm shelters within mobile home communities, and community centers**.
- As trust and use habits grow, LWB US **helps to connect users to permanent community resources** – including their public library.

LWB US: WORK IN ACTION

LAUNDROMAT LIBRARIES IN BROOKLYN



LAUNDROMAT LIBRARIES

Professor Susan Neuman, New York University, Steinhardt School of Education, "[Laundry Literacy Coalition Pilot Evaluation](#)" (2019):

- *The laundromat library spaces significantly enhanced children's time spent on literacy-rich activities that support school readiness: children were observed engaging in 30 times more literacy activities in laundromats that included the spaces compared to the laundromats that did not have these areas.*
- *When the spaces were paired with librarians, children engaged in substantial and sustained literacy activities (the average stay per child was 47 minutes).*
- *Parents observed librarians modeling a rich array of literacy activities and expressed their enthusiasm for the literacy spaces and librarians' visits.*

BALTIMORE



From 2019-2021, LWB US worked with the Enoch Pratt Free Library (EPFL) to install libraries in laundromats and parking lots across Baltimore.

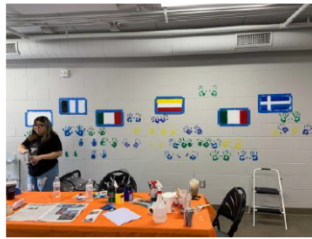
BALTIMORE

Focus: early literacy, digital literacy, mental health, career development

Usage: 30-100 participants per site, per week

Testimony: "I had one customer ask me specifically to teach her more Google sheets. We set it up for her to come in on a different time to do Google sheets, and she wants to continue doing it, so we schedule...We still have to schedule her next session, for example, but she came in and she was so excited. She was like, 'I learned so much.' And it was a basic go-over, and she was so excited that she learned so much."

ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA



From 2020-2021, LWB US worked with Minnesota State Library and the Anoka County Library to transform the storm shelter of the Park Plaza Co-op mobile home community into a multimedia community library.

ANOKA COUNTY, MINNESOTA

Focus: Early literacy, digital literacy, ESL, civic engagement and community building

Usage: 15 learning sessions and 75 computer participants per week

LOIZA, PUERTO RICO



Since 2019, LWB US has transformed abandoned community spaces into self-powered community libraries with free high-speed internet access and youth training programs.

LOIZA, PUERTO RICO

Focus: Digital literacy, health education, community building

Usage: 30-40 participants per week and 22 Agile Training workshops across all sites

Accomplishments: Transformation of three abandoned buildings into self-powered multimedia community centers – led by local youth leaders.

POST-ENGAGEMENT IMPACTS

Baltimore: Enoch Pratt Free Library (EPFL) increased funding for outreach in FY2021 and FY2022. In 2022, EPFL increased program attendance goals by 20% largely by focusing on mobile and digital programming and expanding internet access.

Minnesota: The Minnesota State Library (MSL) now hosts webinars about the laundromat programming to teach librarians how to “bring learning spaces to ordinary places” In 2022, St Paul Public Library expanded outreach to Karen, Somali, and Latinx communities and funded additional support resources and technologies including hotspots.

San Antonio: San Antonio Public Library (SAPL) budget increased \$922,000 in FY2021, with funding going toward developing collaborative community classrooms and technology areas, and expanding the reach of free wifi in parking spots and vehicles.

COMMUNITY ACCELERATOR PILOT

- The **Connecticut State Library** and **LWB US** are launching a **12-18-month pilot project** to enhance the outreach capacity of select Connecticut libraries.
- The initial cohort of **4-6 libraries** will represent urban, suburban and rural catchment areas across the state.

PROJECT PROCESS I

1. Targeting and Assessment: 2 months

LWB will work with library leadership to canvass existing quantitative and qualitative assessments and work with community leaders and organizations to determine specific literacy and information needs among underserved or unserved communities.

2. Community Co-design: 4-6 months

LWB will work with the local library staff and community leaders to identify and form an informal planning committee charged with helping to locate, plan, bring partners to, and ultimately help promote temporary library spaces within the community. The process will involve selecting high-traffic, trusted community spaces or institutions in which to locate pop-up programming and community-based service partners.

PROJECT PROCESS II

3. Training: 2 months

LWB US will work with the library to identify current capacity and skills, confidence, and training gaps. The LWB team of community organizers and trainers will work with library leadership to develop a community outreach curriculum with in-person and virtual training for key existing library staff.

4. Activation: 2 months

LWB US will install pop-up libraries in nontraditional places. We will work with library staff to select services and resources which may include but are not limited to age, culture, and language-appropriate books, periodicals, and reading materials; digital devices, hotspots, and broadband internet access; take-and-go resources and in-person services addressed to multiple forms of literacy.

PROJECT PROCESS III

5. Opening and Celebration: 2-6 months

Temporary spaces create an opportunity to transform relationships, but the financial limits do not allow for permanent activation. Each project is designed for a specific time, which is clearly and regularly communicated to users. As the end date approaches, focus is placed on helping users understand, feel welcome at, and connected to their permanent library. This may include card registration days and/or "field trips" to the local library. The closure of the site is treated as a day of celebration that helps to solidify relationships and open pathways to ongoing library usage.

6. Wrap-up and next steps: 1 month

LWB US will conduct a post-project evaluation in collaboration with library staff, including recommendations for sustaining community engagement, documentation of our shared work, ongoing evaluation tools, and finalized curriculum.

DELIVERABLES: LIBRARIES

- Increased usage of library services by previously underserved or unserved communities measured by metrics co-created by LWB US and library leadership. They may include but are not limited to library utilization, pop-up visits, and library card registration.
- Deepened relationships with community partner organizations, institutions, and leaders from previously underserved or unserved communities.
- Confidence and capacity among key staff for ongoing outreach efforts to connect underserved communities with library resources.

DELIVERABLES: END USERS

- Increased access to information resources including but not limited to digital literacy and digital devices; culturally and linguistically appropriate books, periodicals, and reading materials; resources addressing other literacies: English, health, civic, legal, and financial.



Project in Review: Norwalk Public Library

DATA SOURCES

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| | <p>45 community stakeholder interviews, in-depth interviews with library staff</p> | | <p>Communications analysis of all social media platforms</p> |
| | <p>Infrastructure mapping of stakeholders, organizations, meeting places, and pillars of the Norwalk community</p> | | <p>Library data and community demographic information via CT State Library data, American Community Survey Census data, Advance CT reports, and CT Data Collaborative</p> |

KEY FINDINGS

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>1 A staff member at Norwalk Public Library describes what they call “an age old library problem” where some libraries limit their marketing to “traditional” strategies (newsletters, program flyers, etc), and community members who aren’t already engaged are left unaware of their offerings.</p> <p>Many residents look to social media specifically to find information about their city, yet both branches of NPL host social media accounts that lag behind industry standards of engagement and reach, which highlights a gap in community connection and awareness. Inconsistently posted content limits opportunities for residents to learn about offerings at both the main and South Norwalk (SoNo) branches.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Facebook</p> | | |
| | | <p style="text-align: center;">Main</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">SoNo</p> |
| | <p style="text-align: center;">Avg. Reach per Post</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">454</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">253</p> |
| | <p style="text-align: center;">Avg. Engagements per Post</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">11</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">9.8</p> |
| | <p style="text-align: center;">Instagram</p> | | |
| | | <p style="text-align: center;">Main</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">SoNo</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Avg. Reach per Post</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">327.5</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">81.6</p> | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Avg. Engagements per Post</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">13.2</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">8.5</p> | |
| <p>2 Residents describe Norwalk as a supportive community with an impressive amount of services for those who need them. However, they also note that this conflicts with lacking community awareness of these offerings. For example, the library itself offers free language learning resources, yet community members consistently name the need for language services in Norwalk.</p> | <p><i>“It seems to be that the library only relies on putting up signs for people who already come to the library... There are lots of people who don’t even know how to utilize the library or where it is.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">-Norwalk Resident</p> | | |

OUTREACH STRATEGIES



Library Promotion through Community Access Points, Community Partner Expansion, & Social Media



This project is made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered by the Connecticut State Library

IMPACT

Established Community Access Points & Expanded Local Partnerships

“I think [our access points] were very helpful. We already reach

A local man, who likes to remain anonymous, donated \$2,000 to each library to purchase picture books to go toward the Libraries Without Borders endeavor.

Our Main Library worked with Norwalk's Early Childhood Volunteer Reader Program to provide books to community children ages 3 – 5 with the books purchased with the donated money.

Our SoNo Library began working with the Carver Center after school program spring 2024. We purchased 4 shelving units. One of the units was placed at the Carver Center and stocked with books. One of the units was recently, spring 2025, placed at Side by Side Community Charter School for their preschool program and stocked with books purchased with the donated money.

CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE

The main library reading room furniture capital project was finalized. The committee included library board chair Moina Noor, library board vice chair Patsy Brescia, library board treasurer Jannie Williams, library director Sherelle Harris and head of adult services Cynde Lahey. Together, we have come up with a layout, color scheme and quality furniture, purchased for Robert H. Lord Company, that patrons will find both comfortable and aesthetically.

Similar to the first floor renovation/repurposing project at SoNo library, we kept our elderly patrons in mind.

“People of earlier generations who reached their middle 60s were, by reputation, anyway, often retired, sedentary, or even homebound. Libraries have long served this population with large-print books, outreach to senior centers, delivery of library materials to the homebound and regularly scheduled movies at the library. These programs are still necessary, but not enough.”

- **David M. Guion, Journalist/Editor**

According to American Library Association, our older adults are:

- **America’s older adults are diverse**, differing by age, education, life experience, sexual orientation, health, geographic location, and income.
- **Active older adults typically live in their own homes or retirement communities**, are involved in community activities, and manage their own transportation.
- **One of the fastest-growing groups of active older adults are the baby boomers.**
- **Frail elders are typically the oldest adults and often include persons living in residential facilities** and those with various disabling conditions.

Sources and Resources

American Association of Retired Persons

www.aarp.org

American Society on Aging

www.asaging.org

National Council on Aging

www.ncoa.org

U.S. Administration on Aging

We made sure that the seating is sturdy and not too low, and that the chairs, aside from those at the work tables, have arms for those who need the assistance standing and sitting. We also ensured the colors are compatible with the new carpet that was installed May 2024 as part of an approved CAP project.

Please see the following three pages for design.

Adult Area

3-D Colored Rendering

5.31.25 – some of the material colors shown on square tables and ottomans will need to be revised. Revisions will be added to slides when time permits.

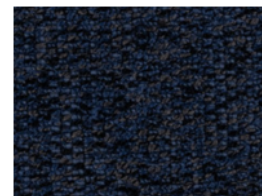


Adult Area

3-D Colored Rendering

Adult Area

#L-01: Curved Lounge with wrapped tall back. OFGO Unify Series Modular Lounge. Segmented units to create the curves. Shown with 2-Tone materials. Made up of (3) 54" w x 28" d x 53" h. Black Metal Post Legs. Laminate top: Linea Mocha on ottoman.

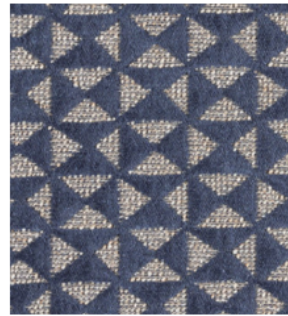


Seat and Top Back:
Mayer – Editor- Midnight
#WC920-024

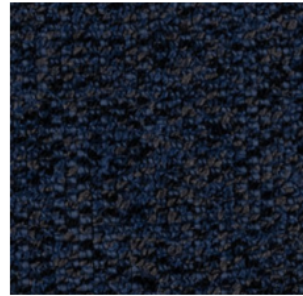


#CH-1 & #CH-1A: Lounge Chair - OFGO – Tribute Series Mobile Lounge Chair

Total Qty. (8) chairs: Single fabric. Black casters front and back on all chairs.



#CH-1: (4) Mayer – Ephesus – Indigo
#623-004



#CH-1A: (4) Mayer – Editor – Midnight
WC920-04

#CH-2: Chair at worktables

Adult Area



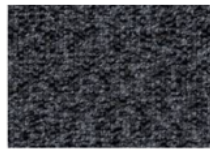
Linea Mocha (LM)

Laminate on worktables

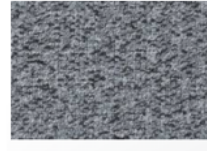
JSI – Hoopz Series: Shell color options

Upholstered seat: Mayer, Editor: color: TBD.

Frame: Black or Chrome



EDITOR
Cinder



EDITOR
Slate



EDITOR
Topaz



EDITOR
Water



EDITOR
Midnight



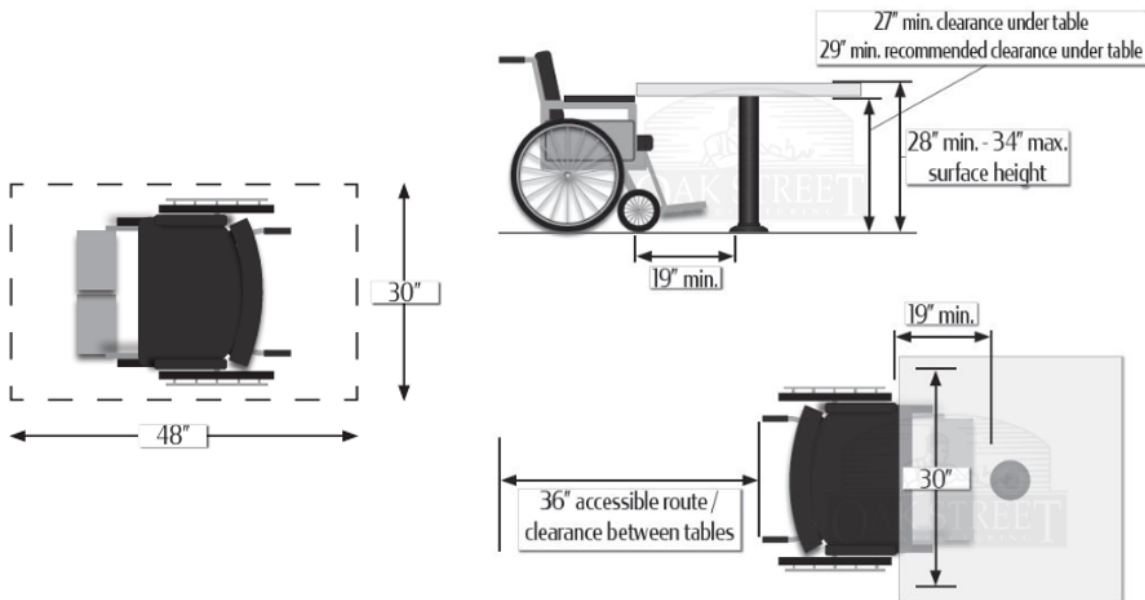
EDITOR
Mineral

Poly Shell color options: Beige, Black, Green, White, Grey & Red



The two work tables in the back in the first two slides will have the linea mocha laminate and the eight chairs will be black with chrome frame. Bill Hnatuk, the city's ADA coordinator, approved the furniture per ADA guidelines.

ADA Guidelines



We would like to purchase 125 of the same chairs (that we purchased for the reading room work tables) in grey for the main library's community room to replace the chairs that we have had since the 1970s. The main library's community room has a capacity limit of 175 per fire marshal.

The main library reading room CAP project was approved at \$20,000. The total \$31,993.80. The Library Foundation approved paying for the shortfall.

The Library Foundation also paid for the outdoor furniture that was not approved in the FY 2023-24 CAP budget request. The cost was roughly \$7,500. This was a significant improvement to our exterior.

The Library Foundation also paid for the painting of the SoNo Library vestibule, stair railing and office cabinets.

We are grateful for their assistance in keeping the library modern and cared for.

SOUTH NORWALK LIBRARY FIRST FLOOR RENOVATION

The South Norwalk Library is in the final stages of the first floor renovation/ repurposing project. Money that was not needed for contingency is being used to finalize furniture purchases. We anticipate the furniture arrival in September.

SECURITY CAMERAS

The security cameras have been installed at both buildings, but they are not yet operational. I would like for the police station, the guards in both buildings and the heads at both buildings to have access to camera footage. A conversation planned for this Thursday will let me know how this will work and any needed signage. Cameras are located on the exterior of both buildings and one in the 2R office area due to thefts from my office.

FYI

<https://www.cleveland19.com/2025/04/02/18-year-old-dies-after-shooting-inside-shaker-heights-library/>

OPERATING BUDGET GROUNDS ACCOUNT UPDATE

The library rolled over the following to the grounds account, 016200-5265 to address the issues in the parking lots—striping, directional signage, etc—and to remove/replace the fence between the 1 Belden Avenue and the 3 Belden Avenue parcels and address the drainage and egress issues between the parcels.

- \$7,400 remaining in the grounds account 5265 was rolled over to same account.
- \$12,600 from 5294 (machinery-equipment rental) was rolled over to 5265.
- \$29,000f from 5391 (audio visual equipment) was rolled over to 5255.

| FYE 2025 | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--|
| "TO" DEPARTMENT | "TO" ACCOUNT | "TO" ACCOUNT NAME | ROLLOVER AMOUNT | Reason |
| Library | 016200-5265 | GROUNDS&OUTDOOR COURTS | \$7,400.00 | FYE 2023, we were allotted \$10,404 for grounds. FYE 2024 we entered into a two-year contractual agreement with Eagles to lease 30 parking spaces for \$12,600/year. FYE2024 we were allotted \$5,000 for grounds and had to transfer \$15,000 into the account to cover the contractual agreement. FYE 2025 we were allotted \$10,000. We had to transfer \$5,000 into the account to cover the contractual agreement. To date, our FYE2025 balance is \$2,400. Requesting move the \$7400 to do the upkeep of three parking lots that need striping, directional signage, signage identifying library parking and emergency maintenance needed throughout the year for both buildings. |
| Library | 016200-5265 | GROUNDS&OUTDOOR COURTS | \$12,600.00 | Now that the City of Norwalk has acquired the property, we are seeking these funds to address the removal of the fence, rectifying the egress/grading issues for safe crossing between the two buildings (1 and 3 Beleden parcels) and fixing the drainage issue to stop the draining into the 3 Belden Avenue building. The funding of \$12,600 will be overseen by Guardian request to move to the grounds account #5265. |
| Library | 016200-5265 | GROUNDS&OUTDOOR COURTS | \$29,000.00 | The Library has now taken over full grounds at Main and SoNo and now requests funds for the grounds management initiative budgeted at \$15,000 (Guardian quote) grounds to be moved into account #5265. The remaining balance of \$14,000 requesting to be moved to the grounds account #5265 to the projects referencing the work that needs to be done between 1 and 3 Belden parcels as noted in the reasoning in account #5265. |

The parking lots are completed, though the hedges in the 3 Belden lot should be trimmed further for visibility of people walking or cycling on the sidewalk just outside of the lot. Too, the sign for the Eagles fence needs to be picked up and placed on the fence.

Neil, from Guardian, the city of Norwalk’s building management company, submitted the invoice for the fence and egress issues and we are waiting for the third quote/invoice for the drainage issue.

The project started 7.1.25





We also take the contractually obligated \$12,600 for the parking at Eagles Fraternal Order from the grounds account.



PASSPORT SERVICE

We received an email on July 1, 2025 from the passport office of acceptance facility oversight that the main library was approved as a passport facility. The South Norwalk Library, however, was not. The South Norwalk Library application will remain on file for one year and we will be contacted in the event additional acceptance locations are needed in Norwalk.

We await an email detailing next steps.

NEW

SECURITY GUARD COMPANY

City Hall, Norwalk Health Department and Norwalk Public Library have changed security guard companies, but we were able to retain Jesus at the main library. The SoNo guard opted not to remain and a replacement was found.

PEST CONTROL

The city of Norwalk hired a new pest control company. Both Norwalk Public Library and the city of Norwalk had previously hired Connecticut Pest Control. The city of Norwalk recently hired Catseye Pest Control. I had a site visit with them on 7.3.25. They are very attentive to details. I provided the building plans for both buildings. I would like the library to hire them, as well. They will map each area of both buildings on their computer with details on how to address each area. A supervisor will come with a technician for the first visit to go over the map to get started.

We had a terrible time with mosquitos for the past few years. Neil, from Guardian, the city of Norwalk's building management company, introduced us to Mosquito Squad and we have seen a tremendous difference.

TIDYING THE PLACE

We have done quite a bit of tidying near the main library's north entrance. We moved the desk and carts to another area, so the north entrance does not look like a dumping ground. We moved the display furnishing to that area. A bit of the beautiful wood covered by the new books is now exposed.



The book sale area near the café area was organized with the wood shelving being evenly spaced. The paintings were moved and similarly spaced. We did quite a bit of measuring.







END