

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
June 6, 2011
6:30 PM
SPECIAL MEETING

Millie Burns who presided called the meeting to order at 6:40 pm.
Present were: Winston S. Maharaj, Julie Mills Worthey and Na'im Tyson.

Also present were: Cathy Webb, CSEA Executive Committee; Diane Munro Morris, City Councilperson; Althea Anderson, Jani Lafayette, Robert McDonald, Deborah Ramsey, Rebecca Steere and Tamara Stewart; Patrons, Debra Bracey Harris, Scott Griffith, Leroy Lea, Nishan Stepak, Cheryl Thomas, Jesse Van Lew, Chris Williams, staff; and Mary Harper, Administrative Assistant.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

The director was not present at the meeting. Millie Burns received an email from Mrs. Lindsay stating that the Board would receive her report at the regular meeting.

PHYSICAL PLANT:

Julie Mills Worthey said that the library being an aged building has issues with the physical plant that need to be addressed.

She said because of a personal issue she was not able to participate in a tour of the library. It is her intention to complete an assessment and have enough awareness to know where experts are needed for specific recommendations.

This will tie in with the plan to move the library along to the next phase.

COMMUNITY BUILDING AND TECHNOLOGY:

Na'im Tyson said that in reviewing the proposal submitted by Girl Scout, Sabine Ginsburg for the enhancement of the children's room, the one thing missing was the timeline. He said that he would like to send an email to her requesting the timeline. He does not see how the board can vote without it.

Julie Mills Worthey said that the proposal also does not contain a budget, which is needed to see how much will be spent.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that she would like to speak to the possibility of local scouts assisting or participating in the project.

She said that she understands that this is a personal goal, but because of the excitement about scouts participating; she is open to ideas and would encourage it.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that she knows there are local scouts interested in participating. It should be made an integral part for any scouts interested in participating.

Tamara Stewart suggested that a part of the project should be feedback from the children that actually use the space.

Scott Griffith said that Sabine Ginsburg had spoken to the children's room staff about the proposal. He said that he thinks the timeline is a valid point. He said they had a discussion and most of the ideas came from the children's room staff. Mr. Griffith said that he did not think that the carpeting was needed, but if they wanted to do it, fine.

Mr. Griffith said that the cost attached is about \$3,000.

Julie Mills Worthey said that she hears Mr. Griffith's support for the scouts when they came to the library and it seems that he would like to continue the support.

Scott Griffith said that he understands that this is an individual scout's goal. These girl scouts are not from the community, but they picked this community to work with.

Jani Lafayette questioned where the donations would come from.

He said that he had been a lifelong resident and has a problem with going outside of Mount Vernon to raise funds. He said it makes us look like a charity case; as if we cannot raise funds for our children.

Mr. Tyson said that Sabine Ginsburg had mentioned going to stores such as Target for donations. She had also mentioned getting contributions from her father.

Nishan Stepak said if we can get across that we are the Central Library, it would be good.

Na'im Tyson said that he will send a letter to Sabine Ginsburg addressing the issues and ask her to return.

JUNIOR TRUSTEES:

Na'im Tyson said that the idea for the Junior Trustees is to select 10 children between grades 5 and 8 who are not performing at the level they should be and train them to create digital media.

Mr. Tyson said that he wanted to train them over a 10 to 12 week period starting with the Book Sale. The first two weeks would be a project narrative.

The students would come to the Board of Trustee meetings to report.

Mr. Tyson said that there were ideas to have the children of staff members take photos over the two day book sale period. There was also an idea to take testimonials about library experiences.

Release forms would be signed for use of the videos.

Julie Mills Worthey said that it sounds like an incredibly exciting project and a step toward educating the public about the new governance.

Millie Burns said that she had a conversation with CDW and the library would be given the educational price.

Ms. Burns said that she would like to make sure the staff is getting professional development.

She said that the software would not only be for the Junior Trustees but primarily for staff. We must see if the computers here can handle the software. If not, upgrades may be needed. It is critical that staff gets development.

Na'im Tyson said that he had received information from Mrs. Lindsay regarding the machine layout in the teaching lab.

Initially at a glance he does not think it is doable to install new software on computers in the lab.

Millie Burns said that she is interested in key staff having ready access to the software. She said that they can look at additional areas.

Julie Mills Worthey asked if an inventory of building equipment had been received. Ms. Burns said not for the entire building.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that she thinks we must have an idea of what is available to be placed where needed and in an appropriate way.

Jani Lafayette asked why the choice of 5th to 8th graders.

Millie Burns said that there is a fall off in education in 7th and 8th grades; extensive research was done on this subject.

Ms. Burns said that she suggested the junior trustees last year. She said that she did not want to start at the 7th and 8th grades. She wanted to start earlier.

Mr. Lafayette said that he feels it may be more beneficial to start at the 7th and 8th grades. He said that Photoshop is hard to follow for 5th through 8th graders. Maybe it would be more beneficial for 9th grades and up to participate in something sanctioned by the library.

Millie Burns said that he makes a valid point. She said that she teaches Photoshop. It is amazing what 5th and 6th graders can learn.

Ms. Burns said that she hears Mr. Lafayette, but there is a very specific mission in targeting these age groups.

Jani Lafayette spoke about the way Mount Vernon is portrayed in the media. He said that he thinks 9th graders can get more out of the program than 5th graders.

City Hall has a media academy, but it can only accommodate a certain amount of people. The others are left on the sidelines.

Ms. Burns said that the library cannot be all things to all people. There are limited resources, but this is a start.

Diane Munro Morris said that as an educator she thinks it is important to target the middle school age group.

She said that there is a dearth of programs in that group. She applauds the library for starting at the incubator stage. Ms. Munro Morris said that she hopes they get funding to get the program off the ground.

Na'im Tyson said that this does not forgo the possibility that as we do other programs we can include other age groups.

Diane Munro Morris said that as the chair of the city council finance committee, as we start the budgeting process, the city council is aware of the needs of the library. She said that she thinks the library should be involved in the process from the beginning.

The council will be inviting the library at the beginning.

Mrs. Munro Morris said that 2012 will be a tight year and she does not want the library to come in on the end.

She said that the city council is supportive of the library and she wants to insure if not all of the library's wants are met then all of its immediate needs will be.

Millie Burns said that the new board treasurer, Winston Maharaj had met with Tom Rajala.

Diane Munro Morris said that it is important to have all parties at the table at the same time. She said that there was concern about the library's finances over the last year.

The new budget process will probably start in July. There is usually a working session during that month.

Julie Mills Worthey said that traditionally this board does not meet in the summer. Millie Burns said last year the board did meet during the summer and this year they will be doing so.

CSEA PETITION:

CSEA Executive Committee member, Cathy Webb presented a petition to the Board calling for the resignation or removal of Library Director, Opal Brown Lindsay. The petition was signed by all the current rank and file of CSEA.

Julie Mills Worthey said that one member of the board cannot speak for the entire board. She said that it was a bold and brave move for the individual staff members to make such a statement.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that she feels the strength and impact of what the union is addressing to the board. The board will accept the statement.

Millie Burns said that the board is doing the very best for the library and will continue to so, in the interest of preserving the library.

OLD BUSINESS:

Millie Burns said that the library had a year to prepare. The citizens of Mount Vernon would have to vote on trustees to sit on the board. Three of the trustees on the Board have terms that end in 2014. Since it is a board of no less than five to nine, at minimum the public will be voting on two trustees.

Ms. Burns said that the board of education has made it clear that it does not want the library going out to vote before they do.

She said that the trustees are looking at the last week in June. A target date could be Tuesday, June 26th, but it is best to pick a few dates.

Millie Burns said that the library has to make up its mind where the vote is going to be held and what people need to be contacted.

Julie Milles Worthey said that if it is correct and legal, she would suggest that the library be the polling place.

Mr. Tyson said from his experience he does not know if the Board of Elections would allow.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that based on her recollections from the Board of Regents and Libby Post they were offering the library as a polling place.

She said that strategy and cost wise, it would be an advantage to limit the polling places.

Tamara Stewart said that she believes that some libraries do use their facilities as polling places. She said she thinks that the older mechanical machines can be used in place of the newer scan models.

The last two years Ossining library had their vote at the library.

Ms. Burns said that she thinks we are going to have to be strategic. If most of the support is in this geographic area, it would behoove the library to hold the vote in the most convenient place for them.

Julie Mills Worthey said that her position precludes her for speaking about a yes vote.

In general terms the library strategy should be to reach out to those members of the community where you can achieve a yes vote.

This is quite different than a strategy where you would reach out to the entire community and get a majority vote.

Millie Burns said that the library cannot seek a yes vote for the budget. They can only reach out to people to vote.

Robert McDonald suggested that there were activists in the community who may be interested in helping.

Julie Mills Worthey said that library funds cannot be used for the vote.

Julie Mills Worthey said that there are other items from previous discussions that were never acted on.

Millie Burns said that the library does not have a policy manual.

Julie Mills Worthey said that one is needed that is clear to everyone.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that requests were made by local law enforcement for access to patron usage. She said that there was not a ready policy that she could put her hands on.

The library needs to create one. The preference would be one that is online for patrons to access. She said that it would seem that staff involvement would be needed in creating one.

Mr. Lafayette spoke about the level of security in the library and his observation of the guards' reaction to situations.

Jesse Van Lew said that a lot of guards who have replaced the ones that left do not have a lot of training.

He said that last year the guards threw unruly kids out of the building and Mrs. Lindsay allowed them to come back in. The guards felt they weren't being allowed to do their job.

Jani Lafayette said that there are things in the library that attract a certain element. X Box games should not be in the library. People are using Face book and social networking while others are trying to get on the computers for serious work.

Patrons should only be allowed to access these sites if they use their own computers.

Scott Griffith said that the library does not censor. Mr. Lafayette said there are some libraries where you cannot view Face book.

FINANCIAL:

Winston Maharaj said that he had met with the person from city hall. He is trying to understand the expectations of the budget and finances.

Mr. Maharaj has a meeting scheduled with Opal Brown Lindsay and Patricia Hansen.

He said that he wants to build a model to understand the revenue and expenses for the last few years. He also wants to go over the rolling budget.

Mr. Maharaj said that the library appears to start in a hole every year.

Winston Maharaj said that we are going to have to make decisions to ensure that we get the proper funding from city hall.

He said that he hopes to have clarity on revenues and expenses soon.

Chris Williams asked with the carryover is Mr. Maharaj going to go over expenses where the debt started to materialize.

Mr. Maharaj said that that would be good to understand, but the library is on the hook for it now.

Chris Williams asked if the Saturday schedules could be discussed. He asked did the board vote on the schedule. Most of the staff understood that the library was only open one Saturday in June.

Millie Burns said that she does not know what the schedule is; the only discussion was about the weekend of June 10 and 11. At the end of the discussion she came away with the understanding that we could open on those dates without incurring additional costs.

They were also hoping for a weekend in November.

CSEA representatives Billy Riccaldo and John Staino have donated money for those dates.

Ms. Burns said that she does not know what the discussion was beyond that.

Chris Williams said that the hours have changed starting this week.

Nishan Stepak said that he found out he was working June 11 and 18th. His scheduled had been changed. He said that this is supposedly the permanent Saturday schedule. The only reason he found out was from the calendar of events.

Millie Burns said there is a budget meeting tomorrow and it may come up.

Mr. Maharaj said that the meeting would address how we could provide Saturday hours.

Scott Griffith said that the Children's room had late hours on Thursdays for years. Instead the late night is now Wednesday. He said that the new schedule is already out there and it is said it will go into effect.

Jesse Van Lew said that he is the foreman of the building and the director's office is locked and he does not have access.

He said that he cannot get in for repairs or plumbing.

Mr. Van Lew said that he was told by Mrs. Lindsay that the key was available.

Millie Burns asked if there were an emergency what would happen. Jesse Van Lew said that the door would have to be kicked in.

Mr. Van Lew said that he was told that he would have to access the tutoring room to get to the roof.

Ms. Burns asked has this always been the case.

Jesse Van Lew said that this just happened. Maintenance cannot check the director's office. You are coming into an unsafe building.

Winston Maharaj asked what were the instructions to get access to Mrs. Lindsay's office.

Jesse Van Lew said that he does not know, he was told the key was available. He said that he cannot get into the room.

Mr. Maharaj said to clarify; Jesse Van Lew has absolutely no access to the room. He does not know who has the key.

Upon a motion by Julie Mills Worthey, seconded by Na'im Tyson, the board moved to table all outstanding business and move to Executive Session to discuss personnel matters.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Mary Harper