

**CITY OF NORWALK
LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS
JULY 10, 2025
VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

ATTENDANCE: Alex Knopp, Laurel Peterson, Mary Mann (Vice-Chair), Moina Noor (Chair), Jannie Williams, Patsy Brescia

STAFF: Sherelle Harris (Library Director)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Noor called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. There was a quorum present.

II. ROLL CALL

A roll call of those present was performed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

A moment of silence was held for Cheryl Telesco.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

The minutes have been tabled.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public present to comment at this time.

V. REPORTS

LIBRARY DIRECTOR

LIBRARY WITHOUT BORDERS UPDATE

Director Harris gave a presentation regarding Norwalk Public Library's (NPL) collaboration with Libraries Without Borders (LWB). NPL was selected as one of six libraries in Connecticut to participate in this initiative, which focuses on community inclusivity through libraries by providing information online and throughout the community to bring awareness to library services and programs. She was pleased to announce that the social media percentage increases gained while working with the LWB program is promising and that the information is the Connecticut State Library's website. Ms. Peterson inquired about the program's social media impact. Ms. Harris said social media posts raise awareness of NPL's programs and services, but staff are also cognizant of residents who do not use social media and work to find ways to reach them, as well. Vice Chair Brescia asked about press coverage. Ms. Harris agreed that press regarding the benefits of working with LWB would be beneficial.

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Ms. Harris went on to provide an update on the work of both children’s departments, main library and SoNo library. She said the main library worked with the Norwalk Early Childhood Volunteer Reader program to provide books to community children’ ages 3 – 5. She said that the SoNo library began working with the Carver Center spring 2024. They bought four units that hold books to distribute in the community. They started with the Carver Center and have recently supplied a unit to Side By Side Community School for their kindergarten classes. She said an anonymous donor learned of their work with LWB and donated \$2,000 to each library to purchase picture books for this work. The main library used the money for their work with the Early Childhood Volunteer Reader program. The SoNo library used the money to stock the units they have in the community with books.

CAPITAL BUDGET UPDATE

Furniture selection was finalized for the adult reading room at the main library, designed with elderly readers in mind, similar to the furniture selection for SoNo’s first floor renovation project. Vice Chair Brescia, who was on the furniture selection committee along with Chair Moina Noor, Treasurer Jannie Williams, and Adult Services Director Cynde Lahey, asked questions regarding delivery and payment. Ms. Harris anticipates September delivery of the furniture for the main library’s adult reading room and the second phase of the SoNo library’s first floor renovation. She shared rendered images of the finalized furniture for the main library. Ms. Harris consulted with Bill Hnatuk, city of Norwalk ADA coordinator to ensure both projects were ADA compliant. She said \$20,000, the amount approved for the main library project would be paid by the city and the shortfall by the Library Foundation. She thanked the board for financial assistance with many projects including vestibule painting at SoNo and the updated outdoor furniture at the main library.

Also part of the capital project, exterior security cameras were installed at both libraries, along with one interior camera on the administrative floor of the main library, Ms. Harris noted, due to thefts from her office. Ms. Harris stated that access to camera footage would be given to her and to the manager of SoNo library to monitor SoNo. Ms. Harris said she would like for the Norwalk Police department to have access to the footage. Ms. Mann asked about the placement of cameras facing library staff and whether they were necessary. Ms. Williams expressed opposition to cameras at staff desks and recommended placing them in hallways and stairwells instead. Ms. Harris clarified that the exterior cameras would capture people going in and out of the building and didn’t see a need to have them directly on staff, but said the stairwells should be given consideration..

OPERATING BUDGET: GROUNDS ACCOUNT PROJECT UPDATE

Funds rolled over from FY2023-24 to FY2024-25 were used to remove fencing and resolve egress issues between the 1 Belden Avenue (main library) and 3 Belden Avenue parcels. Ms. Harris said Neil Rennie, from Guardian, the city of Norwalk’s management company, reported that he didn’t think the drainage issue was no longer a problem.

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PASSPORT SERVICE

Ms. Harris reported that on July 1, 2025, the main library was approved as a passport acceptance facility by the U.S. Department of State's Office of Acceptance Facility Oversight. The South Norwalk Library, however, was not approved. That application will remain on file for one year, and the City may be contacted should additional acceptance sites be needed. The library is currently awaiting next-step instructions via email. Passport service is expected to begin in September.

SECURITY

The library, along with city hall and the health department, has transitioned to a new security guard company.

PEST CONTROL

A new pest control company has also been contracted. Ms. Harris noted that from her initial contact, the new company seems thorough. She stated that Mr. Rennie, from Guardian, introduced the library use Mosquito Squad to address the mosquito issues the main library has had for years and that she is satisfied with their service. Ms. Peterson raised concerns about pesticide use and bee protection. Ms. Harris confirmed that their products are “green” and were vetted for environmental safety.

TIDYING EFFORTS

Images were shown of various areas of the library that had recently been decluttered and reorganized. Chair Noor and others expressed support for the improvements. Areas tidied include the North entrance and the book sale section closest to the café.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

There was no Old Business at this time.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

It was announced that the Board will not meet in August. The next meeting is scheduled for September.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jada Caballero

City Of Norwalk
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Regular Meeting
July 10, 2025