

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

November 28, 2007

6:30pm

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: Chris Hansen who presided called the meeting to order at 6:45 pm.

Present were: Susan Capeci, Arlene Roberts-Grant, Danna Wood Webb, Trustees.

Also present were: Scott Griffith, Cheryl Thomas, Library Staff; Opal Brown Lindsay, Acting Director; Willie Lou Gayles, Chief Account Clerk and Mary Harper, Administrative Assistant.

MINUTES:

The minutes of the meeting of October 17, 2007 were approved without objection.

COMMUNICATIONS:

The board will send an acknowledgement to former trustee, Mary Ellen Forte on the death of her husband.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Board President, Chris Hansen discussed his meeting with approximately 15 staff members regarding their views on the current library situation.

Chris Hansen and Opal Brown Lindsay met with Mayor-Elect, Clinton Young's transition team. Debra Stern a former library trustee will be the liaison between the library and the Mayor Young's team.

It is felt that the big issues confronting the library at this time are:

1. The appointment of a permanent director.
2. The library budget (The Mount Vernon Public Library ranks at the bottom of the county in terms of per capita income).
3. Book purchases and materials and a five year plan.

People have complained about the lack of library staff visibility and accessibility.

The Board has received approximately 30 resumes for the position of library director. There were six candidates to be selected for interviews, one has dropped out. The interviews should be completed by next week and a decision will be made on about three final candidates to be interviewed by the full board.

The CSEA union has rejected the library's request to modify the contract regarding grievance procedures.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Acting Director, Opal Brown Lindsay reported the following:

There has been no word on the proposed library budget or when Mrs. Lindsay can meet with the City Council regarding this matter. Opal Brown Lindsay has been in touch with City Clerk, Lisa Copeland regarding the meeting.

The library director will seek to set up new dates for the CSEA Union negotiations.

WLS will help in developing a policies and procedures manual for the Mount Vernon Public Library.

Opal Brown Lindsay has spoken with Lisa Areford of the State Education Department regarding the library newsletter. Mrs. Lindsay should receive confirmation from Ms. Areford that in the past; the newsletter was requested because of issues with the library governance.

The director met with DPW Commissioner Jim Finch regarding the new air conditioning system. Mr. Finch said that the maintenance staff had to be trained on how to operate the system.

An estimate for the library piping repairs has been received. Jesse Van Lew has suggested that the library send the job out to bid. A wall must be opened in the library to replace the pipes. The city has determined that this is the problem and the library maintenance staff concurs.

Mayor Davis and the DPW Commissioner will be out of office by December 31, 2007.

In the absence of the Director, the librarian-in-charge should make the decision to close the library. The board does not have to make the decision, only be notified.

Discussions have started regarding the Westchester Library System Bookmobile which will go into service in March or April. The bookmobile will travel to 8 municipalities including Mount Vernon. Mount Vernon must consider allocating part of its budget for the bookmobile, since anything materials other than books must be paid for by the member library.

The Rotunda exhibit continues to be an attraction and many requests have been made for the sale of the art work.

Operation statistics have increased in all areas, particularly, renews interlibrary loans and attendance.

The Westchester County's "Big Read Event" kicked-off this month. Over one hundred books and CD's were distributed. Over eighty-one persons were at the live performance; with forty-three children participating in a craft workshop that followed. Patrons enjoyed a live jazz band and staff reported the day being well attended.

The library was honored at the Mount Vernon Seventh Day Adventist Church's Community Guest Day on October 27, 2007.

The new three month calendar was distributed along the Columbus Day parade route.

Two staff members attended a training and writing workshop conducted by Poet's House. The organization is a literary center and poetry archive, founded in 1985 and located in Manhattan.

Sixteen staff members are scheduled to attend Customer Service workshops given by WLS. Some staff members will attend weekly community meetings and all Department Heads who work directly with the public will attend weekly Public Service meetings.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Willie Lou Gayles reported that a large periodicals bill in the amount of \$41,000 was paid, which put that line over budget. At the beginning of the year this line had more funds allotted but they had to be cut in order to balance the budget. Other large bills included over \$4,700 for library cards and \$17,284.00 in legal fees.

It was suggested that perhaps the library should investigate getting some periodicals gratis from the publishers.

The library is hoping to start 2008 with financial statements in a new format that shows expenses as well as revenues. Mrs. Gayles will speak with the financial program consultant in order to tweak the statements.

The board resolved that all invoices must be received by the board with two staff signatures; one from the department that is requesting the purchase and the director's signature for approval. A check should not be drafted for payment unless there are both signatures.

A new requisition form has been created to be attached to purchases.

Mrs. Gayles said that this form will not appear with library materials because of the nature of how they are ordered.

The board suggested a standardization of purchasing procedures.

The new requisition forms will be sent to board treasurer, Arlene Roberts Grant for review.

Mrs. Gayles informed the board of a new insurance survey regarding member health insurance and resignation before retirement.

The October 2007 Bills and Payrolls totaling \$470,953.82 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.

The checks are numbered # 018426-018473 (payrolls), #55055-55089 (payrolls, petty cash), and # 29104-29155 (bills).

PERIOD OF PUBLIC EXPRESSION:

Cheryl Thomas discussed the difficulty she was having adjusting to her new position in the Technical Services Department.

Former employee Tanika Carson expressed her feelings about no longer working at the library and her decision to contact the Human Rights Division regarding her employment.

Scott Griffith spoke about his current position as a Librarian I and his desire to be promoted to a new position.

NEW BUSINESS:

Board President, Chris Hansen said that he is proud of the staff and happy regarding the upswing in library statistics in the Circulation, Cyber Corner and Children's departments.

OLD BUSINESS:

VICE-President, Danna Wood-Webb will set a meeting date with Opal Brown Lindsay to discuss the West Law collection.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Upon a motion by Danna Wood-Webb, seconded by Susan Capeci, the Board entered Executive Session at 8:15 p.m.

The board returned to public session at 8:35 p.m., no decisions were recorded.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Susan Capeci, seconded by Arlene Roberts Grant, the meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary