

**CITY OF NORWALK
PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD
SEPTEMBER 9, 2021
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

ATTENDANCE: Alex Knopp, Chair; Sharon Baanante; Ralph Bloom;
Patsy Brescia; Mary Mann; Janine Williams;
Thomas Cullen (7:26 p.m.); Moina Noor (7:26 p.m.)

STAFF: Sherelle Harris, Executive Director

OTHERS: Nikkia Ellis, Domestic Violence Crisis Center (DVCC)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Knopp called the meeting to order at 7:11 p.m.

2. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

Mr. Knopp asked for a Moment of Silence in memory of Ms. Williams' brother
Ms. Harris asked to add Ms. Regina Krummel, a former library board member.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments this evening.

**4. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MONTH (OCTOBER) NPL: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
CRISIS CENTER PARTNERSHIP**

Ms. Ellis explained that October is their biggest month where they spread awareness about domestic violence. She said that each year they place a banner outside of the Library and this year they want to place pinwheels in the Rose Garden. Ms. Ellis said this would be an appropriate way to spread awareness.

Ms. Ellis gave an overview of the four part series the Domestic Violence Crisis Center will be offering.

Ms. Brescia asked if there would be a visible display at the South Norwalk branch. Ms. Ellis explained that they could place a banner on the building, and they could place pinwheels there is there is any lawn space. She added that they have resources to create an indoor display. She said that the four part series will be available on YouTube.

Mr. Knopp said that the sense of the Board was that they were in favor of this partnership. He added that the Rose Garden was an appropriate location for the display.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 8, 2021

**** MS. BRESCIA MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED
** MR. BLOOM SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

6. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Knopp explained that at the last meeting, the Health Department was hopeful things would be better, but no one anticipated the impact of the variant.

Mr. Knopp said Mr. Daniels asked him to pass his appreciation to the Board for allowing the Health Department to use both branches of the Library as Covid vaccine sites.

Mr. Cullen and Ms. Noor joined the meeting at 7:26 p.m.

A. ACTION: APPROVAL OF UPDATED REOPENING PLAN

Ms. Harris reviewed the updated reopening plan. She noted that all City employees have to be vaccinated for Covid 19 by October 1st or submit proof of weekly test results. Mr. Knopp said they will return to this topic each month. He added that he was pleased that Norwalk has taken this cautious approach.

**** MR. CULLEN MOVED TO APPROVE THE UPDATED REOPENING PLAN AS PRESENTED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

B. BLUE TEAPOT REOPENING UPDATE

Mr. Knopp reported that he received the fully executed contract for the Blue Teapot. There were three changes to the contract, which extends the contract from one year to two years, allows catering events at the Library and enlarges the seating area. The Blue Teapot is expected to open on September 22nd.

C. INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION ON EXTENDING THE LIBRARY TO OUTDOOR SPACES AND POSSIBLE POLICY

Mr. Knopp explained that this item will be discussed further at next month's meeting. He said that Ms. Harris has been looking at using the outdoor space. He said this is an important resource and without a policy, will not have a basis for approving or denying a request to use the space. Ms. Brescia suggesting contacting Parks and Recreation to find out what their policy is.

D. INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION ON "THE LIBRARY OF THINGS" POLICY

Mr. Knopp said he read an article that libraires around the country are becoming a "library of things". The library lends out various things, such as tools and kitchen devices. He said he thought it was worth having a discussion about expanding into these other areas. He said he would circulate the article and discuss this item at the October meeting.

E. DISCUSSION OF BONDING PROJECT

Mr. Knopp reported that State Representative Simms is making an effort to get bond funding to make improvements to the South Norwalk branch. He said he would appoint a sub-committee of the Board to work with him on this item.

7. LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. NEXT PHASE REOPENING (sent to the Board on 8.4.21)

Ms. Harris thanked the Board for approving the next phase reopening plan.

B. CYBER SECURITY UPDATE

The City of Norwalk is going to have a third party conduct a security evaluation of the Library's technology.

C. AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN GRANTS TO CONNECTICUT PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Ms. Harris reported that the Library was awarded \$25,000. She said items have been ordered including charging stations and the sound proof pod. The PPEs arrived today.

D. BLUES AND BEYOND WORKSHOP SONG WRITTEN BY STUDENTS

Ms. Harris reported that over the summer an eight week workshop was piloted where students wrote their own songs. She shared the video of the song.

E. AUDITORIUM REFRESH CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATE

Ms. Harris reported that this item will be on the Common Council agenda on Tuesday.

F. SONO BRANCH REPURPOSING CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATE

Ms. Harris reported that the first walk through with Silver Petrecelli took place on August 31st. Mr. Westmoreland (Norwalk Historical Society) will be invited to the next meeting along with Mr. Rennie (Guardian). She thanked Ms. Baanante and Ms. Mann for their participation in the process of the company selection.

G. CITY OF NORWALK SOLAR FOR ALL PROJECT

Ms. Harris reported the library's partnership with this is a nationally recognized program for all Eversource customers.

H. GRIFFIN HEALTH VACCINE CLINICS REPORT

The vaccine clinic took place during the months of July and August where 385 vaccines were administered between both branches of the Library.

I. STORM IDA FACILITIES STATUS

Damages as a result of storm Ida were reported to Guardian. Ms. Harris said she hopes to have more information at the next meeting.

J. ACORN FUND DONATION

Ms. Harris reported that an anonymous donor wants to donate money to library to purchase a collection of academy award winning films through the donor's Acorn Fund with the Fairfield County Community Foundation.

**** MR. CULLEN MOVED TO ACCEPT A DONATION FROM THE ACORN FUND THROUGH THE FAIRFIELD COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR \$2,500**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

8. OLD BUSINESS

A. Request of Mr. Mohinder Kalsi re Sikh books

Mr. Knopp said that Mr. Kalsi joined the meeting as a guest this evening and offered him an opportunity to add additional information. He said that Mr. Kalsi declined, but said he was interested in the discussion to adopt a policy.

Ms. Harris presented her recommendations and said she followed the guidelines from the American Library Association. She said that the guidelines do not recommend removing a book from the shelves. She said she thought a compromise would be to remove the book from the shelf and make it available upon request, but did not think that would solve the problem. She recommended that Mr. Kalsi and his group bring their dissatisfaction to the publisher.

Mr. Knopp advised not removing the book from the catalogue and not segregating the book, because it invites others to remove materials. He recommended taking Ms. Harris' draft, but removing the last line with the recommendation. He said he did not feel it was the role of the Library to provide advice. Ms. Harris said she did not feel it was an issue to give people the option to contact the publisher.

**** MR. KNOPP MOVED TO AMEND THE POLICY AND REMOVE THE RECOMMENDATION TO CONTACT THE PUBLISHER**

**** MOTION PASSED WITH FIVE (5) VOTES IN FAVOR (MR. KNOPP; MR. BLOOM; MS. BRESCIA; MS. MANN; MS. NOOR) ONE (1) VOTE IN OPPOSITION (MS. WILLIAMS) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MS. BAANANTE)**

9. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Bloom gave an update on the book sale.

10. ADJOURNMENT OF DIRECTORS MEETING

**** MS. BRESCIA MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services

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Public Library Board
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Via Teleconference