

**CITY OF NORWALK / NORWALK PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING / MAY 14, 2009 / MAIN LIBRARY BOARD ROOM**

ATTENDANCE: Stan Siegel, President; Mohan Tracy; Charles McMullen; Grace Vetter; Regina Krummel; Mary Mann; Mary Pugh; Jannie Williams.

STAFF: Frank Ferro, Library Director

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Siegel called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA / ACTION ITEMS

There were no additions to the agenda or action items.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 12, 2009 MEETING

- ** MR MCMULLEN MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 16, 2009 MEETING.**
- ** MS. TRACY SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Siegel reported that at the Friends of the Library Meeting it was announced that their latest book sale was very successful, and more detail would be discussed during the Library Director's Report.

Mr. Siegel presented a recommended change in investment account accounting procedures to set up a separate Library Administrative checking account so as not to mix non-contributed funds with that of monies received by the Library itself such as "lost and replaced," Friends ongoing book sale receipts, etc. Ms. Vetter asked how long the previous methods have existed and if making a change would deviate from the purpose of which the joint account was intended.

Mr. Siegel stated that the objective of this change is to enable the Library Administration to receive non-Board funds (fees for lost books, etc.) and to draw from that account as needed to replace lost books, etc. Ms. Mohan expressed a concern that the City may question this accounting change, and Mr. Siegel clarified that the

intention was to provide a clearer accounting process and to eliminate the co-mingling of contributions with other library funds.

Mr. Siegel summarized that no vote or Board action was required and that the Library Director will provide a financial report of the Library's budget at each board meeting to include the status of the administrative checking account. He added that he has asked the Library Director to provide a complete "State of the Library" report in a "Review" format providing a complete status of projects, long and short-term objectives, financial reporting, etc. for the Board's "Annual Meeting" in June.

Mr. Siegel reported that there was a staff luncheon held on April 22 which was well attended much appreciated by the staff, and he acknowledged the Board Members that were present. On behalf of the Norwalk Public Library he attended last month's CLA Conference in New Haven that included very interesting workshops, and the Librarian of the Year Award was presented to Luis Ayala, of our Reference Department. He added that many positive comments were received from the general public as a result of our "LibrarEmail" on having such an esteemed member of the staff with Luis. Mr. Siegel added that he represented the Norwalk Public Library at the Friends of Connecticut Library Board Meeting in Middletown, and noted that the Friends of the Norwalk Public Library are held in high esteem with the work they do on behalf of the Norwalk Public Library.

Mr. Siegel reported that Lori Torrano could not attend the meeting but that she has been in touch with Peter Nolin, former Council Member who will be giving the Board advice with regard to the Wachovia matter. Mr. Siegel had researched the minutes from the August 2006 meeting which contains a strong statement that is part of the official record on the case in regard to the complaint.

TREASURER'S REPORT

There was no Treasurer's Report for this meeting, but Mr. Siegel added that it appeared that the Foundation's investment account had increased approximately \$40,000 in value over the past month.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Ms. Tracy, Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, reported that the current board officers have been nominated and have agreed to be re-elected to serve another term in their existing positions. Election will be held at the June meeting.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Ferro reported that the Library is coping with the seven vacancies, four of which will be filled eventually. The Finance Department will allow the Director of Building Services position to be filled immediately but it has not been posted yet. The Assistant Director position will be filled on or after July 1, 2009, the Children's Services position will be filled after October 1, 2009, but the Reference Librarian position will not be filled until July 2010. The City needs to recoup about \$100,000 from the Library budget in early retirement and other costs, and they are awaiting official notification of lay-offs of the other positions have been defunded. Job descriptions have been slightly updated for the management positions, and the approval process has begun on the Building Services position. Everything will be posted on-line now, and each position has to be approved by various levels up to the Finance Director. The staff is recovering from all the vacancies, and consequently has been moving at a slower pace with accomplishing the procedures. The part-time afternoon and evening custodian was approved prior to the defunding process, and they are looking forward to having a full

compliment of custodial staff. The Mayor would like to see them open on Sundays, but this will be difficult to accomplish considering the limited staffing.

The approved budget is 3.6% less this year, minus the personnel issue, which is at a total of \$3,658,000 and represents a cut in replacement book budgets and other areas. A year to date status report with budget overview was provided presenting actual spending this year of approximately \$3,300,000. The report also included the number of actual borrowers and circulation statistics of 34,476 vs. March of -7% and a +2% gain over April 2008. A question about internet usage was raised by Ms. Mann, and Mr. Ferro added that is a part of the report and will be highlighted in further detail with next's months report. Ms. Vetter asked how the counts of people were done, and Mr. Siegel responded that there was an electronic eye that provides an indication of library usage. Mr. Ferro answered comments relative to overdue charges which go directly to the City, the card-operated machine costs for copies and faxes which are handled by a private company, and print materials that are outdated or discarded.

Mr. Ferro presented the upcoming holiday calendar schedule which included contractual differences, paid holidays for the staff, and early closings on holiday eves, which was approved last year. Ms. Vetter asked how it was handled by the unions in the past, and Mr. Ferro responded that the school year calendar applied in the past, but that NMEA, and NASA rules applied as indicated. He added that Memorial Day was early this year, and it may be worth closing early the Saturday prior, May 23, as well as the Saturday prior to Labor Day. Mr. Siegel expressed the concern that since it is a busy weekend, that he would opt for staying open as it appears that Saturday is more of a family day and there may be less travel because of the economy.

Mr. Ferro suggested that the way to handle payment to employees was to consider it a bit of a bonus if there was an early closing for those who were scheduled to work. Ms. Vetter expressed her concern over paying employees who were not working contracted hours, due to an early closing. Mr. Siegel responded that the staff is under a great deal of stress because of recent staff cuts, and that it was done last year when there was not the dire situation; therefore for the few hours involved it should be approved for this year, but it would behoove the Board to look at a better policy statement for next year.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Siegel gave an update on the "2009 Big Read" program which has been very successful and has generated a great deal of positive publicity for the Library. He indicated there would be a press release announcing that a The Adventures of Tom Sawyer graphic novel "parent-child" give-away program to students providing that a parent fills out a book order request form.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Pugh suggested a sub-committee be formed to address the "Vision" element part of the Library's mission. Mr. Siegel suggested that rather than a sub-committee, he would e-mail an input form for Library Trustees to fill out to indicate what they would like to have and suggested the members take the time to complete the form and return it to him. From that input, a sub-committee of two or three members could be formed to address the results and go forward with a plan. Ms. Pugh also suggested the possibility of hiring a consultant to do a study of other towns or for each Board Member to take the time to speak to the Librarians to get a feel for what is needed. Mr. Siegel said that as a president of Association of Connecticut Library Boards (ACLB) he visits an average of five libraries each month and what he could compile for the Board a list of each website and a compilation of services that the surrounding towns have as a comparison of what the Board would want the Norwalk Public Library to have. He added for an example, a homebound service for library members who are

elderly, disabled or in the hospital, where the Friends of the Library provide a delivery service for library materials. The members agreed it was a good idea to create a “wish-list” concept.

Ms. Pugh brought up for discussion, the concept of consolidation of the “Norwalk” libraries and installing a uniform computerized catalog system, similar to other towns that have better systems with current technology. Mr. Siegel stated that the East Norwalk Library, for example, cannot afford a universal computerized system that is compatible to the Connecticut Library System, similar to other towns even though the books are barcoded. He added that City Council members have discussed that in the past and that the Third Taxing District owns the library building which is managed by the East Norwalk Improvement Association and has a very small operations budget, but an upgraded system would require a hefty investment; and despite the fact that it would be a much needed addition to the operations, it is just not in the budget.

Mr. Siegel stated that Susannah Violino’s mother passed away and he would attend the wake and represent the Board to extend condolences.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** MS. PUGH MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** MR. MCMULLEN SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Subject to Board approval.

DRAFT