

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

May 16, 2012

6:30 PM

MINUTES

Na'im Tyson who presided called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

Present were: Millie Burns and Marcia Dupree

Absent: Julie Mills Worthey and Winston Maharaj

Also present: Terry Kirchner, WLS Executive Director; Ruth Shire, President, Charlotte Schachter and Christine Gibson, Friends of the Mount Vernon Public Library; Gary Newman, CSEA Unit President; Hafeezah Basir, Jeffery Jones, Rebecca Steere and Tamara Stewart, patrons; Maxine Grandison, Scott Griffith and Rebecca Newman library staff and Mary Harper, Administrative Assistant.

MINUTES:

The minutes of the meeting of April 18, 2012 were approved upon a motion by Millie Burns, seconded by Marcia Dupree. The motion carried unanimously.

PERIOD OF PUBLIC EXPRESSION:

Terry Kirchner spoke about the CLDA (Central Library Development Aid) budget.

Mr. Kirchner said that the system, in conjunction with the central library and PLDA discuss the budget.

Terry Kirchner said that the conversation started with the former central library director. Both parties suggested that the same cycle that was used for the 2011 budget be used in 2012.

It was suggested that a cataloger work at the central library one day per week and also participate in development of Spanish languages, as well as bilingual storytelling.

Mr. Kirchner said that the WLS budget accrues January through December. The goal is to talk about the 2013 budget in 2012 so the budget time line can be incorporated with the state. This was the recommendation from PLDA and the former central library director last year.

Millie Burns asked if this presented a gap.

Terry Kirchner said that the state budget is from April through May. WLS spent last year shifting its budget so they reflect March through April.

Mr. Kirchner said in order for the CLDA budget to move forward it must be approved by PLDA, the Central Library and then WLS. Then it goes to the state.

Millie Burns asked if the decision had to be unanimous at each entity. She said that she was asking because the treasurer was not present at the meeting.

Terry Kirchner said that they may want to table for the June meeting.

Ms. Burns said that perhaps it would be tabled for the June meeting, but the board would engage in conversation before so that it could be voted on.

Na'im Tyson said that the CLDA discussion would be tabled so the treasurer could review it.

Millie Burns said that she would like to get a sense of what the various programs were.

Terry Kirchner said that the discussion going forward for 2013 was to see what every library feels is tangible to reach their community.

Ms. Burns asked if that is what is being discussed now and was there a written document.

Mr. Kirchner gave a copy of the CLDA budget.

Tamara Stewart inquired about the budget vote for the library. She asked was the library still intending to have the vote and would the trustees be voted on at that time. She asked if they were not going to have the vote, would the state be notified.

Ruth Shire said that the Friends of the Mount Vernon Public Library would have a table at the Fleetwood Neighborhood Association Street fair.

She said that they would like to publicize the Saturday openings at the library.

Mrs. Shire said that attendance was very poor at the “Friends” May book sale.

She said she thinks that people have to be reminded that the library is open one Saturday per month; perhaps with flyers.

Mrs. Shire said that the “Friends” would like to have a table about everything that is going on at the library. Mr. Tyson said that he would send a message to Rosanna Guinyard.

Christine Gibson said that the “Friends” have no electronic way to receive money. The “Friends” have a link to the library web page, but the library foundation has the possibility to go to Pay Pal. She asked how the “Friends” could do this.

Na'im Tyson said that in the past the library has asked the “Foundation” for a record of its donations and have not received it.

Mr. Tyson said that the “Friends” must have a Pay Pal account in place, then the library would have to link to it.

Leroy Lea said that Pay Pal has instructions on its website.

Ms. Gibson said that the “Friends” wanted to start raising money on a different level.

Christine Gibson said that she has gathered her own list of people who have graduated from Mount Vernon and are doing well. These are people that we should be going after. She said that the “Friends” don't want to circumvent the “Foundation” and the list could be shared.

Millie Burns said that a statement was made that the “Foundation's” target level was \$5,000 and above. She said at a “Foundation” meeting she attended, it was her understanding that they have taken donations considerably below that amount.

Ms. Gibson said that basically the “Friends” are doing cookies and milk. There is a tremendous gap.

Millie Burns said when the “Friends;” hand out flyers at the Fleetwood event, the first Saturday open will have already occurred.

Ms. Burns said that the cost of toner has gone up.. There has been an attempt to post information around the building and a concerted effort to send eblasts.

