

**MINUTES  
OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF THE PARK RIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY HELD AT 7:00 P.M. ON  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2013 IN THE FIRST FLOOR MEETING ROOM OF THE LIBRARY**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mrs. Harrison called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

**TRUSTEES PRESENT:** Margaret Harrison, President; John Benka, Vice-President; Audra Ebling, Secretary; John Schmidt, Treasurer; Joseph Egan, Charlene Foss-Eggemann, Dorothy Hynous, Robert Trizna, Jerry White

**TRUSTEES ABSENT:** None

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Janet Van De Carr, Library Director; Joe Basso, Jodi Bemis Whitney, Angela Berger, John Doyle, Kelly Durov, Linda Egebrecht, Gretchen Kottkamp, Library Staff; Jennifer Johnson, Pioneer Press

**COMMENTS FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC**

Mrs. Foss-Eggemann stated she had a question regarding a motion made at the Budget & Finance meeting, to which it was agreed she would voice her question during the discussion for that Committee.

Mrs. Van De Carr noted that per the Agenda, the Consent Agenda vote will cover the minutes of both Budget & Finance committee meetings, December 2, 2013 and December 11, 2013.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Mr. Trizna MOVED to approve the Consent Agenda.

Mr. White SECONDED the motion.

Roll call vote.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Mrs. Ebling circulated one folder of correspondence and reviewed the contents:

- A copy of the Google Analytics Library statistics summary for 11/1/13-11/30/13.
- A thank you card from Cubmaster Rose Glasso and the boys of Cub Scout Pack 3, thanking the Library for allowing them to sell popcorn outside the Library. (*Note: Prior permission was obtained from the City to do so.*)
- A thank you card from youth Marete Austrins thanking the Library for the cake and goody bag they obtained at the Anniversary Bash December 6 & 7, "I enjoyed it. Good luck to the Library."
- A thank you email from Angelo & Lena Sturino, Park Ridge residents, complimenting "Mrs. Van De Carr and staff for the labor of love to assure the Park Ridge area is a center of culture and education for all ages."
- A letter from Peggy Seeley, Park Ridge resident, expressing her opinion that the Library's "Food for Fines" program be discontinued as it is currently offered. She suggested that a donation bin be placed in the lobby.
- A photo of students from Embers School visiting the Library and listening to Miss Liz reading a story.
- A copy of the December 10, 2013 *Park Ridge Patch* article: Park Ridge Community Stars: Richard and Dorothy DuSold
- A copy of the December 12, 2013 *Journal & Topics* article: Library Roots Run Deep as Local Learning Center

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Mr. Schmidt thanked Mr. Benka for approving the last batch of warrants while he was out of town. Mr. Schmidt reported that the usual expenditures are on the last six pages of the packet and the Library is running at a deficit, which was the subject of the last Budget Committee meetings, which will be discussed this evening. Mrs. Van De Carr reported that the Library is still awaiting payroll amounts from the City and there is no date as to when that information might be available. Mrs. Van De Carr reported that with 58% of the fiscal year completed there is no full picture of the total expended budget, although according to the financial reports the Library has only spent 19% of the operating budget. Mr. Benka asked if she has been given any explanation when she attends the meetings at the City. Mrs. Van De Carr replied that the City indicated that it is because they only just filled the full time accountant position and they were short staffed. She added that the audit for last fiscal year has also not yet begun. Mrs. Van De Carr stated that she continues to monitor the payroll reports and Library expenditures are within budget.

Mrs. Van De Carr referred to the pages highlighting the Library's statistics and reported that circulation for November, 2013 is slightly less than November, 2012 and previous Novembers with between 74,000 to 76,000 items circulating; and year to date circulation is slightly below November, 2012 year-to-date figures but almost the same as November, 2011. The Computer Use Statistics show an average of between 5,000 to 6,000 users a month (people logging onto the computers in the Library). Book collections are showing a negative growth at this time of year due to the weeding being done to eliminate older and little used items. Total registered borrowers is at 67% of the population through November, 2013, which correlates to 24,951 library card holders. Mrs. Van De Carr reviewed the daily door count report which indicates the number of daily visits as well as the how many people attended Library programs and community programs in the Library. Mrs. Van De Carr noted that there were several piano recitals in November and December and so there is an increase in patrons attending community programs. Mrs. Van De Carr reported on the number of virtual visits to the Library website from individual unique devices from outside the Library. Noting that there were 18,563 virtual visits in November, with a year-to-date total of 143,319 virtual visits. Mrs. Harrison asked if Mrs. Van De Carr knew of why there was such an increase in attendance to Library programs, to which Mrs. Van De Carr replied that it may be due to the additional events in recognition of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, as well as the new large program done with the Park Ridge Civic Orchestra on Halloween that was attended by 400 people. She noted that a few additional, special programs will have a cumulative increase in the total attendance numbers. Mrs. Van De Carr reviewed the Outreach statistics, reporting that there were eleven visits to groups outside the Library, which reached 283 people, for a year-to-date total of 10,568 people impacted by the Library's Outreach services.

Mrs. Van De Carr reviewed the personnel report, which reflects the retirement of Eileen Rosenberg, Children's Services Librarian on December 2. Mrs. Van De Carr reminded the Board that they had met Mrs. Rosenberg at the November meeting when they approved her Resolution.

Mrs. Van De Carr acknowledged the donations listed on page 6E of the packet; which included six donations to the Centennial Fund, two Buy-A-Brick purchases, a \$600 donation from the Friends of the Library for the Open House, and two individual donations.

## **LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mrs. Van De Carr stated that unless there were any questions on her written report, she wished to report on a number of digital materials that the Library is going to purchase using Per Capita Grant funds – namely the resource called *Hoopla* which will allow patrons to download movies and music, similar to how they download books. *Hoopla* is featured in the January/February Library newsletter. The Library is also participating in a grant through the State of Illinois called the eRead Grant, which will allow patrons to download a larger variety of digital books, and should be coming online just after January 1<sup>st</sup>.

Mrs. Van De Carr distributed the last three decade snapshots that are available in the Library, which highlight the decades from 1913 through 2013.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Planning & Operations:**

No report.

**Communications and Development:**

No report.

**Library Resources:**

No report.

**Building & Grounds:**

No report.

**Budget & Finance:**

Mrs. Harrison noted that the only Committee that met was the Budget & Finance Committee and she yielded the floor to Mrs. Foss-Eggemann to discuss the matter she raised at the beginning of the meeting.

Mrs. Foss-Eggemann stated that the Budget & Finance Committee was able to reduce the Library's budget deficit from the \$700,000 range to the \$300,000 range. The way the cuts were made was by a line item vote, but the issue with a line item vote is that you can't cut an item, or decline to cut an item, dependent on another line item being cut or saved. One of the first items discussed was closing early on Sundays in the summer and the vote carried. As the Committee worked its way through the list of items under discussion there were some significant cuts made. She stated she has had time to consult with people in the community and has a concern that Sundays, even in the summer, are important to people, some of whom may work six days a week and Sundays may be the only day they can get to the Library; others may only have their children visiting on Sundays. This is in contrast to other cuts that may involve a longer wait at the Circulation desk to obtain materials, or they may have to borrow an item from another network Library, or have to visit another network Library to access an online database. Mrs. Foss-Eggemann stated she thinks the Board should try to save Sunday hours in the summer if possible in order to still provide base services on Sundays. Mrs. Foss-Eggemann asked the Board to reconsider the possibility of being open on Sundays in the summer.

Mr. Trizna stated he agrees with Mrs. Foss-Eggemann, and after reviewing the door counts for the week of November 21 through November 24, on a per hour basis the Sunday had the highest average visits per hour and therefore he doesn't see a good reason for closing on any given day, he'd rather see hours cut or find some other way to keep the facility open seven days a week.

Mr. Schmidt noted that his impression was that one of the reasons for closing on Sundays in the summer was to make a visible impact with the public; whereas the other cuts being made are not as visible to the public. Cutting Sunday hours in the summer would make a statement to the public that the Library is trying to live within its means and trying to control the budget – just like eliminating the Foods for Fines program, which Mr. Trizna has talked about – that the Library is serious about making cuts. It's not that the Library hasn't done this before, the Library used to be closed on Sundays. Mrs. Harrison noted that the Board can pass the measures discussed at the meetings and review other items to see if there are more revenue means or items that can be cut. Mrs. Van De Carr agreed and gave the Board some options like putting Sundays back and adding \$20,000 in funding back into the budget, deficit spending, leave it as is, etc. Mrs. Van De Carr noted that to Mr. Schmidt's point, if the Board feels it is important for the community to be aware that the Library is definitely being negatively impacted by the decisions made by the City Council then having a visible reduction is one way of proceeding. She stated that staff are already receiving comments about the reduction in Children's programs in the schedule for January, February and March due to the loss of the Children's Services Librarian position. Mr. White stated he's inclined to leave the budget as it was at the conclusion of the Budget & Finance meeting, with the changes made at the meeting. Mr. Trizna stated he would like to see the Library charge for programs and for computer use; by looking at the attendance numbers for the past year at \$5 per program he estimates \$90,000 and for \$2 for computer use he estimates \$135,000 income; and even with losing half of these users that is still almost \$149,000 estimated revenue. He added that rather than closing the Library for a day, tell the community that the Library needs additional revenue and so it is charging for these services.

Mrs. Van De Carr told Mr. Trizna she believes the Library will get an even stronger reaction to charging for programs than for being closed on Sundays. She added that he is counting heads, but if a mother or grandmother comes here with two or three children, is she going to pay \$20 for a children's program? Do we charge per family group or per person? Mrs. Van De Carr believes the Library will alienate a fairly large number of people with such a tactic. She added that computers have become ubiquitous in libraries and that is how people access many of the resources that the Library spends thousands of dollars to provide to them – some resources they cannot get outside of the Library even if they do have a computer at home – because of the licensing set down by the vendors who limit use to in-library-use only. This is akin to charging people to pull a reference book off of the shelf to use, which hasn't been done in the last 100 years of public libraries in America – we are telling them we are charging them to obtain information.

Mr. Trizna stated he doesn't see using a computer for two or three hours as the same as using a reference book. Mrs. Van De Carr stated that the computers are provided to give people access to information. Mr. Trizna added that he hasn't seen people using a book for hours but the bottom line for him is to raise revenue and charge for programs as opposed to cutting hours or personnel unless there is a good reason.

Mr. White stated he disagrees. He stated that as a resident of Park Ridge, he pays his taxes and when he comes to the Library his assumption is that he has already paid his fees and he isn't walking into a store having to pay extra. The Library is here to serve the public and it is the Library's job to keep the doors open and make services available to the public and not charge people extra; they have already paid their taxes. We're already charging people twice a year when they get a tax bill; now the Library has to figure out how to offer the services we offer with the funds we have. Alienating the people is not the answer.

Mr. Schmidt asked what the history of the Library is with Sunday hours. Mrs. Van De Carr stated that the Library was closed on Sundays until 8 or 10 years ago and many libraries in America are closed on Sundays in the summer. Being open on Sundays was an extra service that patrons said they would like and so the Board asked staff to find a way, so hours on Fridays were shortened and Sunday hours were added. Mr. Schmidt added that since the matter passed in Committee, the Library should explain that it has only had Sunday hours for "x" number of years and we're sorry to do so now but maybe Sunday hours can be added again in the future but for now the reality of the situation is this.

Mrs. Harrison stated that she doesn't think that the Board should reopen a Budget & Finance Committee meeting tonight, all the questions aren't going to be resolved tonight, and she wants to provide the City with some direction by the end of the month. She asked that the comments be kept to the topic.

Mr. Egan added that he voted against both closing on Sunday and reducing the hours on Sunday. He believes the Library should be open on Sunday, and he thinks the Board has to find other ways to match the budget to the tax levy provided. He added that although closing on Sunday sends a message, it alienates more people than would charging a nominal fee for incremental programs that are offered. He believes the Library should charge a nominal fee to come up with \$20,000 to keep the Library open on Sundays in the summer; and he thinks people will pay for the add-on programs that are supplemental to basic Library services.

Mrs. Harrison stated that there are three motions being considered, none of which are in regard to Sunday hours. She said she would like to review the motions as they currently stand, and then discuss how the Board wants to address the Sunday hours.

On behalf of the Committee, Mrs. Harrison made a

**MOTION #1:** to reduce the FY2014/15 budget for salary increases from \$50,000 to \$25,000.

Roll call vote. (Prior to his vote Mr. Benka stated that he continues to be disappointed – not an unexpected disappointment – that the City Council has not been able to come to a conclusion as to what they are going to do. He stated this is, as a taxpayer, very disturbing to him, since the onus continues to be on the Library Board as a result of inactivity by the City Council with regard to their communicating to the Board what they are going to do.)

**MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**



On behalf of the Committee, Mrs. Harrison made a

**MOTION #2:** to approve all new estimated revenue sources for FY2012/15 (a conservative estimate of a little over \$10,000).

Roll call vote.

MOTION PASSED with VOTE OF 8 YAY, 1 NAY: Mr. Trizna

Mrs. Harrison made a

**MOTION #3:** to approve the FY2014/15 Operating Budget of \$4,007,529 and the FY2014/15 Capital Budget of \$122,000 as proposed.

Mrs. Van De Carr stated that this is the time to decide whether or not to not close on Sundays during the summer and to put the \$20,000 back into the budget. Mrs. Harrison stated she would like the Operating Budget to stay at the number in the motion and for the Board to find another way to come up with the \$18,000 to \$20,000 because the Library is still deficit spending. Mr. Benka stated the amount shows a reduction of \$313,836 from the proposed budget that was drafted two months ago. He added that in the interim, the Board has reduced the Operating Budget again by almost \$314,000.

Mrs. Harrison called the motion on the table.

Ms. Hynous SECONDED the motion.

Roll call vote.

MOTION PASSED with VOTE OF 8 YAY, 1 NAY: Mr. Trizna

Mrs. Harrison asked if the Board can open up a vote on the Sundays, to which Mrs. Van De Carr replied that it can just be a roll call vote in order to give direction to Mrs. Van De Carr as to what to do to find the \$20,000. Mrs. Van De Carr stated this is a separate matter than charging for programs or other matters discussed this evening. It is directing the staff to come up with other ways to raise the \$20,000. Ms. Hynous disagrees with telling Mrs. Van De Carr to come up with a nebulous \$20,000 because then some Trustees may disagree with the result if it ends up with charging for programs. Mrs. Ebling stated that the Committee already discussed all of these matters and did all the work at the Committee meetings. Mr. Schmidt stated that the Library can send the budget as it stands and then communicate to the public that one of the suggestions to raise money has been to charge for programs and see what the reaction is. Mr. Trizna asked what about asking the public to go for a referendum next November and see if they want to raise their taxes and pay for the 3<sup>rd</sup> favorite service in town per the Community Survey. Mr. Benka stated that 63% of the respondents to the Community Survey stated that this community overtaxes its population. Mr. Trizna asked if the respondents were being schizophrenic about their answers? Mr. Benka stated no they were not being schizophrenic, just stating they are used to quality service for nothing. Mr. Benka told Mr. Trizna that he can argue with the survey but as one of the people who reviewed the Survey, he accepts its statistical significance since 7,000 randomly selected citizens of zip code 60068 were sent the questionnaire and roughly 1,400 people responded which gave a statistical significance of plus or minus 1, which you can extrapolate to a larger number and be accurate. Mr. Trizna stated he would rather take his chances at 8,000 to 9,000 voters who show up at the polls as opposed to 1,400 respondents to a survey.

Mrs. Foss-Eggemann stated she doesn't think reopening on Sundays has to be absolutely dependent with any one particular idea. She thinks there are other options like reducing salary increases, reducing or eliminating some programs, or charging a fee for materials and supplies at a program, etc. It is her opinion that there are other places that the \$20,000 can be found to cover staying open on Sundays in the summer that the Board can agree upon. Mrs. Van De Carr stated that if the Library is going to be closed on those Sundays then staff has to know soon because press releases have to go out to inform the public right

away. However, if tonight the Board decides not to close, then there is time for discussion for how to offset those expenses or to generate revenue.

Mrs. Van De Carr stated the decision has to be made and the message to the public has to be clear. The Board is also going to be back talking about these matters next year because the budget matters haven't gone away. Unless the Library sees a major increase in revenue, not just a few thousand dollars, this discussion will take place for the next few years. Ms. Hynous stated that the most significant impact is to close on Sundays. Next year there will be even tougher decisions. Mr. Egan asked why the most significant impact is to close on Sundays. Ms. Hynous replied it is the thing Library-goers will notice. People who don't go to the Library won't notice (closing on Sundays), but the Library-goers will notice that more than they will ever know that we cut salaries or where we store things, that we are buying fewer materials or any of the other items cut from the budget. They won't know that but they will notice when the Library is closed on Sunday. Mr. Egan asked if this is to give them the forewarning that these are the first of the cuts to come. She replied she wants to wake people up and say, (sic) this is your Library, we're trying very hard to provide you with the best Library there is; obviously we have to make hard decisions and state our priorities, and Sundays seemed to be a logical way of saying (sic) we have a problem and we have work to do to fix it.

Mrs. Harrison suggested that the Board re-call the proposal to close on Sundays between Memorial Day and Labor Day. Mr. Benka stated his opinion that there hasn't been enough impactful discussion this evening to do so. Mr. Benka stated it's already done – it was decided at the Committee meeting. He is not in favor of opening it up to another vote. Ms. Hynous stated she agrees with Mr. Benka; that it was voted on in Committee. Mrs. Harrison stated this is a Board meeting not a Committee meeting. Mr. White stated that it was already passed in Committee and doesn't understand why it is being discussed at length tonight; he thought it was just going to get passed as decided in Committee. Mrs. Harrison added that the Board can also see what happens this year and discuss it again next year. Mr. White stated that Committee did a lot of hard work in the meetings and the decisions should stand. Mr. Schmidt stated his vote wouldn't change. Mrs. Van De Carr stated she will keep the Board apprised of how things progress through the year.

#### **FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY**

No report.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Mr. Benka asked if it would be advisable to ask Mrs. Harrison and Mrs. Van De Carr to accompany the budget to the City with a letter stating the difficulties the Library Board worked with due to the actions that the City Council has undertaken in the budget process. Mr. Benka stated his opinion that the budget should not go to the City unadorned.

Mr. Benka read from the State publication A Library Board's Practical Guide to Self-Evaluation, that one of the jobs of the Trustees is advocacy. One of the major chapters stated that, "For the purposes of this guide, advocacy refers to the ongoing effort to raise the profile of the Library. There are many ways to ensure that the value of the public library is visible to the community it serves on a regular basis. It involves making connections with the power brokers in the community, including the local politicians and the press. It also involves word of mouth promotion of the Library, and engagement with other civic organizations. More than public awareness, however, advocacy takes a strong point of view and is undertaken with the understanding that it should have the ability to affect predisposed community decision makers in favor of supporting the Library. This means that Trustees should be aware of the local political climate, not just with regard to the Library, but with regard to issues facing community members. Because funding for libraries comes from finite sources, the library must compete against other agencies for a fair piece of the pie. No one has a stronger and more well-informed voice than the Library's Trustees. They have the benefit of understanding exactly what the Library provides to the community and what it takes to provide the services. In addition, unlike staff, the Trustees have nothing to gain personally from strong financial support."

Mr. Benka added that the City Council as they receive the document, should be reminded that the Library Board is doing its due diligence, taking a strong stand, but the Board can't do it alone and the Board needs the Council to be more sensitive to the community, vis a vis the Library. Because the Library is, as it stands here in the center of town, with its edifice and its contents – people and resources – an intellectual center for this community. And to let it diminish is not doing a short-term or long-term service to this community, which prides itself on high educational standards, high intellectual standards, and high professional competence. Mr. Benka added that the lack of sensitivity between the Council and the Library is clearly beginning to diminish the Library; and as Mr. Benka prepares to leave the Library Board in June and the rest of the Board is discussing the budget for the 2015/2016 fiscal year. Where will this institution be three years from now in terms of its reputation of standing firm and high in terms of supporting and providing the intellectual and mind-expanding opportunities for a public that has been built on that kind of a philosophy and set of principles? That's what Park Ridge stands for. And so he hopes a brief note to the people across the tracks is that we are on a slippery slope and we want to sensitize them to it; if in fact some of them are predisposed community decision makers. That scares me. This document reminds me that there are people on the (State) Library level that assume that out there are people predisposed, not necessarily in support of the Library.

Ms. Hynous, Mrs. Harrison and Mr. White voiced their agreement. Mr. Schmidt stated he wished Mr. Benka was still on the Council. Mr. Benka stated he understands members of the Council are under a lot of pressure, but they can't forget us. Because besides the schools, the Library is where people come to grow.

Mr. Trizna asked how the Council is treating the Library worse than they are treating themselves? The City has gone from a two million dollar deficit to a slight surplus by cutting and still raising taxes every year by 2 to 2.5%. How does the Library tell the City Council they are not treating the Library fairly? Mr. Benka stated he's not accusing them of anything, he doesn't attend all of their meetings, all he can do is question whether they are being predisposed to the issues the Library is facing. Mr. Trizna asked, is the question is do they have a bias, pro or con, in regard to the Library? Mr. Benka stated that in the last nine years while he's been on the Board, every time the Library Board has invited them en masse to join the Board for a dinner and discussion whether at social engagements, etc. their attendance has been minimal at best. There has never been a unified response from the City Council to come over and join the Library Board for a discussion, and the Board has only had, on an occasional basis, a visit from the appointed liaison from the City Council. Mr. Trizna stated his opinion that Alderman Knight has been at Board meetings more than any other liaison in the past nine years. He added that he believes this City Council inherited a mess and is holding the Library Board to the same standards they are held to. And he agrees that if members are predisposed against the Library they should be candid enough to admit it.

Ms. Hynous asked if the Board can agree that a letter be sent to the City with the budget. Mrs. Harrison and Mrs. Van De Carr stated one can be sent. Mr. Egan stated the Board should see any press release before it is released to the public.

Mrs. Van De Carr asked how the Board feels about staff surveying the public and asking them for input on some issues. Mrs. Foss-Eggemann offered to assist in drafting survey questions.

Mrs. Van De Carr distributed a copy of the message from the Mayor that will be in the next Spokesman. The Mayor's message paints a rosy picture about how the City is doing, without layoffs and cutting services and with a low levy things are good. Citizens are going to receive this message and some are going to know we are a part of the levy and others don't – and the Library's message is going to be very different from the message from the City. The Board is going to have to be very clear as to who is responsible for the Library's income – otherwise it is going to be confusing because the public won't understand why the Library is taking the planned steps.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Benka MOVED to adjourn the Board meeting.

Mr. Trizna SECONDED the motion.

Voice vote.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

---

Audra Ebling, Secretary