

NORWALK PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES / REGULAR MEETING / MARCH 11, 2010

ATTENDANCE: Stan Siegel, President; Artie Kassimis; Charles McMullen, Mary Pugh,
Mohan Tracy; Jannie Williams

STAFF: Frank Ferro, Library Director; Christine Bradley, Assistant Library Director

OTHER: Lori Torrano

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Siegel called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA / ACTION ITEMS

There were no additions to the agenda/action items.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 11, 2010 MEETING

Mr. Siegel stated that copies of the minutes were sent by email to everyone, and stated that if there were no comments, he would entertain a motion to approve.

- ** **MR. MCMULLEN MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 11, 2010 MEETING AS SUBMITTED.**
- ** **MS. VETTER SECONDED.**
- ** **THE MOTION PASSED WITH ALL IN FAVOR, NONE OPPOSED, AND ONE ABSTENTION (MS. TRACY).**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Siegel requested to move the President's report to later on the agenda and asked to have the Library Director's report to be next.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Ferro provided his written report and stated that the monthly statistics relative to circulation borrowing for the year to date are compared to last year and significant changes were highlighted in yellow. He added that the reports were self-explanatory, and he would be happy to answer any questions or concerns, and there were no comments from the Board. Mr. Ferro stated that there were two requests for expense approval; one for moving books for the upcoming book sale, that is a standard request, and the other is for conference fees that no longer are covered by the City budget. He added that the CLA Conference is in April and he would like to be able to offer to the Librarians the opportunity to attend. Ms. Vetter asked who would be attending, and he replied Chris Bradley, Tom Schadlich, Judy Rivas, Sherelle Harris, and himself. Ms Pugh asked what happened if they were all out at the same time, and Mr. Ferro stated that they would stagger their attendance over two days, so the positions would be covered, and they would not go as a group. Ms. Bradley stated that she would be presenting on one of the days and would like to attend on the other.

Mr. Ferro stated that he would also like approval to attend the upcoming American Library Association Conference in Washington, D.C. if money was available. Mr. Siegel suggested that the Board members look at the ALA Conference website to gain a more educated “thought” into the matter, to see what the conference was all about. He suggested that Mr. Ferro come back to the Board with this request at the next meeting, and for the Board Members to be prepared with a point of view. Mr. Ferro replied that this was a very good suggestion, and he would have the Librarians look at the conference site as well. Ms. Vetter asked what the past practice was, and if the City had paid for such conferences; and Mr. Ferro responded yes, but was not sure how much.

**** MR. MCMULLEN MOTIONED TO APPROVE AN AUTHORIZED LIBRARY EXPENDITURE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$500.00 TO COVER STUDENT WORKERS FOR THE BOOK SALE.**

**** MS. VETTER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** MS. VETTER MOTIONED TO APPROVE AN AUTHORIZED LIBRARY EXPENDITURE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$525.00 FOR FEES TO ATTEND THE CLA CONFERENCE IN APRIL.**

**** MS. VETTER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Ferro added that relative to an update on the operating budget process, he has put in the request for security and branch surveillance systems that has been submitted to the Board of Estimate and Taxation. He stated that they have made it an open item for the next meeting. He added that he continues to work with the Police Department to have periodic officer presence, and his goal is to broaden access for all users, but that full-time security is really necessary.

Mr. Siegel stated that building safety and security is a key priority for the Library Board to address within the parameters of overseeing Library administration. He added that he hopes that the Finance Department gives this item their serious consideration, since it is an open item on the BET Operating Budget agenda.

Mr. Ferro stated that he had been given the indication from the Finance Department that since there now are more males employed at the Library, this would answer the need for more security. He reiterated that this is not the case, that additional security is very much needed. He gave an example of an incident where a resident, who was asked to leave the Library after causing a disturbance, then called the Police from his cell phone and reported that the Library custodian had assaulted him. Ms. Bradley concurred that this incident is another example of why increased building security is needed, that Librarians or Custodians are not trained or equipped to handle situations like this, and it simply is not their responsibility to do building security.

Ms. Vetter asked if there was any documentation to show the need for increased security with reports of incidents where the police were called because of a lack of security. Mr. Ferro replied that that was a good suggestion, and he could gather the incident reports and see if there was a correlation with a rise in incidents compared to the level of security presence. Ms. Pugh stated that the lack of full-time security is a problem especially at the South Norwalk Branch, where homeless people go there after they leave the shelter in the morning and spend a great deal of their day on the Library computers. She added that providing adequate security is key priority for the Library Board to address, and she strongly urges the Board to address this as necessary with the Finance Department and Board of Estimate and Taxation to give this item their serious consideration.

Mr. Ferro continued with his Director's Report and stated that they had received \$150.00 donation from Pitney Bowes, and that the Friends of the Norwalk Public Library System have underwritten the cost of replacing the cocoa mat with a more durable entry mat for the Library. He added that he is looking to put a sign and better lighting along the walkway along the Mott Avenue Plaza, and he would come up with price quotes for Board consideration. He stated that, in addition, there is a recommendation to turn the brick wall into an art wall and they are looking into moving the television over the exit area at the front to get greater exposure.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Torrano stated that as a former Library Board member, she was glad to be back and was pleased to bring closure to the Wachovia matter. For the benefit of the new members, she provided a background overview of the situation that began when a securities account was opened with a well respected retired member of the police department back in 2007. She stated that it became apparent by the statements that short term investments had been made with unauthorized transfers from maturing CDs placed into stocks and bonds. Mr. Torrano reported that after an extensive audit and financial review, she identified eight securities that had been purchased, which have since been sold in December 2009. She added that they recently received trade confirmations that indicate a loss of \$55,415 in fund value. Mr. Siegel indicated that the next step was that Attorney Peter Nolan will now present this information to Wachovia to work out compensation with their internal compliance department. Ms. Torrano added that there was overwhelming evidence that the transactions were not authorized, and she anticipates a positive resolution.

