

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

November 18, 2009

6:30 pm

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: Danna Wood Webb who presided called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

Present were: Millie Burns, Julie Mills Worthey and Arlene Roberts Grant, Trustees.

Also present were: Mary Ellen Forte, WLS Trustee; Mike Hekle, Attorney, Jackson Lewis; Gary Newman, CSEA Unit President; Cheryl Berent, Debra Bracey-Harris, Robert Copeland; Doris Hackett; Leroy Lea; Shawn Lucas-Dunnom; Kevin Robinson, Rebecca Steere; Cheryl Thomas; Jesse Van Lew; Christopher Williams, Library Staff; Robert Gardner; Patron; Opal Brown Lindsay, Director; Karen Preuss, Assistant Director; Willie Lou Gayles, Chief Account Clerk and Mary Harper, Administrative Assistant.

MINUTES:

The minutes of the meeting of October 21, 2009 were accepted as amended.

PERIOD OF PUBLIC EXPRESSION:

Gary Newman read a statement expressing the union's displeasure with the course of the contract negotiations. He expressed belief that the library was using "bait and switch tactics" to change wording in the contract agreement dealing with the grievance procedure rules of evidence. Mr. Newman said that major and painful concessions had been made by the union and they believed that a contract settlement was finally near once an agreement was made on language in the contract regarding a change to employee disciplinary protections. Mr. Newman suggested that the library's team manipulated the negotiations in order to change grievance language that had been agreed to. He accused the library of threatening to give employee salary increases back to the city if contract proposals were not agreed to.

Mr. Newman spoke about a security guard at the library who had been assaulted by a patron. He stated that guard had a broken nose, jaw and shattered eye socket. He said that the staff had to work in an environment of chaos and violence. The staff has worked without a salary increase for three years.

Christopher Williams stated that he agreed with Mr. Newman, he said that the staff feels underappreciated and under seize. The staff works under conditions of stress and are deserving of raises. If the funding for raises is in the budget now, then the library should not wait until 2010.

Mr. Williams felt that if the union gives into the library's demands, there will be no need for a union.

He stated that he felt the staff is not being respected. The administration received raises, so what is being expressed is that the administration is doing its job, but the rest of the staff is not worthy of increases.

Doris Hackett spoke about the contract negotiations and library security issues. She stated that two people had been attacked in the library and that no meeting regarding security had taken place. She questioned whether the library had the right security team to deal with the situation. She said at one time the police visited the library on a regular basis, but now there seems to be a problem with them being called to handle situations.

Robert Gardner spoke about enforcing the rules and banning people from the library.

Cheryl Thomas also spoke about safety issues and the need to settle the library contract. She suggested that more police in the area would make a difference.

Jesse Van Lew stated that maintenance is always the first to come in and the last to leave. He said that all of the employees have families and are struggling. The cost of living has gone up. He said that three years is a long time without an increase. He asked that the library do the right thing.

Shawn Dunnom agreed that more police in the area would be helpful. She said that her car had been broken into and her tires slashed on more than one occasion.

She suggested that if security guards were employed directly by the library there might be better accountability.

Board President, Danna Wood-Webb said that unfortunately the parties have not come to a contract agreement. The board is not saying that the staff is not due a raise, but in terms of responsibility to the community, there are some decisions to be made.

The board appreciates the work the staff is doing.

The board has agreed that fact finding is the next step and the union's concerns will be communicated to trustee, Chris Hansen who is on the negotiating committee.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The Board entered Executive Session at 7:52 pm on a motion by Julie Mills Worthey, seconded by Millie Burns.

The Board suspended Executive Session at 9:38 pm on a motion by Julie Mills Worthey, seconded by Millie Burns.

Gary Newman made a formal complaint that the Board is in violation of New York State law by not leaving Executive Session until the end of the meeting.

#### FRIEND'S REPORT:

The Friends had their Book and Bake sale on November 13, 2009

#### FOUNDATION REPORT:

The library gala was well attended, but no financial report has been given. Opal Brown Lindsay thanked the board of trustees for providing tickets for some of the staff members.

#### DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Jesse Van Lew tried to explain the reason for the large Con Ed bill the library has received. Mr. Van Lew explained that the library has gas burners that fuel the boiler. He said that the gas meters had been broken for some time and were not read. When they were replaced Con Edison said that the library owed money. The board is still trying to determine the time frame for the large bill.

The library should schedule a meeting with a person in authority at Con Ed to go over the bills on a month by month basis to determine the time frame for the charges.

It was suggested that the library inquire if there is any advantage to purchasing gas in bulk from the city.

There is still concern over the amount of money that is being spent on maintenance supplies and uniforms.

Some measures suggested to reduce cost would be to consider using cheaper products or using blower dryers instead of paper towels.

Jesse Van Lew said that it is hard to work with the current staff that he has in place. One person remains out and the library must consider whether or not to replace him.

Mr. Van Lew said that he had spoken to the uniform supply company to try and reduce costs.

Jesse Van Lew said that new fencing had been placed around the library walkway. The fence will only be opened during library hours.

The parking lot will be repaved starting on Friday.

Work will begin on the business office soon. One office has been closed for years with mold and water damage.

The New York Power authority had started to replace the lighting in the library, but the job is not yet completed.

Opal Brown Lindsay has been meeting with the principals of the school district.

Karen Preuss said that she is attending the school media specialists meetings to make sure that the schools are getting information.

#### FINANCIAL REPORT:

Willie Lou Gayles said that a large bill for over \$44,000 had been received from Periodicals.

The city did not include the library in its contracts. The library has no prior contract for the elevator repairs, which used to be handled by the city. The bill for the current elevator repairs will be taken out of capital funds.

The October 2009 Bills and Payrolls were properly certified by the Director and reviewed by Danna Wood-Webb and Arlene Roberts-Grant were approved by the Board of Trustees and requested paid.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The board resumed executive session at 10:23 pm on a motion by Arlene Roberts Grant, seconded by Millie Burns.

The Board returned to regular session at 10:57pm. No decisions were recorded

The meeting was adjourned at 10:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary