CITY OF NORWALK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ATTENDANCE: Moina Noor, Chair; Patsy Brescia, Vice Chair;, Alex Knopp, Laurel Peterson, Haroldo Williams, Jannie Williams, Mary Mann (7:11 p.m.)

ABSENT: Thomas Cullen

OTHERS: Sherelle Harris, Library Director

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Noor called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. A quorum was present.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES

- **January 9, 2025**

The following corrections were noted:

Page 3, paragraph 1, please replace the following:

> Ms. Noor stated that the Governance Committee met and Ms. Peterson sent a copy of the Charter revision. There were comments and discussion on the document.

With:

> Ms. Noor stated that the Governance Committee met and Ms. Peterson sent a copy of the Charter revision at the last meeting. There were comments and discussion on the document at that time.

Page 3, paragraph 2, line 2, please change the following from:

> According to Dawn this is basically

To:

> According to Dawn Lavalle, of the Connecticut State Library Board, this is basically

Page 7, paragraph 8, line 1: please change the following from:

> Ms. William repeated that he was the Committee

To:

> Ms. William repeated that she was the Committee

**** MS. WILLIAMS MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 9, 2025 AS CORRECTED.**
**** MS. NOOR SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FIVE (5) IN FAVOR (NOOR, BRESCIA, KNOPP, H. WILLIAMS AND J. WILLIAMS) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (PETERSON)**.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no one from the public present to comment.

REPORTS

A. President

1. Library Cafe

Mr. Williams updated the Board on the Café. The RFP closed on January 28th. There were no submissions. Since then, there have been two parties that have expressed interest in operating the café. There will be meetings with the two new parties on the 14th to discuss the matter. Both parties have experience in the food service business.

Ms. Brescia asked if the new parties had been cleared by the City. Mr. Williams said that if they find that these parties are still interested, they will go back to the City to work out the details.

Ms. Mann joined the meeting at 7:11 p.m.

2. Walkthrough of Libraries

Ms. Noor said that she had sent out a date for the potential walkthrough and only Ms. Williams and Ms. Brescia responded. Ms. Brescia asked whether they would tour both the Main Library and SoNo.

Ms. Williams said that she would like to tour both the Main Library and the SoNo branch. This was agreeable to all.

3. Charter Revision

Ms. Noor then asked the Board if they had seen the letter from the City. Ms. Harris was asked to display the email on screen.

> Dear Board Members,
>
> At our last meeting, the majority of the Board voted that we take our draft of possible Charter Revision changes to Corporation Counsel before sending them to the Charter Revision Committee. I have been in touch with Tom Livingston. Here is his

Response: (Steve Mednick is the lawyer for the Charter Revision Committee and Mario is the City Corporation Counsel.)

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Moina,

I’ve reached out to Steve Mednick and Mario and also spoken with the Mayor. At this point, we don’t see a compelling reason to change the appointment process. The Library has a sizable budget – in excess of $4 million – and is managed and operated by City employees. For these and other reasons discussed in the last Charter revision, we think it is appropriate that the Mayor continue to appoint the person responsible for managing it.

I know this is not the answer you wanted and you are free to make your case to the Charter Revision Commission if that is what the Board decides. Needless to say, we would not support a change,

Tom

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Ms. Noor opened the floor for discussion.

Ms. Williams pointed out that there was a difference between “appoint” and “hire”. She said that the words had two different meanings. Ms. Noor noted that the Charter uses the word “appoint” for every single position.

Ms. Mann said that she would like it to be changed, but the letter states that the City would not change their opinion. She would like to see the Board have the authority to make the decision regarding who the Director would be.

Ms. Brescia noted that the Director was a City employee and it would be unusual for the Board to make the final decision. She noted that the process for the last Library Director had worked well and the Board submitted three candidates. The Mayor select the final candidate.

Ms. Williams agreed.

Ms. Noor said that while she did agree that the process worked well, it was more of a custom rather than a defined role. Ms. Noor’s concern is that the Board could be ignored in the future. There is nothing in the current Charter defining how the process works.

Ms. Williams said that this was how it was done. The Board works in conjunction with the Mayor. She said that she did not understand what the issue was. Regardless of whether or not it was in the Charter, the process worked.

Mr. Williams said that it would be good to have the process defined. Otherwise a future Mayor could come in and disregard the process to hire whoever he wanted.

Ms. Harris displayed the Draft #2 on screen. Ms. Brescia said that the Board needs to have the document as it currently reads on screen. This is the frustrating issue with Zoom meetings.

Ms. Peterson said that in order to maintain a balance of power, it would be best to have the Board work with the Mayor.

Ms. Noor said that she would locate the section of the Charter that addresses this. She said that the Board should have a role with the Mayor in hiring the Library Director. It should be done in collaboration and partnership. It has been and should be continue to be if people continue the custom.

Ms. Williams said that Section 8.2 has the appointment process listed.

Ms. Brescia asked if Ms. Noor knew when the Charter Revision Commission would be discussing this. Ms. Noor said that she did not know. Ms. Brescia said they should have information and facts ready to present to the Charter Revision Commission. Ms. Noor asked if they should notify the Chair of the Charter Commission.

Ms. Peterson said that given the national discussion on information access and balance of power, the Board should present this to the Charter Commission. Ms. Noor said that the Board should decide if they want to send a letter to the Charter Commission Chair, she would check into this. This was agreeable to all.

B. Treasurer – No report at this time.

C. Library Director

1. Budget progress to date

Ms. Harris greeted the Board Members and displayed the Capital Budget spreadsheet on screen. It appears that the requests for ADA compliance doorknobs, Library van, “The Hour” Norwalk newspaper digitization project and the refresh laptop vending machines per contract have been included in the budget.

2. Main Library: ADA-Compliant Sliding Doors

Ms. Harris displayed photographs of the new sliding doors at the Main Library.

Ms. Brescia asked about the newspaper digitalization project and said that she thought this was the final year. Ms. Harris said that there was one more year to go.

Ms. Brescia asked if there would be a meeting on March 4th. She noted that there had been a meeting on February 12th about the Library and asked if they had received confirmation on the Capital Budget. Ms. Noor said that she believed that it would be posted soon.

3. Draft Confidentiality Policy
4. Draft Homebound Policy

Ms. Harris sent a copy of the confidentiality policy draft and homebound policy drafts to the Board Members. Ms. Harris said that the confidentiality policy was based on the State policy. She gave an overview of the details. Once the policy is approved by Corporation Council, they can move forward.

Ms Harris is also waiting to hear back from Corporation Council about the homebound policy.

5. Proposed PT Raises

Ms. Harris said that she had sent information on the proposed PT raises. The PT staff have have not had a raise since 2012. She said that they would have to schedule a special meeting if they approve the increase now. She reviewed the current pay scales and the proposed pay increases. She proposed increasing the pay by $2.00 for the remainder of the year and another $1.00 for the next fiscal year. The raises were not included in the budget.

Ms. Noor said that the City had not approved the Operating Budget yet. Ms. Harris said that this is why they would need a special meeting. She noted that the current pay scale is very low.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to consider at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to consider at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. BRESCIA MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
**** MS. MANN SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services