Mr. Siegel thanked Ms. Torrano and Ms. Williams for all their input and hard work, and it was good that they were able to investigate and uncover this case. Ms. Torrano stated that she apologized for the time it took to gather all the information, and Mr. Siegel responded that he understood the work that was involved, and he added that regardless of the outcome, they did the right thing by bringing the matter out for full disclosure.

Assistant Library Director's Report

Ms. Bradley submitted an outline of the continuation of the NPL Staff Planning Process and summarized the Public Library Service Responses which answer Community Needs. She highlighted the responses on the following twelve points, as listed on the document.

- 1.
2. Build Successful Enterprises: Business and Non-Profit Support
3. Make Career Choices: Job and Career Development.
4. Connect to the Online World: Public Internet Access
5. Visit a Comfortable Place: Public and Virtual spaces
6. Create Young Readers: Emergent Literacy
7. Discover Your Heritage: Genealogy and Local History
8. Explore Our Community: Community Resources and Services.
9. Learn to Read and Write: Adult, Teen, and Family Literacy.
10. Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning
11. Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure
12. Succeed in School: Homework Help
13. Welcome to the United States: Services for New Immigrants.

Mr. Siegel stated that this was all very good information and would like to discuss the recommendations that Ms. Bradley has developed as a result of this program in further detail at the next meeting.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Siegel stated that the items in his report would be covered under the Old Business items.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Library Workers Appreciation Day

Mr. Siegel stated that, as was discussed last month, April 14 is the nation-wide Library Association Library Workers Appreciation Day and the Library Board will host a reception for the Library staff, the Friends of the Library on Wednesday, April 14, at the Norwalk Inn from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Mr. Siegel stated that the reception will include hors d'oeuvres and refreshments, and an invitation will be going out to the staff through the supervisors as well as to the Friends of the Norwalk Public Library System.

Ms. Williams stated that she had mentioned at last month's meeting, but it was not included in the minutes, that it would be difficult for all staff to attend because the Library is open late on Tuesday, the original date of the event .

B. "Snapshot Day" Results.

Ms. Bradley stated that "Snapshot Day" was a big success and they had "out-photographed" other Libraries and refreshments and a Library-use survey was distributed, by RSVP Volunteers, to patrons as they came in. Mr. Ferro added that the photos have been posted on the Library website. Regarding the survey responses, Ms. Bradley added that the only negative comments were about parking and the lack of Sunday hours.

C. Library Director's Review Procedure

Mr. Siegel reported that in response to last month's discussion regarding a Library Director Review Committee, he has appointed Mr. Kassimis to chair this committee along with two other members who will be asked to serve. He added that he will serve as ex-officio member and stated that his reason for selecting Mr. Kassimis is that this will help put him on a fast track to learn about the Library and as a new member, and he brings a fresh perspective to the Board.

Ms. Vetter stated that she extends kudos to Mr. Siegel's choice of Mr. Kassimis, as he will bring objectivity to the position. She asked if there were established objectives for the Director as listed in the evaluation guidelines, and Mr. Siegel answered yes, that they were part of the interview process, and the board members should have received copies of Mr. Ferro's goals and objectives. Ms. Vetter added that the evaluation process should not serve to penalize but should provide an assessment measure to adjust going forward.

Mr. Siegel clarified that the evaluation form was purely a guideline and it was the role of the Committee to meet and come back to the Board with a recommendation on how to proceed.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Briggs High School Library:

Mr. Kassimis stated that when he was campaigning for the Board of Education, he was made aware of the desperate need for a Library for students that attend Briggs High School. He added that he knows many of

these students as they attend his church, and wanted to discuss what the Board could do to help these students gain access to the Main Library.

Mr. Ferro asked if the students have computer access, and Mr. Kassimis replied that Briggs does have a computer lab. Mr. Ferro suggested that the students could browse on-line and books could be set up as a delivery and pick-up arrangement similar to what they do for the senior centers. Ms. Vetter suggested that the inter-school mail delivery system could perhaps arrange a pick up and drop off of books at the Library.

Ms. Pugh stated that it may be difficult for these students to be able to browse from the website, if they do not have an idea of what they want. Ms. Vetter then suggested there be a library card day where students could be able to get a library card, along with a chance to look at some books that correspond to the topics of study in the classes. Mr. Siegel stated that this should be a function of what the kids want and a collection of books or suggested reading list on the website. He added that he was not sure if it is a Board decision or just a statement of Board support of this type of program. Mr. Kassimis stated that he would appreciate any additional direction on how to promote library usage by an alternative high school. Ms. Bradley stated that she could get in touch with the Language Arts teacher at Briggs to see if she can be of assistance to them.

B. Friends of the Norwalk Public Library System Board Meeting: 3/1/10

Mr. Siegel stated that at the recent Friends meeting, Mr. Ralph Bloom stated that he has a historic art and photograph collection to donate to the Library. He added that it is a valuable collection, and that after the items are donated, the art could be mounted on the brick wall as referred to earlier by Mr. Ferro. Mr. Siegel stated that the Friends may donate funds for mounting and framing, but that since this is a building and grounds responsibility, Board approval would be required. He added that this is in the early stages, but he wanted the Board to be aware of a future development that is in the works.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** MR. MCMULLEN MOTIONED TO ADJOURN.
- ** MS. VETTER SECONDED.
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Subject to Board Approval.