

**CITY OF NORWALK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
SPECIAL MEETING  
APRIL 14, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Stan Siegel, Jannie Williams, Patsy Brescia, Ralph Bloom,  
Taber Hamilton, Alex Knopp, Mary Mann, Susan Wallerstein

STAFF: Sherelle Harris, Assistant Library Director

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Siegel called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and noted that members as listed above were in attendance and a quorum was present.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Public Comments – None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Siegel noted that the minutes to last month's meeting had not been forthcoming and that approval of the previous minutes would be postponed until the next meeting.

**President's Report** – Mr. Siegel noted that the Hearst Connecticut Media Group had acquired *The Hour* newspaper and that he wants to continue the great relationship the Norwalk Public Library has with local press.

Ms. Wallerstein stated that Robert Koch and Jim Reid would remain on the newspaper's staff and that she met new staff members Silvia Foster-Frau, Christina Hennessey, Brian Lockhart and others at a meet and greet held at the Maritime Garage Gallery.

Mr. Siegel suggested that Christine Bradley/Sherelle Harris inquire of *The Hour* who the library contacts would be.

**Treasurer's Report** – Ms. Williams distributed her report and fielded questions and comments from the Board.

Ms. Wallerstein noted that she would abstain from the vote because she is still becoming acclimated with financial matters. She added that she wants to view MUNIS and the capital and operating budgets. She also asked if library expenditures are part of the treasurer's report.

Mr. Siegel states that sometimes they are part of the library director's report.

- \*\* **MR. HAMILTON MOVED TO APPROVE THE TREASURER'S REPORT.**
- \*\* **MR. KNOPP SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- \*\* **MOTION PASSED SEVEN VOTES IN FAVOR, NONE OPPOSED AND ONE ABSTENTION (WALLERSTEIN).**

**Library Modernization and Parking Committee Report** – Mr. Knopp stated that the City of Norwalk will attempt to negotiate with various property owners for acquisition of properties for library expansion and parking. He noted that the focus will be on reimagining the library's role in the community for the next 20 years.

Mr. Knopp also noted the March 2016 Planning and Zoning meeting was rendered void because not enough members voted and added that their next meeting will be held at 7:00 pm on April 20, 2016 in the Council Chambers in City Hall. He encouraged all board members to attend.

Mr. Knopp mentioned that the committee will meet bi-monthly on the second Thursday of the month at 6:00 pm, just before regularly scheduled board meetings, and on the fourth Thursday of the month at 4:00 pm to allow for other officials—The Redevelopment Agency, The Parking Authority, and other agencies that may be invited—to attend the meetings.

Mr. Knopp noted that committee is looking at what other libraries—Fairfield, Greenwich, New Haven, and Stamford (Darien will be forthcoming)—have done with library redesign in order to get ideas for expansion opportunities that will include recreation and a coffee shop. The committee plans to visit the libraries in the near future. Outreach to the Norwalk community will be a major part of the process in the hope that participation at the launching will remain at the landing. The committee will look at available grants such as the Connecticut State Library's modest modernization grant and its capital construction grant.

Mr. Knopp added that Ms. Mann will be the liaison to the Webster Parking Lot in South Norwalk to acquire more parking spaces for the South Norwalk Branch Library and to determine the impact of having a mall so close to the branch.

Ms. Wallerstein commented that Norwalk is the only school district in the area that does not have librarians in its elementary schools and that the Norwalk Public Library consider their role with elementary school libraries during the planning phase.

- \*\* **MS. MANN MOVED TO APPROVE THE TREASURER'S REPORT.**
- \*\* **MR. HAMILTON SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- \*\* **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Literacy Volunteers Committee Report** – Ms. Wallerstein agreed to table her full report until next month when Ms. Bradley would be in attendance, but made three points: Literacy Volunteers is a valuable service serving 900 people, 90% of them from Norwalk with 49 of 88 volunteer teachers also from Norwalk; \$30,000 is listed as the budget for the department, but is really \$48,000 - \$50,000 when supplies and technology are factored in, however, consideration should be given as to how the department will be supported if funding vanished; and after a

conversation with Don Foust, who works in the Norwalk Public Schools Adult Education Department, Ms. Wallerstein noted that a close partnerships with Adult Education and ELL should be considered.

