TOWN OF NEWINGTON

LIBRARY RENOVATIONS/ADDITION PROJECT BUILDING COMMITTEE

March 1, 2016

TOWN HALL –CONFERENCE ROOM L100

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

I. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by Committee Chairperson Newell Stamm, Jr. at 7:02 PM.

II. Roll Call – Members present: Newell Stamm, Jr, Chairperson; Laurel Goodgion; Maureen Lyons; and LeeAnn Manke. Others present: Members of the public; Lisa Masten, Library Director; and Jeff Baron, Director of Administrative Services.

III. Public Participation - None.

IV. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes – Ms. Lyons made a motion that the minutes of February 2, 2016 be approved as presented. A second to the motion was provided by Ms. Goodgion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Construction Grant Available ($500,000) from State of Connecticut – Ms. Goodgion reported that she had spoken with a contact at the State Library, which does offer grants for libraries. Funds for grants could be cut back in light of the State's current project budget shortfall. Her contact was guardedly optimistic that there would be funds left. The Town would need submit a letter of intent in June. If that were to happen architectural drawings would be required in the fall. Grant applications would be reviewed by the State Library's Board or Committee. If approved, they would then be sent to the State Bond Commission. After approval by the Bond Commission the Town would have three years to spend the money. The State classifies requests as Category I (construction) grants and Category II (distressed community) grants. Any request from Newington would be for a Category I grant and would have to demonstrate material service delivery. Mr. Baron suggested that the Committee have a project architect and at least conceptual plans before considering which grants could be applied for. In addition, new State law requires bids funded by $50,000 or more of State money to require CHRO set asides, which would increase bid amounts. For a project of this anticipated size, a $500,000 state grant would be expected to result in a net loss to the Town. Ms. Goodgion also reported that grants used to be capped at $500,000 but now could be as large as $1,000,000. She also discussed her experiences with the State grant that was received for the Wethersfield library upgrade. During previous discussions the Committee entertained the possibility of applying for HVAC improvements that could be carried over to the building

addition design. Ms. Goodgion's contact was not aware of any community having received a smaller or partial grant one year followed by a larger grant for a more comprehensive project shortly afterwards.

VI. Upgrades to Existing Building – Ms. Goodgion and Ms. Masten visited three other libraries who had recently completed building improvements, in East Hartford, Wallingford and Avon. Ms. Manke visited libraries in northern California, specifically in San Francisco and Napa County. The East Hartford project had a total cost of $6,137,000 and received $4,435,000 in grants. The Wallingford library project cost $12,055,000 and they received a State grant for $500,000. There was also a grant of $229,625 for a space identified as a collaboratory, which is a digital media co-working space. Wallingford is a private association library, not a Town department. Avon's building addition cost $8,500,000 and they received a $1,000,000 grant. San Francisco's resources are certainly well beyond Newington's. In Napa County a library foundation contributes towards programs and services while the friends of the library contribute to building improvements. Both California systems build further improvements into their budgets. Each observer shared their respective thoughts on each building they visited. Common positive themes were multi-purpose space, which even extended to the staff work spaces in San Francisco, and open space that allowed for portable walls and configurations based on the program or service need. Mr. Stamm asked if Newington needed a local history room and a computer lab, as Avon had. There have not been a lot of requests for a local history room as patrons contact the historical society for that information. A separate room for computers requires a staff member to monitor it. Patrons prefer one on one assistance with computers. Having computers out in the main, open space is preferable. The key is to have flexibility.

VII. Committee Member Ideas and Sketches for Library Addition – The purpose of this agenda item was to get the Committee members to think about and discuss the library's needs and to review the assessment report. Ms. Lyons felt that wherever the teen area would end up, that there would be a separate area for teen programs where there is visual supervision. She would also like to see an observation deck concept for the children's area. Ms. Masten observed that some libraries have the circulation and reference desks close together by the entrance. Others have community space right as the patron walks in. Still others have the children's room at the entrance. The Newington Children's Room was situated well away from the entrance for safety and security purposes. There was general agreement that anyone situated near the front entrance would need climate control to be better addressed than in the present configuration. Ms. Goodgion noted that staff work rooms and meeting rooms could be upstairs. Ms. Manke did not want special collections to be located where they could be damaged by roof leaks. Mr. Stamm shared some sketches he had drawn up. One was for a separate stand alone building. Another envisioned a separate community room area, with its own entrance, that could be closed off. Ms. Masten preferred that the stacks and computers be out in the open space that could be reconfigured as needed. Various

driveway needs, options and locations were discussed. The places where staff could be located were discussed, including the current meeting room and over the back of the existing stacks to fill in space that is not currently used, without having to build foundation space to accommodate it. The library book stacks should be all on one floor. Ms. Masten stated that the focus for libraries today is about what they can do for the patrons. Ms. Goodgion sees the library as a place to go that is the center of the community. Ms. Lyons observed that the Hartford library is a hub for all demographics. As the Committee will eventually look to get funds released from the Town Council, it will develop lists of things that it will talk to someone about. The community needs of the library will be an item on the next meeting agenda.

VIII. Hiring a Consultant to Suggest Future Needs of Library Users – Mr. Stamm will give the Town Council a progress report on the Committee's activity and inform them of the Committee's discussions about hiring a consultant to perform a feasibility study of the library's expressed needs. Mr. Baron told the Committee that $104,000 was currently available for project related expenses. Ms. Lyons distributed an outline of some preliminary costs that one potential consultant might charge for various aspects that such a feasibility study is likely to include, such as focus groups, group planning sessions, a workshop, etc. The next agenda will include an item on public outreach.

IX. Discuss NCTV Recording of Committee Meetings – Mr. Stamm has been approached about the possibility of having Newington Community Television film the Committee's meetings. Although these are public meetings, some individuals might find the presence of a camera intimidating. Although the current meeting room has accommodated a portable camera in the past, there are other meeting rooms that better facilitate video recording. Those rooms are popular however, and restricting the Committee meetings to those locations could limit the nights of the week the Committee could choose to meet. A couple of members expressed satisfaction with the current meeting room. This item will be left on the agenda for the next meeting.

X. Any Other Business Pertinent to the Committee – None.

XI. Public Participation – Diane Stamm, 104 Steeplechase Drive. She liked the information and ideas that were discussed in the meeting, such as the ideas for using the second floor, having the staff spread out across the open space, and incorporating pockets of currently unused empty space. If meetings are recorded some people can be more guarded in their comments. At the same time it might be a good way to keep people informed.

XII. Response to Public Participation – None.

XIII. XI. Adjournment – the meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Baron

Jeff Baron
Director of Administrative Services