

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

November 16, 2011

6:30 PM

### MINUTES

Julie Mills Worthey who presided called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Present were: Millie Burns, Winston Maharaj, and Na'im Tyson.

Also present: Gary Newman, CSEA Unit President, Eric Morgan, Mary Slattery, Junior Trustees, Robert McDonald, Kabiru Mohammed, Deborah Ramsey, Kevin Robinson, Geraldo Soares, Rebecca Steere and Tamara Stewart, patrons; Maxine Grandison, Scott Griffith, Doris Hackett, Leroy Lea, Shawn Lucas Dunnom, Rebecca Newman, Nishan Stepak, Cheryl Thomas, library staff; Opal Lindsay, Library Director and Mary Harper, Administrative Assistant.

#### JUNIOR TRUSTEE REPORT:

Mary Slattery reported that she visited Marymount Manhattan College for an exhibit and tour. She also visited trustee, Millie Burns's classroom.

Eric Morgan said that this was his first experience as a Junior Trustee. He said that he took pictures around the library, outside of the library and in the computer lab.

He felt that it was great to be a Junior Trustee and has learned a lot of things. He said he had a great sense of participation with the other trustees.

Millie Burns said that three young people work as junior trustees. The board members want to invite them to their places of work to see what they do.

Julie Mills Worthey said that she looked forward to continuing the relationship and incorporation in plans.

She said that she is hoping that more young people will participate.

#### MINUTES:

The minutes of the meeting of June 27, 2011 were approved.

The minutes of the meeting of October 19, 2011 were approved.

#### PERIOD OF PUBLIC EXPRESSION:

Geraldo Soares said that he was speaking about a personal matter.

Mr. Soares said that he worked four hours on September 16, 2011, he said that was about four months ago and he still has not been paid.

He said the excuse given was that his name was not at city hall. He said that he left a year ago and the director told him to put his name on a list.

Mr. Soares said that he does not know what happened and has not gotten a satisfactory explanation.

Julie Mills Worthey said that it is a personal matter and she thinks that Mr. Soares and Opal Brown Lindsay need to resolve it.

The library does have civil service limitations and have to be in compliance.

Geraldo Soares said he thinks that he should be paid. If someone made an error they are responsible. He worked and he should be paid. He asked when he could expect a resolution.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said she appreciated Mr. Soares asking for a resolution. There are civil service requirements to be met. The library expects to receive a report from civil service whether they are in compliance.

Kabiru Muhammad said that he had put on a play at the library and he is presenting another play at the library on January 26, 2011.

Mr. Muhammad said that he is concerned about unfinished projects in the library and in the room upstairs.

Mr. Muhammad said that he is involved with kids in schools.

Kabiru Muhammad said that he is concerned that the library is not open on weekends. A lot of students have projects and no computers. Their only opportunity to use computers and labs are on weekends. He asked why end one project and not start a new one.

Julie Mills Worthey said that she was glad he was able to put on a play and she looks forward to the new one.

It is the board's intention to offer the community services they deserve. Financial constraints prohibit the library from opening on weekends. She said she hoped that would change.

Mrs. Mills Worthey asked for Mr. Muhammad's continued support of the library. She said that perhaps he would be interested in supporting the library when they go out for the public vote.

Robert McDonald said that he lives across the street and can't even come to the library on Saturday.

He said he sees that the board is trying to change things. He said to stay focused, positive and keep coming to the meetings.

#### FINANCIAL MATTERS:

Winston Maharaj said that he wanted to thank Mary Irwin and the business office for the work they have put in so far.

Mr. Maharaj said that he had draft information, not audited financial info and only for the first nine months of the year.

Winston Maharaj said that he needs to discuss the information with the director and the business office to make sure they are comfortable.

A detailed analysis of the ledger was done by line item. This allows the board to focus on specific items to see what is over or under and to ask pointed questions.

Going forward there will be focus on the format of the reports.

Mr. Maharaj said that going forward the 2012 budget is very important. We need to understand where we are today in order to know where we need to get to.

Focus should also be on Saturday hours and expenses to know where we need to go.

There were four income items and eight expense items that were discussed.

Income

Line item 3001.02, CLDA  
Projected \$214,000 dollars  
Actual \$0

Line item 3012.03 Gifts and Memorials  
Projected \$12,000  
Actual \$1, 000

Line item 3200.01 Fines, Fees and Income  
Projected \$21,000  
Actual \$9,600

Line item 3577.01 Refunds, Hospital Medical  
Projected \$15,500  
Actual \$9,000

Robert McDonald said that the numbers sounded alarming to him. He said it is not known what the deficit is and how will it be made up.

