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**GREAT NECK LIBRARY  
MINUTES OF THE  
SPECIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
MONDAY, MARCH 8, 2021, AT 6:00 P.M.**

A special meeting of the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees was held on Monday, March 8, 2021, via Zoom [Agenda attached]

The following Trustees were present constituting a quorum:

Weihua Yan – President  
Liman Mimi Hu – Vice President  
Barry Smith – Secretary  
Chelsea Sassouni – Treasurer  
Scott Sontag – Assistant Treasurer  
Kathleen Gold – Assistant Treasurer  
Josephine Mairzadeh – Trustee

Also Present:                      George Trepp – Interim Director  
   Steven Kashkin – Business Manager  
   Elisabeth Martin – MDA Design Group

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by President Yan at 6:02 p.m. He announced that the purpose of today’s meeting is to discuss the Station Branch Renovations.

**PRESENTATION OF STATION BRANCH RENOVATIONS**

Trustee Smith thanked the members of the Building Committee, Elisabeth Martin – Architect, MDA Design Group, Peter Fishbein – Library Counsel, Steven Kashkin – Business Manager, and George Trepp – Interim Director, for their hard work on this project. He announced that Mr. Kashkin, Mr. Trepp and Ms. Martin will be providing an overview of the renovations. Dr. Smith wished all the women in attendance a Happy International Women’s Day. He said that he came across the Latin word *ethos* which is a noun that means the characteristics, spirit of a culture, era or community as manifested in its beliefs or aspirations. He stated that the Great Neck Library and its board recognizes that we have a special community that is one of inclusion, diversity and love. Dr. Smith believes that is what all these projects are all about. He shared that the library began the branch renovation projects four years ago. At the initial meeting, Trustee Fuller suggested a space planner and designer for both Station and Parkville. After four long years that vision is close to fruition as renovation awards for Station will be completed tonight and Parkville will be going to bid in the next few months. It is anticipated that these projects will be completed by late 2021, early 2022.

Steven Kashkin, Business Manager, reported that the total costs for the Station renovations is approximately \$685k. He said there are currently funds in the Branch and Special Services Fund to cover both the Station and Parkville projects. Since the Parkville renovations will occur after Station, he anticipates it will be after our current fiscal year. Mr. Kashkin announced that we are headed towards a surplus and that, through board approval, as we get closer to the May/June timeframe, we may be able to move some of that surplus into the branch fund, if necessary. He noted, though, that the goal should be to keep the costs down for both projects and utilize the funds we currently have in that fund account. Mr. Kashkin added that with surpluses and accruals of prior years we have built a nice fund in our bond retirement which we intend to use in 2024 to pay down the bond for the first time. He said that in a worst-case scenario that fund is one we can consider as we move forward with these projects. Mr. Kashkin reiterated that the goal should be to use the funds we already have in the Branch and Special Services Fund for both projects but we will not know if that will be possible until we identify what the Parkville project will cost.

George Trepp, Interim Director, announced that there have been two primary questions pertaining to the branch renovations. The first is, why Station first? Mr. Trepp said that since Parkville is a school district building the process is a complex and lengthy one that includes going through State Education and Facilities Planning Department approvals. He stated that because of this it was determined that the Station renovations could be completed faster. Mr. Trepp said that another question has been about the cost for the Parkville renovations. He estimates that the Parkville project will be approximately the same as Station but that we will not know the actual cost of the project until the bids come in. Finally, Mr. Trepp shared that Trustee Fuller, in March 2017 indicated that a planner and designer were valuable for both projects and on April 2017 the board approved the RFP for this. He clarified that there was never a budget stipulated for these projects.

Elisabeth Martin, MDA Design Group, stated that the project started in 2017 but was put on hold with the departure of former director, Denise Corcoran. It was started again with the arrival of George Trepp, Interim Director. At this time, mechanical, electrical, plumbing & fire protection were added for both branches. This is the principal difference from the very early estimate to the current bid for this project. Ms. Martin explained that to make up for that, MDA went back to the drawing board and found many cost savings to nearly compensate. She presented the Station Branch project update. Ms. Martin went over the existing plan and goals which is to provide a good space for all age groups. It was also decided early on that new outlets and HVAC changes were necessary. Ms. Martin reported that in 2019 the project was estimated to be about \$500k but that did not include the mechanical, electrical, plumbing & fire protection, shelving or moving services. She noted that the engineering was a very big part of it. Ms. Martin shared that a thorough analysis of the existing shelving was conducted to determine what could be reused and how much new shelving was needed to house the entire collection. She noted that on tonight's agenda, in addition to the construction contract, recommendations are being presented for moving and storage, furniture procurement and installation, and for shelving.

Trustee Sassouni asked when Station's lease expires and if the landlord is aware and supportive of the extensive upgrades the library is planning. Mr. Kashkin responded that the lease runs through June 2025 with a renewal option of 10 years. Mr. Trepp noted that the library must advise the landlord of its intention to renew the lease one year prior to its expiration.

Trustee Hu questioned if the design is adaptable to current and post COVID-19 social distancing requirements, as well as state regulations. Mr. Trepp said that it is.

President Yan inquired as to the total cost of the Station renovation, inclusive of moving, storage, furniture, etc. Mr. Trepp stated that the total cost is \$698,065 but that this amount does not take into account any negotiations that the library may enter with the contractors.

Trustee Mairzadeh asked if the library has any leads on where they may donate the excessed furniture. Trustee Gold wondered if it would be possible to post pictures of this furniture on the library's website for the public to view. Mr. Trepp said that he reached out to the Salvation Army, Habitat for Humanity and Goodwill but all are reluctant to accept donations due to the pandemic. He also contacted the Great Neck School District and NLS libraries. Mr. Trepp stated that Trustee Hu connected him with an organization that will be taking some of the furniture. Trustee Hu concurred with Trustee Gold's suggestion to share the photos of the available furniture on the library website and added that Trustees could also share them on their social media pages.

