

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

February 25, 2009

6:30 pm

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: Chris Hansen who presided called the meeting to order at 6:55 pm.

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

Also present were: Gary Newman, CSEA Unit President; Cheryl Berent, Doris Hackett, Debra Bracey Harris, Deborah Ramsey and Cheryl Thomas, Library Staff; Opal Brown Lindsay, Director; Willie Lou Gayles, Chief Account Clerk and Mary Harper, Administrative Assistant.

MINUTES:

The Minutes of the meeting of January 28, 2009 were approved without exception.

PERIOD OF PUBLIC EXPRESSION:

Gary Newman spoke about a memo of February 20, 2009 from the Director's office praising the staff. Mr. Newman requested that the staff mentioned in the memo be identified so they could be honored. He also stated that the best award for the staff would be a fair salary increase.

Doris Hackett distributed information to the Board regarding a meeting with the director.

Deborah Ramsey questioned why salary increases were given to the administrative staff when the union contract had not yet been settled. She said that the city's rules stated that management could not get a raise before union workers. Chris Hansen said that the city provides for such a law, but the library does not. Chris Hansen said that the board is still waiting for the union proposal.

COMMUNICATIONS:

The library received a letter from a patron who grew up in Mount Vernon and had always used the library as a child.

Reference Librarian, Carl Andrews has resigned his position to take a job at Medger Evers College.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

The Board President and Director met with the City Council on February 24, 2009.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Opal Brown Lindsay reported the following:

The library is getting feedback from the community summit event and more agencies are making plans to come and visit.

The Second Annual "Big Read" at the library was well attended. The grant for this event comes from the National Endowment for the Arts, through a partnership with Arts Westchester and WLS. A number of County Executives participated.

A meet and greet for new WLS Executive Director, Terry Kirschner was held at the library on January 17, 2009.

Despite economic strains the library has maintained its Sunday hours and reports indicate increases in the Sunday service.

In January there were roof leaks and materials were damaged. A temporary fix to the roof has lasted so far.

New carpeting will be installed in the periodicals room as well as in the three tutoring rooms in the rotunda. There are also plans to carpet the main room.

Several new names have been submitted to the school board for the two vacant positions on the library board.

The library will explore placing a fax/vending machine for the public in the main area. The Board approved the fax machine for the public.

It is suggested that an amnesty period be given to grades K through 12 for the month of April 2009. The Board authorized the amnesty period for these grades.

The director will make the final decision on how to choose the new library logo.

Mrs. Lindsay is considering having a staff development day as an annual event.

A “Best Practice” training workshops will be held on March 18 and 19, 2009 in collaboration with the city. Two staff training workshops on Violence in the Workplace and Harassment were also held.

The library is hiring new people to fill vacant positions. Any new positions created need to be approved by the board. Two part-timers on staff have been offered full time positions. One full time position that was offered was turned down. The library will re-canvass for this position.

The position of Assistant Director has been filled.

Chris Hansen said that many space reorganization projects within the library are at the discretion of the director. Any major reorganization projects, such as the Local History Room and the Young Adult Room should have board approval.

The Fiction room is underutilized and the YA area is over utilized. Right now all programs are being taken up by young adults. The Cyber Corner has recently been moved. The trustees have requested a tour to better understand the new layout of the library.

The issue of the location of the new Cyber Corner and privacy issues for patrons was discussed. The library has a policy of non-censorship. The use of privacy screens for computers was also discussed.

Opal Lindsay said there were other issues that were brought to her attention regarding the cyber corner that she wanted to squash.

The 2009 budget did not have the expected increases; therefore balancing the budget was not easy. Many line items were cut or zeroed out. The Central Library Development Aid budget will also receive an 18% cut.

In 2009 the library will be addressing computer replacement needs, staff shortages and funding challenges. Grant writing will also play a pivotal role.

The director attended many meetings and workshops in the library and the community in January.

GRIEVANCE STEP III:

The Step III Grievance for Robert Copeland was heard by the Board of Trustees. Mr. Copeland was not present at the grievance hearing. CSEA Unit President, Gary Newman presented the grievance.

The grievance was denied by the board, because the union did not provide any facts to support its position, only conclusory statements. The union was given a chance to postpone the grievance until Mr. Copeland could be present, but did not.

Gary Newman said that he believed the board's statement regarding union negotiations to be incorrect. Mr. Newman said that the union has repeatedly asked for meetings, but the library attorney has declined stating that negotiations should go to impasse. Mr. Newman said that he was told that the library wants to rollback its proposals to August of 2008. Mr. Newman said that the union keeps asking for a date. He never knew of the existence of the January meeting that was mentioned in the minutes.

FINANCIALS:

Willie Lou Gayles said that the revised 2008 budget includes the cost of a new database.

There were questions regarding the process for rectifying the budget when there is a surplus at the end of the fiscal year.

The benefits line in the budget for 2009 has been adjusted to the level it was before it was revised.

The revised 2008 budget was approved by the Board of Trustees.

The 2009 Budget was approved by the Board of Trustees.

There were questions regarding one of the legal bills received at the end of the year. Mrs. Gayles said that it was a bill for 2008 and would be reversed in the 2009 budget. This bill will be sent to Chris Hansen for review.

The January 2009 Bills and Payrolls totaling \$587,152.87 properly certified by the Director and reviewed by Susan Capeci and Arlene Roberts Grant were approved by the Board of Trustees and requested paid.

The checks are numbered #019189-019263 (payrolls), #55609-55662 (payrolls, petty cash), and #029924-29968 (bills).

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The Board entered Executive Session at 8:20pm. The Board returned to public session at 8:50 pm. No decisions were recorded.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 p.m. without objection.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary