

**CITY OF NORWALK
NORWALK PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 11, 2021**

ATTENDANCE: Alex Knopp, Chair; Sharon Baanante, Ralph Bloom, Mary Mann, Moina Noor, Jannie Williams; Patsy R. Brescia, Vice President (7:25 p.m.)

OTHERS: Sherelle Harris, Interim Library Director

This meeting was held via Zoom.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Knopp called the special meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

2. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:

Moment of Silence in memory of:

Mr. Knopp said that the Board was deeply saddened to hear of the loss of these three friends of the Library:

Tabor Hamilton, NPL Board Member
Sherelle Harris' cousin, Stephanie
Collin Pratt's sister, Keshia Pratt

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There was no one present from the public.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 14, 2021

**** MS. WILLIAMS MOVED THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 14, 2021.**

The following correction was noted:

Page 4, paragraph 1, line 1: Please change the following from:

“Ms. Baanate asked why the Instagram following dropped.”

To: Ms. Noor asked why the Instagram following dropped.”

**** MS. NOOR SECONDED.
** THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 14, 2021 AS CORRECTED WERE
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. Brescia called in to say that she was not able to access the meeting. She was able to join the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

5. PRESIDENTS REPORT -- ALEX KNOPP

A. Status of NPL reopening plan –

There have been no changes.

B. Status of NPL ED Search –

Ms. Harris recused herself at 7:25 p.m.

Mr. Knopp said that the Board Members could participate on the selection committee and he went on to describe who else would be involved. The Personnel Department will pre-screen the candidates and forward the qualified candidates. The Committee will interview the candidates and forward three candidates to the Mayor. Mr. Knopp said that there was a letter that was not included in the packet which he would be sending to the Board Members.

Ms. Noor asked when the posting was released. Mr. Knopp said that it had been up for about a week and a half. He added that there apparently was a centralized location where these positions are posted.

Ms. Noor asked for a timeline. Mr. Knopp said that they were interested in having the position filled quickly because of the various decisions that the Board will be making.

Ms. Brescia asked if they would be ranking the candidates. Mr. Knopp said that they could rank the candidates they submit to the Mayor.

Ms. Williams said that she was uncomfortable having Ms. Harris recusing herself during the meeting and having the discussion in the minutes. Ms. Brescia suggested the item be moved to the end of the agenda in the future.

Ms. Noor said that she had brought up the position on the City website. Ms. Noor asked if they were waiting on the new Library Director before they hire the other vacant positions. Mr. Knopp said that if they do not fill the positions, the City will take the positions away.

C. Update on Status of Library Capital Budget request

Alex Knopp's comments on CFO recommendation:

“In recognition of the City’s financial situation, the Library exercised great self-restraint to submit only two minimal program-related requests totaling \$113,000 compared to all the other city departmental requests totaling \$54,500,000! I’m disappointed that these two minor requests were not recommended because they both are merely continuations of on-going projects that were funded in prior years, including the final year of digitization of The Norwalk Hour and the technology refresh of the Main Branch auditorium to enable real-time streaming of programs. My concern is that failure to fund these projects will impair the library’s ability to provide the kind of top-notch on-line and digital services that our patrons have a right to expect during this era of social distancing. We’ll certainly be asking the Planning Commission, the Mayor and the Common Council not to neglect these very modest requests of the library.”

Mr. Knopp reviewed the two requests he had made and that they had been deleted from the budget. He said that he had submitted his comments to Nancy on Norwalk with the hopes that the projects will be restored to the Library Budget.

Mr. Knopp said that if there was an important meeting, he would notify the Board Members. Both projects are continuations of projects that have already been underway. Ms. Brescia pointed out that the Board had requested \$25,000 a year for a number of years to complete these projects.

Ms. Harris rejoined the meeting 7:44 p.m.

6. ADMINISTRATION REPORT— SHERELLE HARRIS

A. Capital Budget Update

Ms. Harris said that they had attended the Planning Committee meeting on February 3 and they hoped that the items would be restored to the budget.

B. Reopening Considerations

Ms. Harris went on to speak about recently released OSHA guidelines. She explained that the building already has a sign in log so that if someone tests positive, they can determine whether it is reportable. The log also helps with contract tracing. She gave an overview to the Board Members.

Apparently, some employers are doing daily questionnaires regarding social distancing and other aspects of the protocols. She said that she would be sharing her notes with the Board Members once she gets her notes organized. Mr. Knopp said that he believed it was the responsibility of the City administration regarding these issues. Discussion followed.

C. Vita Tax Service Update

Both of the buildings are full through March. Ms. Harris said it is very popular. This service is for those who are not comfortable doing this online.

D. Norwalk Public Library - Norwalk Public Schools Collaboration

The pod program will be ending on the 12th because of a decrease in attendance. The students will be returning to the classrooms.

Ms. Harris said that there were 139 entries for the Dr. Martin Luther King event. The elementary schools submitted the most entries. Staff from Senator Murphy's office called about collaborating next year.

Ms. Harris then spoke about collaboration with the Year of the Young Child. Mr. Knopp suggested a number of contacts for displaying the portraits.

E. Employee Health Report

There was one employee that tested positive along with members of that household. The family quarantined and now the employee is back at work

F. Library One-Day Closing Update

[Inaudible] Ms. Harris said that they would talk about going to half days in March at their next meeting.

Ms. Noor said that the staff had responded to almost 4,000 calls. Ms. Harris said that there was a direct line for the Senior Center. Initially, the Library was asked to supply space for the volunteers to make appointments.

Ms. Baanante asked what the appointment schedule for the computers. Ms. Harris said that the phone calls and in person appointments have increased. Ms. Harris said that there were approximately 5 or 6 appointments per day.

Ms. Harris said that they were working very hard on getting the reporting accurate for the State. The staff has been phenomenal with the programs. There have been a number of letters received that praise the staff for their assistance.

Mr. Knopp said that there was an RFIG proposal included at the end of her report. He wished to know about the details. Ms. Harris said that the system scans the item and sorts it into one of the general categories such as book, DVD or CD.

7. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Knopp said that the flagpole has been repaired and the flag is now flying.

8. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to consider at this time.

9. ADJOURNMENT OF DIRECTORS MEETING

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services