

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
October 19, 2011
6:30 PM
MINUTES

Millie Burns who presided called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Present were: Winston Maharaj, Julie Mills Worthey, Rodney Reynolds and Na'im Tyson.

Also present: Gary Newman, CSEA Unit President, Brian Salerno, Salerno Painting; Kevin Robinson, Rebecca Steere and Tamara Stewart, patrons; Maxine Grandison, Scott Griffith, Shawn Lucas Dunnom, Nishan Stepak, Cheryl Thomas, library staff; and Mary Harper, Administrative Assistant.

AGENDA:

The agenda was modified to include a period of public expression.

PRESIDENT'S RESIGNATION:

Millie Burns resigned her position as President of the Board of Trustees of the Mount Vernon Public Library.

MINUTES:

The minutes of the meeting of March 16, 2011 were unanimously approved as amended.

The minutes of the meeting of April 20, 2011 were unanimously approved as amended.

The minutes of the meeting of May 20, 2011 were unanimously approved.

The minutes of the meeting of June 15, 2011 were unanimously approved.

The minutes of the meeting of July 20, 2011 were unanimously approved.

The minutes of the special meeting of September 13, 2011 were unanimously approved.

The minutes of the meeting of September 21, 2011 were unanimously approved.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

Upon a motion by Na'im Tyson, seconded by Rodney Reynolds, Julie Mills Worthey was elected President of the Board of Trustees of the Mount Vernon Public Library.

Upon a motion by Millie Burns, seconded by Rodney Reynolds, Na'im Tyson was elected Vice President of the Board of Trustees of the Mount Vernon Public Library.

PERIOD OF PUBLIC EXPRESSION:

Gary Newman informed the board about the pile of dirt in the library parking lot that has taken up a least three parking spaces. He said it was from a landscaping project that ran out of money. There are not enough parking spaces and the dirt is taking up three.

Millie Burns said that it is her understanding that the dirt is from the task force landscaping project. They ran out of funds and were unable to complete the project.

She said she does not know who has the responsibility, but suggested that the task force be given a very specific date to move the soil.

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Shawn Lucas Dunnom said that she had been out all summer and would like to thank her staff. She said they made it easy for her to return to work, because they had been very diligent.

Her department has lost Kevin Robinson who was very good. They are now missing a fantastic librarian. Mrs. Dunnom said that she hopes when the library is able to hire again, Kevin Robinson and Rebecca Steere are given first preference.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Millie Burns spoke about a demand from CISCO Inc. regarding a bill for \$41,388.66 for unpaid Westlaw services.

Ms. Burns said the understanding was that Westlaw would have been cancelled by January 1, 2011. She said it came to her attention via the comptroller's office it had not been cancelled.

FINANCIAL MATTERS:

Winston Maharaj said he had spoken with Mary Irwin who is doing a line by line analysis of the general ledger to see what needs further investigation

Records are needed to substantiate the costs to date. Ms. Irwin may not know where to find this information.

The questions is what is the scope of the work and how quickly can she be brought up to speed.

Julie Mills Worthey asked was it better for Mary Irwin to complete aspects of what he wanted her to find and then bring her up to speed.

She said it was hoped there would be a better handle on what is needed in the business office; if a professional is needed.

Mr. Maharaj said there are two issues; an understanding of where we are and where we go from here.

It was discussed whether there was the ability in the business office to have an understanding and answer the questions regarding the substance behind the expenditures. There is concern about who is going to answer the questions.

Staying behind the numbers will help figure out where we have to go.

Winston Maharaj said that everything is a priority. If we don't have money, we may as well walk out the door.

Millie Burns asked when the meetings with Tom Rajala could resume.

Mr. Maharaj said that Mary Irwin had been asked to pull together info to present on a regular basis. He is not sure she has the skill set or the familiarity of what is important.

Millie Burns asked if Mr. Maharaj could spend some time to see who has certain skill sets in order to pull together the information.

Winston Maharaj said he is not clear what the cause is, but the affect is we don't have the ability.

Julie Mills Worthey asked if Mr. Maharaj had any recommendations between now and the next meeting on how the problem could be tackled.

Winston Maharaj said it was a matter of sitting down and describing basic expectations. The functional guidelines need to be laid out.

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Mrs. Mills Worthey asked if the library were capable or was support needed from the comptroller's office.

Millie Burns said there is belief that the comptroller's office has pretty much given all the recommendations they have. She said she is not sure how much more support they could possibly provide.

Mr. Maharaj said what Mrs. Irwin has provided is not far off from meeting the minimum standards. We are not trying to meet minimum standards. We need to be managing expenses at every line.

Julie Mills Worthey said what she is hearing is that a manager is needed in the business office to pull things together.

Millie Burns said that civil service only approved the senior bookkeeper position. They have not approved a business manager position.

Rodney Reynolds said that the statement needs to be made to civil service that we need a sound business manager or the department will not run efficiently.

Winston Maharaj said that it gives pause when he asks basic questions and cannot get answers. Mary Irwin does a good job for what she is asked to do.

Millie Burns said that either way we have not gotten the answers. Mr. Reynolds said it is a testament that we need a business manager.

Julie Mills Worthey said that not knowing the state of the financials in a complete fashion limits us from being able to explore the position.

Mr. Maharaj said that the questions should be easily addressed. The concern is management. There is no go to person to pull in the department in a cohesive way in order to provide answers to the city.

Millie Burns said that the desk audits had been stopped because the city got bogged down with non-compliance. She said she has inquired several times and was told that the energies need to go to compliance.

Julie Mills Worthey asked if we were to go outside of the civil service system would we still need their approval.

Ms. Burns said she thinks if we can resolve the compliance issues we can request help.

Ms. Mills Worthey said that we have to complete the compliance with civil service before we can press them to complete desk audits.

It will help frame out job descriptions of what is needed in the business office.

Ms. Burns said it will also help to review some of the job descriptions in the business office.

OLD BUSINESS:

Millie Burns said she has inquired about the check from Dr. Claudia Edwards for the book signing. What is the time line?

Ms. Burns said there are issues of reimbursement; one staff person is digging deeply into their pockets to purchase supplies materials and refreshments for programs. She said she did not know what it was for, so she did not sign. She got a call and an email from the individual.

Millie Burns asked if money was received at the library then why the person would have to go in their pocket. She said she did not think it was fair.

Ms. Burns suggested that a cap be set on how much an employee is allowed to pay out of pocket. She said it is not a good business practice.

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Millie Burns said that no employee here can be expected or allowed to pay out more than twenty dollars on expenditures. Expenditures should be provided via library funds.

Money in petty cash is reimbursement for money laid out by the staff.

Winston Maharaj said that he is on the fence. There is inherent cost control. If a person has to come out of pocket, they will think twice about how much they spend. Either way is acceptable and not uncommon.

Ms. Burns said that half of the money was here when the person paid for refreshments.

Tamara Stewart said that in terms of expenditures and getting the best prices; she has made purchases at Ossining for programs and has had no problem in getting reimbursed.

Mr. Maharaj asked if it were against policy for the person to get pre-approval.

It is a matter of preference and timing.

A policy should be created with respect to expenditures that can be made by staff for library programs.

Millie Burns said she would like to know if there is any special programming for the book and bake sale.

Julie Mills Worthey asked if there were other things that could be proposed that could take place on that day.

Gary Newman said there are only two people in reference on that day. When people come in for programming there is not much spill over. People come in for programming not library services.

Millie Burns suggested marketing library programming and encouraging people who want to come in on the Saturday of the book sale.

Gary Newman said that during regular scheduling there is never more than one person at the reference desk. On Saturday there would be two people. If you want more librarians you would have to request them.

Millie Burns said that because of what we have ahead of us, it doesn't hurt to get the library out there.

Mr. Newman said you can get as many people as you can in the library. We can handle it.

Julie Mills Worthey suggested that a marketing campaign be requested for this event to get as many people as we can in the library.

Na'im Tyson said that he could ask Nishan Stepak to use Facebook. The library has thirty one likes. Millie Burns said that she could ask Joe Parisi.

Na'im Tyson said that the board has engaged a tax consultant because the library still has not regained its 501C3. A letter of engagement has been sent to the board for review and approval.

Upon a motion by Na'im Tyson, seconded by Rodney Reynolds, the board accepted the letter of engagement for the tax consultant to be signed by the board president.

Millie Burns said that there is movement on clearing the roof drainage. The paperwork was turned over to the maintenance foreman to be signed. She said she does not believe it is his role to do so.

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The junior trustees have completed their visual project. Millie Burns said that she would like to get it on the website.

Junior Trustee, Mary Slattery has completed a quick time movie.

Millie Burns said that she would like to create a web page for the junior trustees.

Na'im Tyson said that we can now go to Leroy Lea or YouTube. Leroy Lea is doing the page design.

Millie Burns said that she would like to design the page.

Millie Burns said that the issue has been brought to the board's attention about concern for an asbestos hazard in the young adult room.

She said she has requested certain reports that are not completed.

Ms. Burns has requested that the director cease work until a plan is in place.

Brian Salerno said that he has worked on the entire library building several times. He has renovated the fiction room three times and put down the original floors.

Mr. Salerno said that he met with the decorator to show the floor plans, as well as the carpeting and tile. He said that he was not told what materials he would be using. He said last time he put down plywood and sealed it, never disturbing the floors. There is concern now that the cabinets have to be moved. He would level the floor without disturbing it.

Mr. Salerno said that he has sent letters to Opal Lindsay and to a consulting firm. He said that he spoke to a state agency and they said everything was okay. Julie Mills Worthey asked how the agency said yes. Mr. Salerno said verbally. Winston Maharaj asked if he stated there was concern about asbestos. Mr. Salerno said yes.

Millie Burns said there were concerns about moving forward with Brian Salerno pulling up the bookcases. Mr. Salerno said that no one told him he would be pulling up the bookcases. He does not know the full extent of his job. The bookcases are attached to the floor underneath the tile.

Millie Burns said that this would make at least three levels of flooring in the room. Has anyone looked into load bearing issues? Mr. Salerno said that he had to level the floor and put tile on padding with the carpet.

Julie Mills Worthey asked if the conversation with the state agency addressed any removal of cabinetry in the room. Mr. Salerno said that he did not get into it.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that she appreciates Mr. Salerno taking the time and would like to know if the board is prepared to move forward with the project.

Millie Burns said if there is wiring of any kind then drilling would have to be done. She said that given the water damage she would like assurances that putting in the carpet is the correct thing to do.

Rodney Reynolds asked who was overseeing the project.

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Julie Mills Worthey said unless we address the concerns completely someone can go back and say the board knew about them and did not address.

Brian Salerno said that he was not told the details about the carpet quality and pricing.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that she has something in writing from Brian Salerno.

Mr. Salerno said that he never gave any pricing for the floor.

Ms. Burns questioned whether Mr. Salerno had submitted a bid of about \$15,000 for work in the room.

Mr. Salerno said that he already did the rest of the work in the room. He said he repaired the windows, cabinets and painting. He said that he painted at no cost to the library. He refinished all the woodworking on the pillars.

Millie Burns asked what the distinction between the bookcases and cabinets was.

Mr. Salerno said that the darker wood is the cabinets. He said he does not believe he did the lighter wood.

Rodney Reynolds inquired about the Foundation.

Julie Mills Worthey said that she had a conversation with Brian Johnson. The foundation has an understanding that the Girl Scout paving project is not possible. Mr. Johnson felt the foundation was in a position to reintroduce their project.

It was not discussed whether there was still an active foundation.

The Girl Scout project created some misunderstandings that have to be addressed.

Na'im Tyson said there was an informal report on the donations, but not much was donated. There was no report on the level of activity.

Millie Burns said that she attended a foundation meeting in January and at the time the foundation was not meeting every month.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that a reminder and invitation had been sent out to Camille Banks Lee reminding her of the Board meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Millie Burns informed the board that Duane Brown of the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce is requesting the use of the rotunda on November 2nd.

The board has previously requested a policy for use of space, but has not received it.

Julie Mills Worthey said that the current policy needed to be amended. Part of the issue is whether the library can be used for private functions.

She said private is considered a select group, invitation only and the public is not invited.

There needs to be a clear perception that some events are not marketed to the public.

Millie Burns said that she does not think it is up to the board to get to the bottom of Mr. Brown's request. There is concern that it was requested that this information be forwarded to the board.

The board's response is that the director has the responsibility to address this request.

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Millie Burns said that the board is seeking to allocate a certain amount of money, up to \$300.00 per year for full time professional staff development and \$150.00 for part time staff.

The employee would have to work at least a full year to qualify.

One day every six months would be allowed for full time staff.

Interested staff can apply via an application stating where and how they think it is relevant. The application may go to the department head or to the director.

Nishan Stepak said that some things are very expensive. It is more about time than money. How much time can be allocated?

Gary Newman said once every six months for some people is a reduction in what they are doing now. WLS has training sessions all the time that people take advantage of.

Millie Burns said that she would like to extend the opportunity for staff to explore professional development that may be out of their reach.

Gary Newman said that he would urge the Board not to put a ceiling in terms of time or dollar amount. Staff used to go to ALA and it was paid for by the library.

Winston Maharaj said that to the extent that expenses could be limited. He feels very strongly that there has to be a cap.

Mr. Newman said the control has always been you need the permission of the director.

Nishan Stepak said that he had recently taken another conference. He said he is not sure it is getting through to the director all the events the staff is attending.

Na'im Tyson moved that the discussion about professional development be tabled until the next board meeting.

Na'im Tyson said that he is trying to get a site survey to fix the telephone issues. The handsets being used in the library will be obsolete in less than two years.

Mr. Tyson said that he has reached out to Avia who own the rights to the handsets.

There will be a meeting on Friday, October 21st with a representative from Avia to address these issues.

The person the library currently has the agreement with does not have a support contract.

Avia can offer maintenance support to fix the immediate problems. Afterwards Lightpath may be needed to address some issues.

Julie Mills Worthey asked about thoughts on maintaining a land line in case of emergency.

Na'im Tyson said that he is suggesting some sort of hybrid system to make the change over time.

Upon a motion by Rodney Reynolds, seconded by Na'im Tyson, the board entered Executive Session at 8:35 pm.

The board returned to public session at 9:10 pm, no decisions were recorded.

Respectfully,

Secretary