

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

October 17, 2007

6:30 pm

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: Chris Hansen who presided called the meeting to order at 6:50 pm.

Present were: Danna Wood-Webb, Rodney Reynolds and Arlene Roberts-Grant, Trustees.
Also present were: Mary Ellen Forte, WLS Trustee; Camille Banks Lee, President, Mount Vernon Public Library Foundation; Ruth Shire, Friends of the Mount Vernon Public Library; Robin Osborne, WLS Adult and Outreach Service Coordinator, Francine Vernon, Assistant Adult and Outreach Service Coordinator; Jill Nelson, Author; Chelsea Hamlet, Darlene Irons, Daisy Livingston, and Ashley Singleton, Junior Researchers; Larry Jennings, Human Resources Director, Brooklyn Public Library; Gary Newman, CSEA Unit President; Cheryl Berent, Thea Blessitt, Sharon Cohen, Shirley Garrett, Scott Griffith, Debra Ramsey, Diptimoy Roy, Geraldo Soares, Cheryl Thomas, Jesse Van Lew and Cathy Webb, Library Staff; D. Callazo and Edwin Maxwell, Library Patrons; Opal Brown Lindsay, Acting Director; Willie Lou Gayles, Chief Account Clerk and Mary Harper, Administrative Assistant.

MINUTES:

The minutes of the meeting of September 19, 2007 were approved as amended.

COMMUNICATIONS:

The Mount Vernon Public Library will be honored by the Mount Vernon Seventh Day Adventist Church on its Community Guests Day on Saturday, October 27, 2007 at 11:00 am.

JUNIOR RESEARCHERS REPORT:

The Junior Researchers who worked at the Mount Vernon Public Library over the summer reported on their visits to other libraries in the New York area. They visited the new Bronx Public Library, the Langston Hughes library in Queens and the Schomburg Library in Harlem. Each one was found to have unique and innovative concepts. The new Bronx Public Library is a "green" building with a self check out system and an entire floor of computers. It also has a music and gaming space. The Langston Hughes Library is culturally based and has a teen space for people to interact. The Schomburg library has a museum quality with paintings and sculptures depicting African American history and the present.

The group compiled a pamphlet entitled "Reclaiming Our Library" a comparison of Mount Vernon Public Library youth services versus other libraries.

WLS TRUSTEE REPORT:

During the month of October, Westchester County will celebrate "The Big Read" a series of events featuring Zora Neale Hurston's novel, "Their Eyes Were Watching God." The kick-off date is October 16, 2007 at the Mount Vernon Public Library. Copies of CD's will be handed out; there will be a raffle and a Jazz group.

The encouraging All Kinds of Reader's Workshop will be held at WLS Headquarters on October 24, 2007 from 9:00-11:00 am.

The WLS Annual Meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 13, 2007; 6:30 pm at Ossining Public Library. Gary Knell, President and CEO of Sesame Workshop will be the guest speaker.

The Kick-Off Breakfast for the 10th Annual African-American Writers and Readers Literary Tea is Tuesday, November 13, 2007 at FUJIFILM holdings America Corporation, in Valhalla.

WLS is sponsoring a series of workshops on Customer Service Training for Public Library Staff in October and November at WLS Headquarters in Tarrytown.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Acting Director, Opal Brown Lindsay, reported the following:

The new West Law database is a comprehensive one which includes Pure Lexis/Nexis. Six workstations will be provided for this database. Information now being retrieved from law books can be obtained from this site.

Gary Newman questioned the cost and feasibility of this new database since most library patrons are not attorneys but users who he feels will have difficulty retrieving statutes on line as opposed to books.

He feels that the cost of a 3 year contract is a waste of money and that six computer stations are not needed for this program.

Jesse Van Lew reported that there are still ongoing problems with the library roof which needs to be repaired. There is standing water on the roof that needs to be continuously pumped every time it rains.

The city has not responded to the library's requests to have this problem repaired.

The new air conditioning system is not working. It worked for a while but the contractor's have not returned to see what the problem is.

The board will try to contact the City's Department of Public Works regarding library repairs.

Library Circulation statistics have shifted upward since May from 7,399 to 13,267 in August.