Trustee Sassouni recommended the library negotiate the lease terms with Station's landlord for a possible rent reduction. She said that if we are going to make over half a million dollars of improvements to the space with only five years left on the lease and to not be negotiating better terms with the landlord now is irresponsible because that is what anyone in the private sector would do. Trustee Sontag wondered if it is being suggested that we look at other possible sites for the branch. President Yan said that the point is not to look at other sites rather use this opportunity to approach the landlord to let him know we are making a significant investment and to negotiate better terms for the lease. Mr. Kashkin announced that currently the annual rent for the Station Branch space is approximately \$250k. Mr. Trepp agreed to speak to the landlord in an attempt to negotiate better lease terms.

## **AWARD CONTRACT FOR STATION BRANCH RENOVATION**

**Upon motion by Trustee Smith, seconded by Trustee Sassouni and after discussion, it was, subsequently TABLED,**

**MOVED**, that the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees award the contract for construction renovation of the Station Branch renovation to Jobco Incorporated per the per the attached quotation, in an amount of \$483,000.00; to be charged to the Branch and Special Services Fund

**VOTE:** Yes – 5 (Yan, Smith, Sassouni, Gold, Mairzadeh)

No – 1 (Sontag)

Abstain – 1 (Hu)

**MOTION CARRIED**

*Board Comment: Motion was TABLED to allow the library to negotiate lease terms, specifically the amount of the escalator, with landlord of Station Branch's space.*

## **AWARD CONTRACT FOR MOVING AND STORAGE FOR STATION BRANCH RENOVATION**

**Upon motion by Trustee Smith, seconded by Trustee Sassouni and after discussion, it was, subsequently TABLED,**

**MOVED**, that the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees award the contract for moving and storage for the Station Branch renovation to WGB per the per the attached quotation, in an amount of \$54,100.00; to be charged to the Branch and Special Services Fund.

**VOTE:** Yes – 5 (Yan, Smith, Sassouni, Gold, Mairzadeh)  
No – 1 (Sontag)  
Abstain – 1 (Hu)

**MOTION CARRIED**

*Board Comment: Motion was TABLED to allow the library to negotiate lease terms, specifically the amount of the escalator, with landlord of Station Branch's space.*

## **AWARD CONTRACT FOR FURNITURE PROCUREMENT AND INSTALLATION FOR STATION BRANCH RENOVATION**

**Upon motion by Trustee Smith, seconded by Trustee Sassouni and after discussion, it was, subsequently TABLED,**

**MOVED**, that the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees award the contract for furniture procurement and installation for the Station Branch renovation to Inside Source per the attached quotation, in an amount of \$112,002.00; to be charged to the Branch and Special Services Fund

**VOTE:** Yes – 5 (Yan, Smith, Sassouni, Gold, Mairzadeh)  
No – 1 (Sontag)  
Abstain – 1 (Hu)

**MOTION CARRIED**

*Board Comment: Motion was TABLED to allow the library to negotiate lease terms, specifically the amount of the escalator, with landlord of Station Branch's space.*

## **AWARD CONTRACT FOR SHELVING FOR STATION BRANCH RENOVATION**

**Upon motion by Trustee Smith, seconded by Trustee Sassouni and after discussion, it was, subsequently TABLED,**

**MOVED**, that the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees award the contract for shelving for the Station Branch renovation to WGB per the per the attached quotation, in an amount of \$48,963.00; to be charged to the Branch and Special Services Fund.

**VOTE:** Yes – 5 (Yan, Smith, Sassouni, Gold, Mairzadeh)  
No – 1 (Sontag)  
Abstain – 1 (Hu)

**MOTION CARRIED**

*Board Comment: Motion was TABLED to allow the library to negotiate lease terms, specifically the amount of the escalator, with landlord of Station Branch's space.*

## **OPEN TIME**

Ms. Martin understands the board's desire to negotiate the lease terms for Station branch but asked if they feel comfortable with the recommendations presented at tonight's meeting to give her the green light to negotiate with the general contractor and possibly significantly reduce the bid cost. The board agreed.

**Upon motion by Trustee Sassouni, seconded by Trustee Hu and after discussion, it was,**

**RESOLVED**, that the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees recognized Jobco Incorporated, WGB and Inside Source as the lowest responsive bidders for the Station Branch renovation project.

**VOTE:** Yes – 7 (Yan, Hu, Smith, Sassouni, Sontag, Gold, Mairzadeh)

*MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY*

*Board Comment: President Yan stated that this resolution empowers Ms. Martin and Mr. Trepp to negotiate with these contractors.*

## **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

March 10, 2021- 1<sup>st</sup> Budget Workshop

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Upon motion by Trustee Smith, seconded by Trustee Hu, it was,**

**RESOLVED**, that the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees enter into Executive Session for a discussion on Personnel Matters.

**VOTE:** Yes – 7 (Yan, Hu, Smith, Sassouni, Sontag, Gold, Mairzadeh)

*MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY*

**Upon motion by Trustee Sassouni, seconded by Trustee Hu and after discussion, it was,**

**RESOLVED**, that the Great Neck Library Board of Trustees exit Executive Session.

**VOTE:** Yes – 7 (Yan, Hu, Smith, Sassouni, Sontag, Gold, Mairzadeh)

*MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY*

No action was taken in executive session.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 pm on a motion by Trustee Gold and seconded by Trustee Mairzadeh.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Barry Smith  
Secretary, Board of Trustees