

**CITY OF NORWALK
PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
FEBRUARY 13, 2020**

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

ABSENT: Thomas Cullen; Taber Hamilton, Ralph Bloom

LIBRARY STAFF: Christine Bradley, Director; Sherelle Harris

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. Knopp welcomed new board member Ms. Baanante.

2. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

There were no additions to the agenda.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments this evening.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 9, 2020 AND JANUARY 13, 2020

**** MR. KNOPP MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 9, 2020 AS AMENDED.**

**** MS. NOOR SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY WITH SIX (6) IN FAVOR AND ONE (1) ABSTENSION- MS. BAANANTE**

**** MS. NOOR MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**

**** MS. BRESCIA SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FIVE (5) IN FAVOR AND TWO (2) ABSTENSIONS- MS. WILLIAMS AND MS. BAANANTE**

5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT.

a. Update on capital budget

Mr. Knopp said he and Ms. Bradley met with the Planning Commission and presented the capital budget and the expansion of the Library is under Economic Development and they had also presented. The Finance Director had made his recommendations and he did not recommend any reductions in the Economic Development budget, but did recommend a slight reduction in the library's capital budget because some of the upgrades for the auditorium may conflict with the library expansion project, but he did recommend to approve the upgrades at the South Norwalk Library. He did also recommend the streaming technology item at both the main library and the South Norwalk library but did not recommend the full amount. Mr. Knopp asked if there were any recommend changes to the operating budget. Ms. Bradley no with the exception in conferences and said staff had requested \$5,000 because the current budget is \$2,280 and has been the same for years and there are 27 full time employees and 60 part time employees but the Finance Director did not recommend the increase. She said she will be presenting the operating budget to the Board of Estimate and Taxation on February 26th.

b. Review of NPL Policy on Fines Amnesty

Ms. Bradley presented the policy and said the fine schedule will be the same for now but they would like to forgive people whose library cards have been blocked and would like to announce the program during the week of April 19th which is Library Week and the week of school vacation. Mr. Knopp requested that staff draft the announcement to present to the Library Board. Ms. Bradley said she will present it at the March meeting. Ms. Brescia asked if fines would be eliminated altogether or forgiving the current debt. Ms. Bradley said forgiving the current debts. Mr. Knopp suggested announcing the amnesty for the return of billed items and following that announce that the fines will be forgiven to try and get some of the material back. Ms. Brescia asked if there is a way people can return items without having to do it face to face so they would not have to deal with the uncomfortableness of it. Ms. Harris said they could have a separate bin.

- c. ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom Policy on upholding the ideas of respect, inclusion, and equality for all people and celebrating intellectual freedom in the public library

Mr. Knopp said that he had requested that Ms. Bradley inquire if the American Library Association had a policy because of inquiries that were received from the drag queen story hour and if the board agrees draft a statement from the board. The board had a discussion all agreed that a blanket statement should be drafted. Mr. Knopp asked staff to draft a letter and have it circulated to the board members for their comments. Ms. Noor asked if any of the emails that were received have been respond. Ms. Bradley said “yes” and the policy is that when staff receives complaints either by a telephone call or by email they respond if there is a way to respond. Mr. Knopp complimented the library staff for the way they handled the comments during the event.

- d. Challenge to tile Guru Gobind Singh from GTBJ Foundation

Mr. Knopp said they had received a request for the GTBJ Foundation with a blasphemous depiction of one of their religious leaders and have requested it be removed from the collection and have offered to replace it with other materials. He said that they have also requested to meet with the Library Board and that he will invite Mr. Singh to attend next month’s meeting to express his point of view. Mr. Knopp said in his opinion it is a graphic novel depiction and not a cartoon and suggested while acknowledging the sensitivity from their point of view, politely decline replacing it in the collections because we don’t regard it as a cartoon and is a graphic depiction which is now the most popular forms of literature for young adults and others, but if they would like to contribute additional materials we would be glad to accept them. Ms. Mann said while she understands the sensitivity she does not feel it should be pulled from the collection because it offends one person and is certainly not in agreement with anyone reviewing the collections that are ordered. There was further discussion ensued and it was decided that Mr. Knopp with invite Mr. Singh to the next meeting to participate in the public comment.

- e. Update on NPL Expansion Project and January 13th meeting with CP

Mr. Knopp said the project is moving along and on January 13th Ms. Brescia, Ms. Bradley and himself had met with the Mayor and staff along with four representatives from CP to reconnect following their strategic plan process with their new president. He said it was a good meeting and they have recommitted to the Norwalk project and discussed putting shovels in the ground in three fiscal years and are anticipating having a facility of 4000 square feet for their needs. He said the Mayor’s office has informed him that they will be meeting next week to discuss the composition of a building committee

and he has recommend the Ms. Brescia, Ms. Bradley, Ms. Noor and himself be appointed to the building committee. He said they are getting recommendations from Mr. Lo with some RFP samples early next week and they will review them and will submit a draft of what the RFP should look like with for architectural services which the Library Board will approve before it is submitted.

Mr. Knopp said that he has no update to report on the negotiations between the city and the First District Water Department.

6. ADMINISTRATION REPORT

a. Library Statistics- July – December 2019

Ms. Bradley reported and said that staff is concerned with the statistics and said the Supervisors are meeting once a week to discuss ways to improve the statistics. Ms. Brescia asked how the statistics fit in with the consultant's projections for the future and requested that concept is looked into before planning on space. Mr. Knopp requested that staff aggregate the data and include what would be most illustrative of the actual use of the library for the next meeting.

Ms. Bradley said that the Pop-Up Library will be at the SONO Collection on February 23rd and in the spring.

b. Census 2020 report

Ms. Bradley reported and said both libraries will be questioner assistance centers but the dates have not yet been determined.

7. OLD BUSINESS

a. Update on location on Belden Avenue Book Drop

Ms. Harris said there was a meeting held with a representative of the First Taxing District and supplied the schematics but have not yet received a response back.

Ms. Brescia said she will follow up. Ms. Harris said that Mr. Knopp has requested that the book return be placed on their property as well.

8. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business discussed this evening.

9. ADJOURNMENT OF DIRECTORS MEETING

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd
Telesco Secretarial Services