

**CITY OF NORWALK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
JULY 8, 2021**

This meeting was conducted via teleconference

ATTENDANCE: Alex Knopp, Chair; Sharon Baanante; Ralph Bloom;
Patsy Brescia; Janine Williams; Mary Mann (7:13 p.m.)

STAFF: Sherelle Harris, Executive Director

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Knopp called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. and called the Roll as indicated above. A Quorum was present.

2. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

There were no additions to this evening's agenda.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No members of the public wished to comment this evening.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 10, 2021

The following corrections were made to the minutes:

Page 1: Ms. Baanante asked if there were any situations where books were removed from the Library shelves. This question was asked by Ms. Noor.

Page 6: Ms. Baanante said there is a tradeoff between the length of the survey and the number of participants. This comment was made by Ms. Noor.

**** MS. BAANANTE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS
CORRECTED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

A. Divya Misra's memorial

Mr. Knopp thanked Ms. Harris and the Library staff members for such a a moving and successful tribute to Ms. Misra. He thanked all who participated. Ms. Harris said Ms. Misra's family thought the tribute was beautiful and felt the rose garden was very appropriate since she was an avid gardener.

Ms. Mann joined the meeting at 7:13 p.m.

B. DRAFT: Updated Blue Teapot contract

Mr. Knopp explained that it was agreed that the Blue Teapot can cater events at the Library. He asked the Law Department to add that addendum and finalize the contract.

Mr. Knopp said he and Ms. Harris discussed offering a two year contract to the Blue Teapot rather than a one year contract.

C. QUOTE: Blue Teapot flooring for expansion

Ms. Harris reported that the Library is ready for the Blue Teapot flooring expansion. Mr. Bloom noted that the Friends of the Norwalk Library will pay for this flooring expansion. Mr. Knopp said the purpose of the flooring expansion is to allow the Blue Teapot to have more guests, while maintaining social distancing.

Mr. Knopp noted that as part of the revision to the Blue Teapot contract, all event sponsors who request catering will be responsible for cleaning after the event.

D. REVISED: Item Reconsideration Policy

Ms. Harris added a recommendation that anyone who complains about a particular book in the Library should also contact the publisher and express their concern. Mr. Knopp said he did not see this as part of the Library policy. Ms. Harris said it could be added to the policy as a suggestion to the person complaining about a particular book. Mr. Knopp requested moving this part up in the policy so that it is not criteria used by the Board to make a decision about a particular book.

**** MS. MANN MOVED TO APPROVE THE RECONSIDERATION POLICY
AS AMENDED**

**** MS. BAANANTE SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Knopp asked for the Board's opinion. He said that the policy calls for the Board to hold a hearing when there is a complaint about a book title. He said that the person who objected to a particular title submitted material in support of their request, to remove a particular book.

Mr. Knopp asked if the Board should hold an additional public hearing or consider that they have already acted upon this matter. Ms. Bresica asked if the opportunity to speak to the Board was construed as a hearing. Mr. Knopp said it could be construed as a hearing but suggested offering the person an opportunity to present anything not already presented to the Board.

Mr. Knopp explained that he did not want it inferred that the Library Board did not follow their own policy or not provide someone with an opportunity to add anything to their complaint. He said that the Library communicated to the person making the complaint that they were working on the policy and told him to expect a decision at the September meeting. Mr. Knopp said the Library Board may not hold a meeting during the month of August. He said he will contact the person who made the complaint to ask him if he wishes to present anything further to the Board.

6. ADMINISTRATION REPORT— Sherelle Harris

A. Next phase reopening

Ms. Harris said she was seeking input from the Board before meeting with the Library staff again to present the next phase reopening plan. She said she would like to implement the plan in September.

Ms. Harris reviewed the plan. She said she gets some complaints because they are contact tracing. Ms. Harris said that after reading about the Covid variants she feels it is important to continue either contact tracing and/or taking temperatures.

Mr. Knopp asked if the requirement to wear a mask still applies. Ms. Harris said that social distancing will be enforced and mask wearing indoors and outdoors will be enforced.

Mr. Knopp asked for comments from the Board members. Ms. Mann asked if people visiting City Hall are required to wear a mask. Mr. Knopp explained that he understands visitors either have to be vaccinated or they have to wear a mask. Mr. Knopp asked about the justification for taking temperatures and asked Ms. Harris if they ever had to

turn anyone away due to an elevated temperature. She said they did not have to turn anyone away.

Ms. Harris said that when people ask why they take temperatures, she tells them it is for everyone's safety. She said that no one has become belligerent, but there have been comments. Ms. Mann said she was not sure about the requirement to wear a mask outdoors.

Mr. Knopp asked if it was possible to increase the capacity at both branches of the Library. Ms. Brescia said they increased the capacity at the Lockwood Mathews Mansion Museum and staff and guests are still required to wear a mask.

Mr. Knopp said they do not need to wear a mask outdoors or take temperatures. In addition, they could increase the capacity at both branches of the Library. He added that they should continue to wear masks indoors. He said the policy will be re-addressed every couple of months.

Ms. Harris said staff are ready to begin Passport service by appointment.

Mr. Knopp said that in agreements for meetings with outside groups, they need to add the requirement about wearing masks and maintaining social distancing. He added that he does not want the Library staff to have to stay to ensure guests are wearing masks.

Mr. Knopp suggested discussing the policy with the staff and asking if they have any additional comments.

B. American Rescue Plan Grants to Connecticut Public Libraries

Mr. Harris reported that the Library was awarded a grant. The grant will purchase a sound proof studying pod, and hygienic chairs for the adult and children's departments. The Board members discussed where to place the pod and Ms. Harris said there were a lot of options. Mr. Knopp said that if they get a second pod, he would like to see it place at the South Norwalk branch.

Mr. Knopp congratulated Ms. Harris on being awarded the grant.

Ms. Harris said she is trying to get chairs that are easy to clean and would like to purchase masks to keep on hand for staff and patrons who forget their mask.

C. Collaboration: Eight (8)-week Blues and Beyond workshop (Norwalk Public Library, Norwalk Public Schools, Carver Center, After the Bell After-School Program

Ms. Harris described the program and said that children will have an opportunity learn the history of the blues and to listen to different instruments. The first presentation was held today by Zoom with 54 participants.

7. OLD BUSINESS

The following items were not discussed this evening.

A. Request of Mr. Mohinder Kalsi re Sikh books

B. Proposed Laptop/Internet Acceptable Use Policy—tabled at May, 2021 Board meeting

8. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business discussed this evening.

9. ADJOURNMENT OF DIRECTORS MEETING

**** MR. BLOOM MOVED TO ADJOURN
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services