The Mount Vernon Public Library Foundation will have a "Book Bash" fundraiser on November 13, 2007.

The library participated in the 2nd Avenue Association Block Party in September, handouts and flyers of library activities were distributed.

The library partnered with the Post Office for an E-Bay workshop, which was well received.

The Customer Service, Program Committee and Local History Room committees all regrouped during September. Each group presented plans for the immediate future.

The Website Committee met and discussed plans to update the library's website.

The first session of Staff training for the Westlaw computer was conducted. The staff expressed preferences on how they would like the interface to appear; this should result in a more personalized interface for library patrons' frequently asked questions.

All books and materials formerly stacked on trucks are back on the shelves. The library collection still needs immediate attention to organize the books on the shelves.

The Children's room has been receiving overwhelming attendance. The community room has to be used to accommodate the overflow.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

The library was billed for two quarters of WLS professional salaries from the CLDA budget.

Bills were paid out of the periodicals line for Pro Quest and OCLC databases.

The OCLC database seems to be used by the member libraries, but not widely used at Mount Vernon. It is suggested that this database be publicized to Mount Vernon patrons.

Large bills paid to WLS from CLDA were:

Databases - \$50,000

Delivery Service - \$35,000

Mrs. Gayles will work with the financial database consultant to include money budgeted for CLDA in the 2008 budget.

Gary Newman questioned whether the library had enough in its budget to run the library through the end of the year. It was stated that the library would make it through the end of the year.

Ruth Shire indicated that whenever she uses the library, she notices that the books she receives almost always are the result of inter library loans and are not owned by Mount Vernon.

Mrs. Lindsay said that the library is now in the process of ordering new books, but at a low rate for now.

The proposed 2008 budget for books is significantly more than 2007.

Mrs. Gayles said that the line for refunds in the budget represents e-rate reimbursements, as well as refunds for hospital and medical for retirees who pay directly and sometimes from the library's insurance.

The September 2007 Bills and Payrolls totaling \$267,072.00 properly certified by the Director and reviewed by Arlene Roberts Grant, and Danna Wood-Webb were approved by the Board of Trustees and requested paid.

The checks are numbered #018377-018425 (payrolls) #55028-55054 (payrolls, petty cash), and #29022-29103 (bills).

OLD BUSINESS:

The Board received packets of resumes for the position of Library Director.

A hiring subcommittee will be formed to interview the initial candidates.

NEW BUSINESS:

The idea of posting an ad in the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce was discussed. It was felt that even though the library is a member of the chamber; at this time it would not be wise to spend the money, since the library is in debt.

GRIEVANCE:

The board heard the grievance Step II regarding Forced Compensatory Time. The grievance was tabled until the next board meeting so CSEA Unit President Gary Newman can present additional information.

PERIOD OF PUBLIC EXPRESSION:

The library staff renewed their request to speak with the board regarding complaints with management. One trustee will make dates available to staff at which time they can speak regarding their concerns.

The idea of modifying the union contract to hear grievances by a board subcommittee was discussed. Gary Newman will contact the CSEA Labor Relations Specialist regarding this matter.

Sharon Cohen expressed concerns about the lack of communication between the administration and the staff; particularly when there is an emergency situation and the person in charge cannot contact either the director or the board members.

A request was made for written guidelines for these situations.

Diptimoy Roy expressed his displeasure with what he felt was a board member's lack of concern for staff complaints regarding working additional time and being forced to take compensatory time.

Gary Newman said that the 100 Greatest Video booklets had not been returned to him. He said that he has been ordering videos for a number of years and now a committee has been formed to do this. He said that he does not want to see the video collection fail. Mr. Newman formally requested that he be removed as head of the video collection.

The overcrowding of the DVD section was discussed and several ideas to remedy the situation were put forth, including hiring and training new aides. Adequate supervision of the aides was also discussed.

Currently shelf reading is being done by all of the library staff, in an effort to keep the collection in order.

Francine Vernon relayed a message from a parent concerned that the children's room was not open the same evenings as the adult library. Scott Griffith felt that it was rare that many children would be in the children's room till eight o'clock; even on the current night's that it is open.

It was suggested that the impact of the children's room being opened additional late nights be studied

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 pm was approved without objection.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary