

**CITY OF NORWALK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
JUNE 10, 2021
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

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

STAFF: Sherelle Harris, Executive Director

OTHERS: Samantha Lee, Connecticut Library Association Intellectual
Freedom Committee

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Knopp called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and called the Roll as indicated above.

2. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

a. Introduction of Samantha Lee, Chair, CLA Intellectual Freedom Committee (see attached APLA Policy Statement)

Mr. Knopp welcomed Ms. Lee and Ms. Harris gave an overview of Ms. Lee's background.

Ms. Lee presented a PowerPoint presentation "Intellectual Freedom 101". She said that libraries provide access to free speech and do not suppress free speech. She said that censorship is in direct conflict to Freedom of Speech. She reviewed three sections of the Library Bill of Rights.

Regarding children's material, Ms. Lee said that libraries are not in a situation to act as any child's parent. Parents are more than welcome to make decisions in choosing their child's library material, but they do not have the right to not permit others access to other titles. The collection has to serve everyone.

Ms. Lee reviewed Religion in American Libraries and said the collection should reflect those needs by providing access to diverse religions without becoming a proponent of any religions.

Mr. Knopp asked Ms. Lee if she knew about any similar concerns about the graphic depiction of a religious figure. Ms. Lee said not that she knew of.

Ms. Baanante asked if there were any situations where books were removed from the Library shelves. Ms. Lee said that the most recent situation was where libraries decided for themselves about whether or not they were going to keep six titles from the Dr. Suess collection. She said that her library follows the CREW method based on several factors, including the condition of the book and the accuracy of the information. She added that her library removed the Dr. Suess books.

Mr. Knopp thanked Ms. Lee.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No members of the public wished to comment this evening.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 13, 2021

Mr. Knopp offered corrections to the minutes.

Other corrections were as follows:

Section D – add Ms. Williams’ comment on the issue of how to address people who have been vaccinated and those who have not been vaccinated and how that could potentially be an issue.

Page 3 – include Ms. Baanante’s comment that the Library should consider purchasing a couple of Mac computers.

Page 4 – add – Ms. Baanante withdrew her suggestion after push back from the Board, because it would be difficult for the Library to decipher who was using the services for a job search or social services.

**** MR. KNOPP MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS REVISED
** MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MS. NOOR)**

5. PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Mr. Knopp commented on how impressed he was to see so many members of the Library attend Ms. Misra’s memorial service.

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Ms. Harris explained that there have been discussion on having a permanent memorial honoring Ms. Misra at the Beldon Avenue Library by naming the Rose Garden in her honor. She said she is tentatively looking at June 21st, depending upon how quickly Crown Trophy can complete the plaque and if that date is agreeable with Ms. Misra's sons. She said she wants to be able to present the plaque to her sons.

A. ACTION:

- ** **MS. NOOR MOVED TO APPROVE DEDICATION AND RENAMING OF BELDEN AVE. ROSE GARDEN IN MEMORY OF DIVYA MISRA**
- ** **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

B. ACTION:

Mr. Knopp reviewed the following request. It was noted that the Library wants to do all they can to support the City's efforts to offer Covid 19 vaccines. Ms. Mann said that the Library staff should not have to do any work associated with this event.

Ms. Baanante asked if there is funding to help clean the bathrooms. Mr. Knopp said the operating budget for part time help was returned. Ms. Harris added that in the re-opening plan, the bathrooms are deep cleaned every three hours.

- ** **MR. KNOPP MOVED TO APPROVE USE OF OUTDOOR AREAS FOR COVID-19 VACCINATIONS AT BOTH NPL BUILDINGS SUBJECT TO AGREEMENT WITH COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION THAT NPL STAFF NOT BE REQUESTED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MANAGEMENT OR SET UP/TAKE DOWN OF THE SITES, AT THE DISCRETION OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IN TERMS OF SCHEDULING**
- ** **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

C. ACTION:

Approve permission of Blue Teapot to cater third-party events at NPL

Mr. Knopp explained that the Blue Teapot is available for curbside pickup or delivery. There have been conversations about catering events once the Library opens. Ms. Williams asked who would be responsible for deep cleaning after the events. Mr. Knopp explained that the events would be held by other organizations. Historically other organizations would bring food in for their event. Ms. Harris said that pre-covide, the Cleaning staff cleaned. She said they should be able to hire another Custodian now that

the budget has been restored. Ms. Baanante suggested adding a cleaning fee to the cost of the event.

Ms. Baanante asked if the Blue Teapot needs an additional catering license. Ms. Harris said she did not believe so. She added that her contract is with the City of Norwalk.

Mr. Knopp said that the sponsor of the event should be responsible for cleaning after an event. Ms. Williams suggested adding to the contract that the person holding the event would be responsible for cleaning after the event.

This item was tabled for further discussion.

D. ACTION:

Ms. Harris said she spoke to the City and they have no objection to fine free use for children. The fines would be free, but there would be a charge if a book is lost. She noted this policy would apply to children 17 and under. She added that they do not loan out laptops.

Mr. Knopp asked if there is a point where someone can no longer take out a book. Ms. Harris said that happens when the fine reaches \$20.00 or they do not return a book. Mr. Knopp asked about the fine impact. Ms. Harris said they average \$62,000 in fines annually; however, she did not know how much of that is from fines for children's books.

**** MS. NOOR MOVED TO APPROVE PILOT POLICY FOR CHILDREN'S FINE FREE USE OF NPL MATERIALS**
**** MS. MANN SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

E. Operating budget reinstated.

Mr. Knopp reported that the City restored \$100,000 for part time Custodial help.

F. Bond request by State Representative Travis Simms re the South Norwalk Branch Library

G. Discussion re resuming in-person NPL Board meetings

Mr. Knopp suggested that the Board continue to meet virtually and have a discussion about resuming in person meetings in September.

6. ADMINISTRATION REPORT— Sherelle Harris

A. Land Use & Building Management Approval of Silver Petrucelli & Associates designer services for the South Norwalk Branch Library repurposing project

Ms. Harris thanked Ms. Mann, Ms. Baanante and Mr. Westmoreland for being part of the selection committee. She said she hopes to have a design within the next few months.

B. Draft Library Survey

Ms. Harris gave an overview of the draft Library survey. Mr. Knopp said he was concerned about the length of the survey. Ms. Harris said the last survey was done in 2018 when they learned that people wanted a café, drop boxes and a drive through check out. Ms. Baanante said there is a tradeoff between the length of the survey and the number of participants. She said that shorter surveys get more participation.

Mr. Knopp asked Board members to submit their questions about the survey to Ms. Harris.

C. Blue Teapot update

Ms. Harris reported that she got a price to expand the area with a hard wood floor.

D. Upcoming Programs

Ms. Harris described the upcoming Juneteenth event on June 19th. She said that Mayor Rilling is going to issue a Proclamation on that date and he would like someone from the Library to offer remarks.

Ms. Harris reported that the Library is going to pilot a children's program this summer where they will learn the history of the Blues.

E. Staff Appreciation Lunch -- Aug. 25 or 26

Ms. Harris said the Staff Appreciation Lunch will be held on August 25th. She said she believes the Board approved a budget of up to \$450.00 for both locations.

7. OLD BUSINESS

The following two items will be discussed at the July meeting.

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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

Mr. Knopp thanked Mr. Bloom for getting fixtures from recently closed the Artists Market. Mr. Bloom said the fixtures will arrive on Saturday.

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 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services