

**CITY OF NORWALK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
WESTPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY  
MCCALL ROOM  
SEPTEMBER 12, 2019**

ATTENDANCE: Alex Knopp, Chairman; Ralph Bloom; Mary Mann; Taber Hamilton;  
Patsy Brescia; Moina Noor; Janine Williams

LIBRARY STAFF: Christine Bradley, Director; Sherelle Harris, Assistant Director

OTHERS: Bill Harmer, Executive Director, Westport Public Library; Jennifer Bangser,  
Director of Strategic Community Partnerships, Westport Public Library;  
Bette Bono

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Knopp called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. and noted that members were in attendance as listed above and there was a quorum present.

Mr. Harner welcomed the Norwalk Library Board of Directors and gave an overview of the renovation project of the Westport Library. He began by discussing the project budget and said the project was \$21 million dollars and that construction began in 2017 and was completed in June 2019. The focus was a renovation of the existing shell and did not add square footage and they had made that decision because it would have been considerably more expensive to add square footage. Prior to construction the building was 48,500 square feet and with the renovation is now closer to 50,000 square feet and the big difference came from all of the square footage that they had liberated within the building for the public.

Mr. Harner discussed the revenue stream for the budget and said that \$5 million dollars came from town contribution, \$1 million dollars was received from a construction grant from the State of Connecticut and \$15 million dollars was from private donors.

Mr. Harner said that they had had three design goals which were flexibility, openness and to create density and brought the classic library into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He said they are still about books and providing information sources and study spaces but also introduced some new

elements and brought next generation thinking into the spaces. Ms. Brescia asked if they had any parking issues. Mr. Harner said every community feels that they don't have enough parking but they have plenty of parking.

Mr. Harner said that they had made a decision to do the project in phases and had the construction done while they were still open for business. That decision was primarily made for economic reasons and they had explored moving the operation off site and had estimated conservatively and the cost of the project would have increased at least \$ 3 million dollars. It also would have meant separation from their footprint and wanted to use the opportunity to prototype to see how people would respond to it before they had moved forward with the final plan. He said it also had an impact on their capital campaign because instead of bringing a donor into an office off site he was able to walk them through the space during construction and that was their greatest tool in the success for the funding.

Mr. Harner said that they had hired an owner's agent because they thought it was money well invested to keep the project on budget. Mr. Knopp asked Mr. Harner what criteria was used in selecting an architect other than have library construction experience. Mr. Harner said a track record on visionary projects like the project that they had in mind and for him personally he need to connect with the architect and have the same vision as himself, the board and the community. Ms. Noor asked how much they had to engage the public. Mr. Harner said they had put together a very comprehensive business plan

The meeting recessed at 7:45PM while Mr. Harner gave the board and staff a tour of the Library.

The meeting went back in session at 8:35PM.

## **2. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA**

There were no additions to the agenda.

## **3. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ms. Bono said in the interest of time she would submit her comments in writing.

#### **4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 11, 2019 & AUGUST 8, 2019.**

**\*\* MR. BLOOM MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JULY 11, 2019 AS SUBMITTED.**

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

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED WITH (6) SIX IN FAVOR AND (1) ONE ABSTENTION- MS. WILLIAMS**

**\*\* MS. MANN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 8, 2019 AS SUBMITTED.**

**\*\* MR. CULLEN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED WITH (6) SIX IN FAVOR AND (1) ONE ABSTENTION- MS. WILLIAMS.**

#### **5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT.**

Mr. Knopp stated that the tour of the Westport Library was the main focus on tonight's meeting and it was very interesting and revealing.

#### **6. ADMINISTRATION REPORT**

A. Statistics July 2019

There was no report given.

B. Ebsco charging stations

Ms. Harris said that Ebsco had approached them about bringing in interactive charging stations to the Library, and they would like to contact the businesses in town to see if they would be interested in having their information on the charging station. She said they will do all the work at no charge. Ms. Brescia asked if the Library will receive any money from the charging stations. Ms. Harris said "no" Mr. Knopp requested that Ms. Harris provide a detailed memo as well as memo from the company as to what they are proposing to the board for further discussion.

C. NPS Continuing Education

The item was tabled.

D. Norwalk Immigration Collaborative

Ms. Harris said Norwalk would like to have a place where new immigrants can go for information and that had met once last month. Mr. Knopp asked if this will be held in the Library. Ms. Harris said “no” and that they are thinking it will be held in a building off of the Methodist Church on Mott Avenue. Mr. Knopp asked if it will be run by the city. Ms. Harris said “no” but there will be city involvement. Mr. Knopp requested a memo describing the program.

E. Code of Conduct revision

Ms. Bradley presented the proposed changes in the Code of Conduct and they are to add carrying weapons of any kind, eating at computer stations and bringing in any animal, unless it is a service animal as defined by Title II and Title II of the ADA under the unacceptable library customer behavior. She said everything else in the current Code of Conduct is what had been previously approved by the board. Ms. Brescia requested adding no vaping under no smoking. Mr. Knopp requested to make the warning more prominent under unacceptable library customer behavior to make it clear.

**\*\* MS. BRESICA MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM SUBJECT TO CLARIFICATION ON THE WARNING AND ADDING NO VAPING TO THE UNACCETPANE LIBARAY CUSTOMER BEHAVIOR.  
\*\* MR. CULLEN SECONDED THE MOTION.  
THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **7. OLD BUSINESS**

Ms. Noor asked the status of the Pop-Up Library. Ms. Bradley said the company that was going to print the decal has gone out of business but the decal design will now be sent to a local vendor. She said she will keep the board updated.

Mr. Knopp said the café at the Library will be opening on Saturday, September 14, 2019 at 2:00PM.

Ms. Bradley said on Sunday, September 15, 2019 they will be having the Celebration of Indian culture with the Indian Consonant. Ms. Noor requested that there is a list of the books that will be available at the Library.

Ms. Bradley said that on Sunday, September 22, 2019, from 2:00PM-4:00 the History Room will have the sixth year anniversary and Ms. Dorothy Mobilia will be speaking about Aaron Homer Byington.

Ms. Bradley distributed an email from Ms. Casey with the updates.

### **8. NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business discussed this evening.

### **9. ADJOURNMENT OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

- \*\* MR. BLOOM MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**
- \*\* MS. BRESCIA SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- \*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd  
Telesco Secretarial Services