

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

March 21, 2012

6:30 PM

MINUTES

Julie Mills Worthey who presided called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

Present were: Millie Burns and Winston Maharaj

Also present: Brian Johnson, Mount Vernon Public Library Foundation; Althea Anderson, Hafeezah Basir, Marcia Dupree, Robert Gardner, Patricia Hansen, Robert Lattimer, Jamie Pessin, Mark Powell, Deborah Ramsey, Brittany Smith, Rebecca Steere and Tamara Stewart, patrons; Cheryl Berent, Maxine Grandison, Scott Griffith, Leroy Lea, Rebecca Newman, and Cheryl Thomas, library staff; and Mary Harper, Administrative Assistant.

MINUTES:

The minutes of the meeting of February 15, 2012 were approved upon a motion by Millie Burns, seconded by Winston Maharaj.

WLS TRUSTEE REPORT:

Julie Mills Worthey reported that WLS has proposed legislation to give them discretion on funding for the central library. As the central library, Mount Vernon will carefully monitor to ensure proper funding.

PERIOD OF PUBLIC EXPRESSION:

Rebecca Steere suggested that the library reach out to the Westchester Community College extension site in Mount Vernon. Unlike the main campus in Valhalla, this site has no library.

Cheryl Berent inquired about when the periodicals department would be reorganized.

Julie Mills Worthey said that this was an opportune time to address concerns about periodicals.

She said she would recommend restoration of the periodicals desk to its prior placement.

There is a need to replace some of the shelving in that area.

Tamara Stewart asked about an update on the budget vote.

Ms. Stewart spoke about the volunteer efforts of Jamie Pessin and Robert Lattimer who have spearheaded a clean-up at the library.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that the clean up effort had been brought to her attention at the meeting. She said that she was sorry she did not know before. Mrs. Worthey said that she wished to laud the efforts of the volunteers.

Robert Lattimer said that there were concerns about the library. The maintenance department is doing a good job, but needs help. He said that the Peacekeepers and Habitat for Humanity had joined in the effort.

Mr. Lattimer said that the positive things about the library and Mount Vernon needed to be highlighted.

The project, “Operation Clean Mount Vernon” started in January as a community resolution that stated that volunteers would come to the library every day for one year to do cleanup.

Millie Burns said that she thought the project was wonderful and the library is looking forward to working with them in any way they can.

Mr. Lattimer said that Councilman Rich Thomas is holding his “Lean on Me” sessions once a month at the library. The program started as a mentoring session for 8th to 12th grade young men, but is no longer all male.

Cheryl Thomas spoke about the March 2nd Dr. Seuss birthday party. She said that the event was supported by the “Friends”, but there was no support from the board.

Julie Mills Worthey said that the request for the program was received only two days before the event. She said that the board is not averse to supporting the programs.

In order to have a realistic budget we will have to set up a program committee, so that we can approve all the programs at one time.

Cheryl Thomas said that children’s programming is diverse and not a day goes by without programs.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that she is aware and that is why she is asking for a committee.

She said the board has taken on the day to day tasks of the library. They are not librarians. The goal is to provide everybody with programs.

Winston Maharaj said as a board, they must support the right programming. It must be done in a careful and measured manner, so we can take into account all the issues in the library.

He asked if Ms. Thomas was aware of the policies and procedures that need to be followed in order to get things approved from the library’s standpoint.

Cheryl Berent said it is not like this has never been done before, we already know how much the programs cost. She said that she is a little surprised that the board is asking for a plan a whole year in advance. She asked if the board was looking for a realistic amount.

Mr. Maharaj said that in the absence of having a director or business manager, they have to be able to say they know what the programming is. He said that he is in support of programming, but wants it to be done the right way.

Patricia Hansen inquired about the high unemployment figure that is projected for 2012.

Mrs. Hansen suggested that the amount of \$190,000 is very high and said it would equal the maximum amount for eight full time employees.