Winston Maharaj said that we need to understand before we move forward.

Gary Newman said that the biggest is with the CLDA budget. It is historically late every year. He asked had a particular bottleneck been identified.

Mr. Maharaj said that it looks like the 2010 allocation was \$280,000. He said he contacted the city to get more details,

Gary Newman said the he believes there is a penalty when your budget is less than the previous year.

Expenditures

Line item Non professional salaries and expenses.

This line seems to be tracking where the budget is, but more detailed information is needed from the city.

Line item 5150.01 Periodicals  
Budget \$20,600  
Expenditure \$3,000

This expense only comes once a year. We need to know what to look at to understand what is being circulated if cuts are to be made.

Line item 5250.03 Programs  
Budget \$0  
Expenditure \$1,500

Line item 5501.01 Supplies  
Budget \$28,000  
Expenditures \$5,000

Line item 5650.01 Telecommunications  
5750.00 Telephone and terminal maintenance  
Budget \$90,000  
Expenditures \$60,000

Line item 6100.01 membership  
Budget \$800  
Expenditures \$62,000

Line item 7001.01 Insurance  
Budget \$90,000  
Expenditures \$102,000

Line item 7700.01 Dental  
Budget \$19,000  
Expenditure \$0

It is believed that this is an actual expense, but there is no accrual to date.

Winston Maharaj said that the purpose is to focus on very specific line items and build a structure that can be presented here and to the city.

Gary Newman said that Periodicals is single payment made to EBSCO. The payment for 2011 was made in September 2010. Payment for 2012 should have been made around the same time. The 2011 subscription is rolled over to 2012 and a list is sent to EBSCO.

If only \$3,000 was spent, then something is very wrong. The payment should have already been made.

Mr. Newman said that he wanted to congratulate Mr. Maharaj for trying to get to the bottom of things and for the terrific job he is doing.

Mr. Maharaj said that they are trying to provide transparency. The draft numbers are not audited and may be completely different.

Julie Mills Worthey asked if the programs were identifiable under programs and gifts.  
Mr. Maharaj said if we understood what they were we may be able to replenish them.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that we need to understand what the different accounts are and how they are used and maintained. It gives clarity on what type of gifts and solicitations the library is asking for.

Gary Newman asked was it possible the library is having difficulty paying the periodicals bill because of the tax status. Mr. Maharaj said that the tax status is being looked at.

Kabiru Mohammad said that the library answers to the city. He asked who answers to the board. Is this the first time this has happened or has it happened in the past?

He said that the person doing the job must be capable and competent so the information can be presented to the city.

Julie Mills Worthey said that this board has taken ownership of this issue. They have contracted someone to assist with this, so going forward we will have control.

We have to set the stage for a new board so we can address the issues accurately and completely so future budgets will project where the library needs to go.

Julie Mills Worthey said that the report from Winston Maharaj was meaningful and helpful. Mrs. Mills Worthey proposed that the board dedicate time to meet solely to work on financial information.

Mr. Maharaj said there may be a number of items that other trustees may want to review to get a perspective on the 2012 budget.

#### DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Director, Opal Brown Lindsay reported the following:

She had a business meeting with the Mayor and the upcoming budget process does not seem one to look forward to.

A proposed budget draft was given to the city.

Libraries were not considered in the 2 % tax cap decision.

Mrs. Lindsay suggested that the board adopt a resolution prior to adopting the budget intended to revise the tax cap. The cap may be overridden by a 60% vote of the library board.

Winston Maharaj said that in order to ensure compliance the budget must be submitted via an IRS PIN. There is an understanding that the library can apply for an exemption.

He said he is trying to get an understanding. If we are part of a school district budget or municipality, how do we apply? If we are part of another municipality, we may be exempt.

Mrs. Lindsay said that NYLA has been working to get an exemption for libraries. Letters were sent to all the libraries. Mount Vernon Public Library is not exempt.

Julie Mills Worthey said if you are looking to increase the budget beyond 2%, then you need a waiver.

Mr. Maharaj said the short term impact is that the letter may not be applicable for 2012, but if the budget is taken out to vote for 2013, it may apply.

Mrs. Mills Worthey asked, NYLA is recommending that the board pass a resolution prior to 2012 to say what. She said that she is trying to get clarity on the resolution.

Winston Maharaj asked was the letter saying this is how we apply for an exemption.

Mrs. Lindsay said it is saying the board needs to prepare themselves in case they go over the budget.

