

**CITY OF NORWALK
LIBRARY BOARD
MARCH 10, 2022
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

ATTENDANCE: Alex Knopp, Chair; Sharon Baanate; Ralph Bloom; Patsy Brescia;
Moina Noor; Janine Williams; Thomas Cullen (7:21 p.m.)

STAFF: Sherelle Harris, Executive Director

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Knopp called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 10, 2022 MINUTES

The following sentence on page 4 should read as follows:

Ms. Noor asked Ms. Harris to think about a plan to bring people back to the Library, once restrictions are lifted.

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

3. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

There were no additions made to the agenda this evening.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments made this evening.

5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

A. Moment of silence in recognition of passing of Cynde Lahey's mother

Mr. Knopp asked for a moment of silence in memory of Ms. Lahey's mother, Ms. Joan Bloom, who encouraged her to go into Library services. He thanked Ms. Bloom for the gift of Ms. Lahey. Mr. Bloom noted that she is a third cousin.

B. Updated action on Capital Budget Request

Mr. Knopp reported that Planning and Zoning did not recommend two of their requests and neither did the CFO. He asked Ms. Harris to bring together all the materials he submitted and he will submit a letter to the Mayor, Common Council President, Chair of the Planning Committee and the CFO.

Ms. Brescia said she understood there was a new version of the budget available. She said they need to push to get what they need.

C. Action Item: Updated Operating Budget Request

Ms. Harris explained that the recommendation was made to the Mayor and now it is up to the Mayor and the Common Council.

Mr. Cullen joined the meeting at 7:21 p.m.

D. Action Item: Proposed Updated Reopening Plan

The reopening plan was provided in the meeting materials and was discussed. The City of Norwalk lifted its mask requirement, and most entities are on their way to doing that. The issue is the number of people vaccinated, including the booster. Mr. Knopp said he read that 35-40% of Norwalk residents are vaccinated and boosted.

Mr. Knopp explained that Ms. Harris' recommendation is to expand the number of attendees in a room for an event. Ms. Harris asked to increase the capacity at the main branch to 80 and at the South Norwalk branch to 50.

Mr. Knopp said they are at a period of uncertainty and is concerned about another variant; therefore, he is not in favor of increasing the room capacity. He said he does understand that people are expressing interest and most people are still wearing their masks. Ms. Harris explained that the Fire Code allows up to 175 people at the main branch and 130 people at the South Norwalk branch.

Ms. Brescia said she feels being as open as possible is a positive thing. Mr. Cullen asked if the Health Department has the vaccine rate for the City. He added that anybody who had Covid has better protection than those who are vaccinated. He said that they should not be afraid to loosen up a bit. Mr. Knopp said he would rather err on the side of caution.

Mr. Knopp said they are voting on the reopening plan that was amended to increase capacity to 80 at the main branch and 50 at the South Norwalk branch.

Ms. Baanate asked about the hours of operation and if they will be open more at night. Ms. Harris said that hopefully during the next phase, they will be open at night and on Sundays. She said the issue is the staffing.

- ** MR. CULLEN MOVED TO APPROVE THE AMENDMENT TO THE REOPENING PLAN WITH THE INCREASE IN CAPACITY OF 80 ATTENDEES AT THE MAIN BRANCH AND 50 AT THE SOUTH NORWALK BRANCH**
- ** MR. BLOOM SECONDED**
- ** MOTION PASSED WITH FIVE (5) VOTES IN FAVOR (MR. BLOOM; MS. BRESCIA; MR. CULLEN; MS. NOOR AND MS. WILLIAMS) AND TWO (2) IN OPPOSITION (MS. BAANATE AND MR. KNOPP)**

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E. Action Item: Proposed update to the WiFi Hotspot Lending Policy

Ms. Harris reviewed the policy included in the meeting packet. The effective date will be March 21, 2022.

- ** MR. KNOPP MOVED TO APPROVE THE WIFI HOTSPOT LENDING POLICY EFFECTIVE MARCH 21, 2022 WITH THE ADDITION OF A COST FOR ONLY THE HOTSPOT**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

F. Action Item: Approval for NPL Website Links to Friends of NPL, Literacy Volunteers and Norwalk Reads

Mr. Knopp explained they have been discussing financial issues related to other entities and determined it was in the best interest of the Foundation to avoid any co-mingling of funds. The question came up whether the Friends and other entities could maintain a link on the public library website. After discussing this with the Corporation Counsel, Mr. Coppola indicated that the City would allow the Library to add a link for the purpose of making donations to the Library.

Ms. Brescia said she would like to see an additional link for donations to the Library Foundation.

Mr. Knopp said he felt it was appropriate to have this Board's approval for the purpose of encouraging donations to the Friends of NPL, Literacy Volunteers and Norwalk Reads. He expressed his thanks to Mr. Coppola.

**** MR. CULLEN MOVED TO AMEND THE APPROVAL AND ADD THE LIBRARY FOUNDATION**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**** MR. CULLEN MOVED APPROVAL AS AMENDED FOR THE NORWALK PUBLIC LIBRARY WEBSITE LINKS TO THE LIBRARY FOUNDATION, FRIENDS OF NPL, LITERACY VOLUNTEERS AND NORWALK READS**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

6. LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. ARPA Grant Update

Ms. Harris reported that all of the items are in. The POD arrived, but with an incorrect door. A replacement will arrive in 10 weeks.

B. Telehealth

With the arrival of the POD, Ms. Harris said she talked to others about Telehealth and to see if it was possible to get a grant for medial supplies for Telehealth. Mr. Knopp said he has been very supportive of telehealth for decades, but noted this has to be done carefully. He suggested creating a Board sub committee to have those discussions.

Mr. Cullen expressed concern over data privacy for users. Ms. Harris said the Library always protects people's privacy. This offers people an opportunity to have a telehealth appointment. She said they just keep statistics on usage. Mr. Knopp said that written protocols are important.

Ms. Baanate agreed with Mr. Knopp and asked who was going to clean the PODs. Ms. Noor asked if the Library could distribute Covid tests. Mr. Knopp said he asked Mr. Daniels who said they had a sufficient distribution plan. Mr. Knopp noted that the government offers two test kits.

C. Placement of Solar Charging Stations

Ms. Harris said she is looking for placement for solar panels at the main library branch and for the South Norwalk branch. She said she would like to have them installed as soon as possible.

7. OLD BUSINESS

No old business was discussed this evening.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. Planning for “hybrid” In-person and Zoom NPL April Board Meeting

The Board members discussed plans for their April meeting. Mr. Knopp said he learned that most meetings are being held remotely. Ms. Brescia said there is enough room at the Library and is in favor of going back to in person meetings. Mr. Knopp said he will give people the option to. Ms. Harris said it is a personal choice. Ms. Baanate said it is about accessibility too for people with children.

Mr. Bloom asked the Board to consider having a meeting to plan the book sale. He said this is the time to start planning.

9. ADJOURNMENT

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

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services