She said she questioned how feasible it would be to give out flyers at an event immediately after the last Saturday we will be open until October.

Na'im Tyson said that the library would give out flyers about the events. Millie Burns said that it would behoove the library to make a concerted effort to get merchants here and in Fleetwood to post information in their windows.

Ms. Burns said that she understands that flyers were posted in merchants windows about the ShenYung event with the effort from Cathy Webb's staff.

Ms. Gibson suggested it would be helpful if the information were given to the Fleetwood Neighborhood Association, so they can incorporate the library information in their flyer.

Millie Burns said that she is not a member of the Fleetwood Neighborhood Association but that Susan Granata is on her eblast list. Ms. Burns said there are gaps in communication somewhere. She said that she is a Fleetwood resident and has never received a flyer from them.

Charlotte Schachter said that she was seeking permission from the Board to underwrite the painting of the double doors on the second and first avenue sides of the building. She said she also wanted to replace one handle. She said that she heard the doors would be replaced, but the "Friends" are willing to put up the money.

Millie Burns said that this was discussed at the book sale. She said that she has done the research. The library doors are metal doors that must be removed and stripped, then put on sawhorses and painted.

Ms. Burns said given the kind of preparation this would take, she wonders if it is economically feasible.. Mrs. Schachter suggested a touch up of the doors.

Christine Gibson said that she had spoken to Jesse Van Lew and he did not mention this. She said that she has researched an historic reddish brown color that was in existence at the time the library was built.

Millie Burns said she was just trying to make the "Friends" aware of how expensive it could be.

Na'im Tyson asked was this part of the capital improvements.

Millie Burns said in her first conversation with the city, she was told that the library would make the improvements until the money ran out. In the second conversation she was told that a list of what would be done would be established.

Ms. Burns said she agrees that the Second Avenue doors look awful.

Na'im Tyson said that he must speak with Jesse Van Lew regarding this issue.

Mrs. Schachter asked if they could get permission to buy one brass handle for Second Avenue.

Na'im Tyson said that he needs to have a conversation with Jesse Van Lew to make sure he has the crew. He needs to see what he can do or not regarding the door painting, color, etc.

He said that they will hear from him what can be done and decide what the "Friends" can do.

Mr. Tyson said that he would find out the specifics of the capital improvements.

Millie Burns said that it is her understanding that \$250,000 has been set aside for the library.

OLD BUSINESS:

Na'im Tyson said that there was a problem with book discards and the boxes on the lower level.

American Independent Paper in Tarrytown will take the paperback discards for free, but the library will have to get them there.

Mr. Tyson said that according to maintenance the city has not responded to getting rid of the books.

Millie Burns said that she has been working in the ante room of the Bookmobile office. Ms. Burns said that she has measured the space in the literacy office and would like to give that space to the “Friends”. If they have vertical shelving in the office, they can move the books right into the community room. As long as the shelving is on wheels it can be moved to another portion of the library.

Once the maintenance department is moved, the “Friends” will go in the old maintenance office on a very short term basis.

Mr. Tyson said that the library is running against the clock with the Fire Marshall and may need to ask for another extension. Millie Burns said that she thinks the library needs to move forward so they don’t need another extension.

Na’im Tyson said that maintenance needs to do clean-up in the next week and then prepare the maintenance space for the “Friends”

Ms. Burns said that she was concerned that in the immediacy of things we get rid of the boxes so we can invite the Fire Marshall in.

Leroy Lea asked if the violation was the amount of books or where they are located.

Millie Burns said both. They are in the pathway for people to get out of the building. The boxes are flammable.

Leroy Lea asked could the boxes be removed slowly or separated to other parts of the building.

Mr. Tyson said that this has been proposed to maintenance. It cannot be done and is only putting off the problem.

Tamara Stewart suggested that the department of corrections could be contacted to remove the books. Ms. Burns said that the department of corrections had a very specific list of what they would take.

Na’im Tyson said that moving forward the library will have to implement a plan for better sorting and removal.

Millie Burns said that the board had spoken to a number of people about the Chief Administrator search. It is her understanding that a decision will be made at the next level of who will be called back for an in person interview. She said that she does not know when this will take place. Ms. Burns said that she has only seen email picks from two members of the board.

Ms. Burns said that she had hoped to have a discussion on the number of trustees who should be present for the in person interviews.

Na’im Tyson said that he agreed with Millie Burns’ picks. All of the HOBs suggestions were picked.

Millie Burns said that she hoped that the trustees agreed on the questions.

Mr. Tyson asked about the HOBs submitting questions.

Ms. Burns said that maybe the closest candidate could be interviewed first.

Millie Burns said that she sat on a panel at ArtsWestchester to select the artist to be commissioned to create an eye catching free standing sculpture for the Second Avenue side of the library.

The selection has come down to three artists. The coordinator wants to come to the June board meeting to present proposals from the finalists.

Mount Vernon Public Library will have one vote to be represented.

Millie Burns said that she had taken a look at the panelists' selection and it is leaning towards very colorful ones.

Ms. Burns said that she has taken a look at a rectangular space on Second Avenue near the children's room and an engraved stone in the flower bed.

Leroy Lea said that he believes the engraved stone is from Westchester Community College for the children's room. Millie Burns asked Mr. Lea to research the engraved stone.

Ms. Burns said that she can see the artwork being proposed and the engraved stone staying where it is. She said that she does not want to offend someone by removing the engraved.

Millie Burns said that she does not remember if any of the finalists spoke about lighting but that ArtsWestchester said that the lighting should/would be a part of the installation.

Ms. Burns said that she made a point to respond that the maintenance of lighting could not be at the library's expense. ArtsWestchester replied that the maintenance of lighting would be at the city's expense.

The library must make sure that the level of lighting doesn't become intrusive to the people living across the street from the library.

FINANCIAL MATTERS:

Vice President Tyson reported that:

The revenue projects higher than the actual budget.

Salaries are under budget due to the open head count in administration.

Materials are under budget because no books have been ordered.

Library operations have excessive expenditures on toner. Adjustments have been made.

Arrangements have been made to reduce copier costs through a program with Westchester County.

Building operations are under budget.

The line for personnel is under budget.

Attempts have been made to meet with the finance office on a regular basis.

Millie Burns said that she met with the program committee because they have not been responsive to the board's request for two years worth of programming with budgets.

The committee is used to doing things the other way around.

Ms. Burns said that she met with them to inform them of what the board wants. At the end of the meeting they were asked if they were armed to move forward.

Millie Burns said that she specifically mentioned Westchester Community College and the Wartburg. She said that she forgot to mention Maurice Sendak.

Ms. Burns said that a couple of days after the meeting she got a vague book order with no programming or plan.

Millie Burns said that it was explained in the course of the meeting that books were a separate item from programming.

Ms. Burns said that she gave very specific instructions to the committee that they could inform the board of the specific amount of one title that they need in the library a particular time.

She said that she thought there was an understanding and we could move forward.

Ms. Burns said that she sent a response to the Maurice Sendak email and outlined what could potentially happen everyday. It was a template.

Millie Burns said that since then she has gotten back an email wanting to do an extensive display of Maurice Sendak's books. She said that she does not know how to respond. There was no don't buy books; only please give us your plan.

Ms. Burns said that she understands that programming involves books.

Millie Burns said that she is waiting for the green light from the program committee.

Books are a part of something else. You have to encourage people to come and use them; to plan programming around them.

Na'im Tyson asked if Ms. Burns thought the program committee could be asked to submit a calendar for a shorter period of time.

Millie Burns said that it was not going to do any good. We have to plan for the entire year. It is already May, so 2012 will only be a half year.

Gary Newman said that the library hasn't bought any books in two years. We need books more than programming.

Millie Burns said please give us what we ask for so we can approve buying books.

Gary Newman said give us the money and we will buy books.

Scott Griffith said that it is difficult for the children's room to have discussions on Maurice Sendak. You cannot have a discussion for each grade. He said that the board may have to lay out a little money.

Millie Burns said that she outlined suggestions for a program and what staff she presumed would be involved.

Sunday and Thursday a screening of "Where the Wild Things Are"

Tuesday- Bi-lingual storytelling. A fun time for tots and a teaching artist to make masks based on "Where the Wild Things Are".

Wednesday- Another program plugged in

Friday- Another creative activity

Saturday- The banner gets changed.

For banned books week the suggestion was "In the Night Kitchen"

Ms. Burns said that she laid out the whole week that is programming. She said that she doesn't want people to think she is projecting her ideas.

Millie Burns said don't send a request for books when she is asking for programming.

Ms. Burns said that she had also sent a request for December for Jerry Pinkney's birthday.

Millie Burns said that she was very disappointed that no one gets what the board is willing to do if you give us programming. She said that the board wants to support and see the library flourish.

She said the board cannot explain to people what is going on if they do not know.

Gary Newman said what the public wants is books. They are not asking for programming.

Ms. Burns said that will be done if you tell us what books you need.

Mr. Newman said that he had never heard of collection development run that way. As a professional librarian it is so rigid. Gary Newman said that they need to respect the professional staff and their ability.

He said if you go out and buy books you are communicating to the public by putting them on the shelves.

Millie Burns said that she respects what the public is saying to Mr. Newman. She asked that Mr. Newman respect what the public is saying to her.

Na'im Tyson asked why the program committee hasn't given what is asked for.

Millie Burns said after a week and a half, why hasn't collection development given a list of books.

Gary Newman said he does not think they understand what make up your mind means.

Gary Newman said that we need books. We don't need formulas.

Mr. Newman said that the board needs to figure out how much money is there and split it up to buy books.

Millie Burns said that the board is not going to release funds until they have documentation of what the staff intends to do.

Na'im Tyson said that we want to get this resolved and get a simple question answered.

Gary Newman said that no one understands the question..

Mr. Tyson asked why was Ms. Burns allowed to leave the program committee meeting thinking that everyone understood.

Gary Newman said; give us a plan does not compute in the way you do collection development.

Mr. Newman said that he could understand if you said you want to build on certain areas of the collection.

Mr. Tyson said that was not communicated to the board.

Library Budget Vote

Trustee, Tyson said that he had spoken with the Deputy Commissioner of the Board of Elections in White Plains regarding the vote for the library budget. He was directed to the City Clerk who directed him back to the Board of Elections.

He sent an email to the Law Department and got no response. Board President, Julie Mills Worthey also spoke to the Law Department and got no response.

Na'im Tyson said that the board wanted a forty-five to sixty day window to present the budget.

Two committees were needed; one to explore the charter, the other to set up the election.

A letter to Albany will have to be drafted asking for more time. It is impossible to hold the vote at this time.

Mr. Tyson said that they will need to have a larger conversation next month.

Tamara Stewart asked had there been discussions with the Mayor and the City Council about carrying the library for an additional year.

Na'im Tyson said that they will have to come up with a proposal on what the committees can do.

Tax Exempt Status

Na'im Tyson said that the library had received an acknowledgement from the IRS saying they are in receipt of Form 1023, but the library must wait. There are specific categories.

Gary Newman suggested that the board provide the Collection Development staff with three tentative sums of money and ask them to come up with recommendations on how they would spend the money. That would give the staff some kind of structure.

Mr. Newman said as for programming he does not think it is a bad idea to plan ahead for one half year. He said that the board needs to keep in mind the reality of life at the library. The staff is at bare minimum. If two people are out, the other two are on the desk a minimum of five hours a day.

Millie Burns said that she is aware of staffing. .

Ms. Burns said that the board encourages the staff to dream big and come up with fabulous programs and/ or books and dare the board to not fund them.

Gary Newman said that the staff is caught up in running this library day to day. That is the reality. People think they are doing a good job.

The board has to recognize the reality.

Mr. Newman said that the library needs a director.

Millie Burns said that the board is working on that and wants to get the best person. They do not just want to bring in a body.

Gary Newman said we don't want just a body. The library has had experience with that. It takes time.

Mr. Newman said that people come to him about the committee. He said Ms. Burns is a formidable person.

Millie Burns said that she is asking for ideas.

Gary Newman said that he thinks Maurice Sendak would want the library to have his books.

Scott Griffith said that Maurice Sendak only wrote a few books, but illustrated many.

Mr. Griffith said that summer reading is important. The library gets a lot of children during the summer. We should already have in place an idea of how much money we have to spend.

Gary Newman said that Cheryl Berent has concerns about how we are going to fill the demand from the schools when kids come in for the summer reading list books. The entire board of education depends on us.

Na'im Tyson said that he will contact Treasurer, Winston Maharaj

ADJOURNMENT:

Upon a motion by Millie Burns, seconded by Marcia Dupree, the board meeting adjourned at 8:23 pm to discuss personnel matters.

Respectfully

Secretary