Mr. Maharaj said that the amount is based on the quarterly actual number projected for the full year.

Patricia Hansen said that if \$190,000 is projected then there must be names and numbers associated with that.

Winston Maharaj said that they did not have any specific names or numbers.

The projected number will equal the actual number by the end of the year. We will make the necessary adjustments to the projected budget as we see fit and obtain more actual data through the course of the year.

Patricia Hansen said that the numbers are based on a lot of people who are collecting unemployment and not looking at a cap.

Mr. Maharaj said that the projected number is based on actual expenses. As we get more tangible, the projected budget will be adjusted.

Mrs. Hansen said that this way of projecting the numbers was skewed.

Jamie Pessin asked if the director's salary was in the budget and was the director still being paid. Mr. Maharaj said that the salary was in the budget and when a new director is hired, they will be paid the money.

Michael Powell requested that his library privileges be reinstated. The Board will review with the staff the decision to revoke his privileges before a decision can be made.

Althea Anderson requested that the library consider moving the Second Avenue book drop from its curb side position further back near the library wall. She said there are problems with parking and kids using the book drop as a way to jump on cars.

Brittany Smith said sometimes she comes to use the computers or get books. She complained about the level of noise in the library made by children and sometimes adults on their cell phones.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that the staff has requested additional personnel so there is someone dedicated to cyber corner.

Althea Anderson said there are patrons blasting their headphones.

Millie Burns said she has had the same observations.

Ms. Burns said that the board is working on revisions in the policies and procedures.

New York Public Library has signs clearly posted as to what and what can't be done.

Ms Burns said that she wants to change the culture here to make a very different culture.

Althea Anderson inquired about the amount of the salary for the new director and whether the salary would be lowered and other individuals would be hired.

Julie Mills Worthey said the way the library is staffed is unrelated to how the director is compensated.

The library is in the process of searching for a new director. At this point we do not want to address compensation.

Winston Maharaj said that the library is trying to indentify the very best person for the position within the budget. Not only the director's position. He said we are hoping to get the right person and fairly compensate.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Julie Mills Worthey said she attended the school board meeting. She said she received assurances from the trustees that they would support the library's change in governance.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that there was concern that the library would have to change its charter. The charter has never called for the election of trustees. The school board has offered their counsel to help with the charter amendment.

The library board is involved in so many aspects. In addition to the charter amendment, petitions must be sought from potential trustees who must petition to be on the ballet.

Mrs. Worthey said that she has not yet heard from the elections commissioner despite trying to contact him.

The 1023 tax form has been completed and must be submitted to the IRS along with a fee.

Julie Worthey said she is hopeful that with the assistance of the tax advisor, the library will receive a positive response.

The library has just received a response from its June 2011 request for reinstatement. IRS responded and did not agree.

Foundation:

Julie Mills Worthey said that the library hoped to engage in productive fundraising in collaboration with the foundation.

The next foundation meeting is on April 9, 2012.

Staff Meeting:

Julie Mills Worthey said that the major focus of the staff meeting was to invite staff members to participate in the selection of the chief administrator.

The library has received sixteen resumes that met the deadline.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that redacted copies of the resumes have been shared with the head's of building.

Initial telephone interviews are expected.

Julie Mills Worthey said that the library has advertized as widely as they could afford to.

Millie Burns said that she wanted to underscore that she did the redactions for some who are concerned about confidentiality.

Ms. Burns said that the library had two paid listings. The ad was sent to public library systems and every college in the US that has an MLS program. The posting was also sent to professional library related listservs and was forwarded by many of the recipients to individuals and institutions that she was not aware of. It was widely publicized.

Brian Johnson asked the fact that the library has had two very short term directors, what are the board's priorities. He said it was essential to have a person with the ability to maximize the central library status. It is key that the chief administrator has the face of the library and is a visionary. Someone is needed to transcend the library where it needs to go.

Millie Burns said that the resume rankings will reflect on the qualities and visions of the new director. Not all assistant directors are qualified to be the director.

Attention will be paid to what is said and not said.

The chief administrator should be a good communicator with indicators of common sense, policy development and decision making ability. They must also have people skills, be fair, and have vision, integrity and financial management skills.

Robert Lattimer said that we very much need someone who is able to do the job. He said that he is hoping for someone who is capable and part of the community. He said he hopes that is considered. He said you don't want a commuter, but someone who cares about the community.

Millie Burns said that the very best would certainly incorporate someone who cares about the community.

Water Safety Day:

Julie Mills Worthey said that the library has been invited to participate in Water Safety Day on May 26, 2012. The library is not scheduled to be opened on that day.

She has let the organizers know that the library is watching its budget and they have asked the library to submit a cost budget to be open for the program on that day.

Mrs. Worthey said that she is attending the meetings and they are waiting to hear from the organizers, the United States Olympic Swim Team.

Physical Plant:

On March 15th the library had an emergency preemptive closing. The gas burners for the boiler needed to be repaired. The previous repair was unsuccessful.

This past winter there was additional roof damage. The company with the warranty will address this issue.

In the past library books have been weeded and discarded with the help of maintenance and the city.

Arrangements have been made to donate the materials to the Salvation Army to clear the area and meet fire codes.

Millie Burns said she has done a cursory inventory of the items in the vault. They have been counted and photographed. She said she can make a package to send to the appraiser.

Julie Mills Worthey said the insurance carrier insisted upon the appraisal so we can be properly insured. The cost for an appraiser needs to be allocated.

FINANCIAL MATTERS:

Winston Maharaj said that January and February accrued expenses have been projected and compared. We are running above in revenue numbers.

Projected expenses are lower, because there are personnel costs that are budgeted for, but the positions are not yet filled.

It looks like the library is coming in under budget, but this does not include any capital improvements the library may incur.

Patricia Hansen requested a copy of the financials and said they were supposed to be available at every meeting.

Julie Mills Worthey said that this is a transparent board with nothing to hide. The board will make the financials available to the public once they are reviewed.

Mr. Maharaj said that the projected revenues from New York State and from fines and fees are being carefully reviewed and are coming in under budget.

A material contribution from a trust has not been reflected in the numbers.

Salaries are under budget because we are effectively not paying people whose seats are not filled.

Library materials are being looked at very carefully.

The library is trying to coordinate building repairs. As the expenses are incurred going forward, the numbers will go up substantially

Julie Mills Worthey said that the insurance carrier has demanded that the library install a sprinkler system. We do not have an estimate for lack of plans. This is an issue that may affect the budget.

Mrs. Worthey said there was a possibility that funds in the amount of \$250,000 have been allocated for the library from a state assembly grant.

She said she has asked for the paperwork. The mayor has taken the lead.

Mrs. Worthey said it was hoped that the funds could be used for capital improvement, but that may not be possible.

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Mr. Maharaj said that 0% has been recorded for book purchases to date. He said he would argue that it is appropriate to start the process of ordering books with the collaboration of the HOB's and department heads.

Leroy Lea asked if Millie Burns saw a book signed by Samuel Clemens in the vault. Ms Burns said no, she saw books inscribed by Louis Comfort Tiffany and Herbert Hoover.

TRUSTEE RESIGNATION:

Julie Mills Worthey said that the board had received notice that Trustee, Rodney Reynolds intended to resign from the Board.

The board has met with a Mount Vernon resident, Marcia Dupree who is more than capable of serving.

The trustees have requested that Mrs. Dupree join the board to fill the unexpired term of Rodney Reynolds.

OATH OF OFFICE:

Board President, Julie Mills Worthey administered the oath of office to Marcia Dupree.

ADJOURNMENT:

Upon a motion by Winston Maharaj, seconded by Millie Burns, the board entered Executive Session at 8:38 pm to discuss personnel matters.

Respectfully,

Secretary