**Library Administration Report** - Ms. Harris distributed the report and reviewed its highlights.

Petitions – Ms. Harris stated that nearly 1,200 petitions have been signed to acquire parking adjacent to the library and that more are forthcoming.

Planning and Zoning Update – Ms. Harris noted that the 11 Belden application is on the Planning and Zoning committee’s agenda for April 20.

April is Poetry and Jazz Month – Ms. Harris noted that Laurel Peterson, an English faculty member at Norwalk Community College, was named Norwalk’s first poet Laureate on April 1 at the main library. She also noted the other events: the second annual Evening of Jazz and Poetry at the Norwalk Inn on April 8 that netted \$646 for library programs; an April 10 Emily Dickinson (performed by Ginger Grace) visit to the library, an April 11 celebration of Norwalk Fair Housing’s 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with Jazz and Poetry at City Hall; and poetry on each Norwalk Transit Authority bus.

Ms. Brescia said that Ms. Peterson is an amazing poet and that she enjoyed listening to the many passionate poets at the Norwalk Inn.

Policies – Ms. Harris explained her work with Simona Maddox from the city’s finance department, in consultation with library supervisors, to complete the library’s new cash handling policy and procedure manual. She also stated that she would be working with the library’s Circulation Systems Manager and Director of Information Services to revise circulation and materials selection policies and would present them to the board upon completion.

Foundation Requests – Ms. Harris explained that in the course of developing the cash handling policy, administration proposes shifting the Lost and Paid revenue with the collection agency expenses to the city’s band instead of the Foundations and request of the city that the increased revenue minus the collection agency fee be added to the city budget for library materials. Lost and Paid revenue has been a consistent \$10,000 for the past three years and collection agency expenses have been an average of \$350 a month.

Ms. Wallerstein liked the idea and stated that if the city agrees, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) should be in place and that administration should inquire as to whether any other city departments have a similar situation.

Mr. Knopp asked to what account are library fines placed.

Ms. Harris responded that library fines go to the city’s account.

A discussion ensued and it was suggested that the library also ask the city to return fine money.

Ms. Harris continued with administration’s annual request of an amount not to exceed \$2,500 to reimburse staff who participate in professional development opportunities.

Ms. Wallerstein asked if the collective bargaining units support education opportunities.

Ms. Harris stated that NMEA has an education reimbursement plan.

Ms. Wallerstein stated that she would support the request with the stipulation that bargaining units should be tapped prior to the board in the future.

**\*\* MS. BRESCIA MOVED TO APPROVE THE REQUEST TO SHIFT THE LOST AND PAID REVENUE WITH THE COLLECTION AGENCY EXPENSES TO THE CITY'S BAND INSTEAD OF THE FOUNDATIONS AND TO FUND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$2,500 THIS YEAR WITH THE STIPULATION THAT STAFF WOULD SEEK THEIR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING UNITS HEREAFTER.**

**\*\* MS. MANN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Branding – Ms. Harris announced that the city launched its new brand on April 7. She gave board members a note pad with the new “Sound of Connecticut” logo. She also showed the city’s new brand for the library, which is not yet available, but is expected to be used on the website, stationery and library cards when it is. She added that the city would pay for the latter.

Mrs. Wallerstein stated that it is great that Liz Stocker has money to pay for the library cards.

Mr. Siegel noted that it is nice that Connecticut is on the city’s logo, which differentiates Norwalk, CT from Norwalk, OH and Norwalk, CA and others. He asked Ms. Harris if she could follow up and ask if Connecticut can be listed on the library’s logo.

Ms. Harris stated that she would.

Love Letter to the Norwalk Public Library – Ms. Harris shared a love letter dated April 9, 2014 that was sent to Ms. Bradley from Elaine Camerota who moved to Norwalk from Cincinnati, OH less than two months ago. She commented on the programs and the helpful staff and specifically mentioned Sam Arnold, Ramona Garcia, and Tina Kramer.

Mrs. Wallerstein asked if the board recognized staff members who do a good job.

Mr. Siegel responded that the idea is great and that it would be appropriate to send their gestures through the library director or assistant director.

Mr. Siegel stated that he would distribute copies of the library’s 2000 Long Range Plan to board members after the meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MS. MANN MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**

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

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sherelle Harris; Assistant Library Director

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