The New York State Education Department has embraced common core standards state wide. They are asking that libraries support these standards through the promotion of non fiction and information texts and activities that promote vocabulary building, math skills, science literacy; as well as writing and research activities based on primary sources.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Brooke W. Mahoney Award for Outstanding Board Leadership is scheduled to be given in March 2012. More information about the award can be found at [www.vcggm.org](http://www.vcggm.org)

The Dr. Claudia Edwards book signing attracted community members who have not recently used the library.

There is an overall drop in circulation, but Mount Vernon had an overall increase of 86%.

A recent staff survey on customer service indicated that neither the director nor administration were an issue.

Opal Lindsay said that the recent decision of the board to eliminate some patrons will have an effect. The board made the decision to cut library cards and this could affect the bottom line.

Mrs. Lindsay said that we need to move forward, because the YA capital funds are in danger of being lost.

The Westlaw invoices have been submitted to David Ouellette.

Opal Lindsay said that the IRS challenges date back to the 1980's. Form 990 was never filed.

The Friends have agreed to sponsor a museum pass.

Opal Lindsay said she did not see the email regarding a MOU for the Task Force program. The email referred to private functions. An MOU of this magnitude is not required for everyday functions. The event did take place.

The library must look into how AmeriCorps can work with adult programming.

An email was sent to the board regarding contacting legal services about Lionel Turner.

Millie Burns said that the issue did not require contacting legal services.

Opal Lindsay said that civil service had suggested it. If the board says to terminate him she will do so. If the board tells her she will work with Mary Irwin on the items indicated in the board's email.

Julie Mills Worthey asked how the book signing was made public

Opal Lindsay said through eblast. She said over 100 people attended.

Mrs. Mills Worthey asked were there any steps to utilize over 100 people. In what way did it benefit the library?

Mrs. Lindsay said that many have not been to the library in years. It was a very positive experience

Mrs. Lindsay said that the Task Force event was also made public through an eblast.

Opal Lindsay said that a survey given to the staff was designed by Robin Finney Granston. It was completed at a staff meeting and handed in. Mrs. Mills Worthey requested a copy of the survey.

Opal Lindsay said she thinks that cutting of Bronx library patrons at this time can be harmful. The library should see if they can attract community patrons back first before letting the Bronx patrons go.

Tracking shows that people with Mount Vernon cards are using other libraries.

Gary Newman asked if WLS and PLDA were aware that Mount Vernon was giving cards to Bronx patrons.

According to the PLDA minutes Opal Lindsay was present at a meeting where Yonkers library was roundly criticized for giving out cards to Bronx patrons.

All of the criticism was directed at Yonkers. Mrs. Lindsay was in the room, but did not say a word or give support to Yonkers.

Opal Lindsay asked how Mr. Newman could say that since he was not present at the meeting.

Gary Newman said that the second question is about the increase in circulation. Book purchases and videos are almost nothing. How much is this due to circulation and services to the Bronx.

Millie Burns said that there are wonderful library services in New York City. We are about to ask the City of Mount Vernon to foot the bill. It is only fair that they pay for services for Mount Vernon residents.

Mr. Newman said he thinks the library is sitting on a political time bomb with this and he is glad the board is addressing.

Gary Newman said a good portion of the people helped at the reference desk are from the Bronx and are using Mount Vernon cards.

Na'im Tyson said in September the board passed a resolution that no more cards would be issued to Bronx residents. He asked if Mrs. Lindsay had informed circulation.

Opal Lindsay said she is not saying that Bronx residents should not be phased out. Before we cut off our nose, we must increase circulation.

Mr. Tyson said that Mount Vernon serves 68,000 people. Given the resources we have it is extraordinarily burdensome to include Bronx patrons.

Julie Mills Worthey asked what Mrs. Lindsay's proposal was to replace Bronx patrons with Mount Vernon patrons. Opal Lindsay said we have to take a look.

Winston Maharaj said that we have to look at it regardless. One is not predicated on the other. We can make the decision independently.

Mr. Maharaj said that given the budgetary constraints, he sees it as two different things that need to be addressed independently.

He asked what the time period of the statistics was.

Opal Lindsay said that they were done in September for the October meeting.

Winston Maharaj asked was there any way to understand what Mount Vernon patrons are checking out at other libraries.

Opal Lindsay said that statements regarding the central library were, no parking, problems with customer service, patrons would prefer to go elsewhere.

Mr. Maharaj said if we understand why people are going to other libraries then we can market the library so they could come here.

Tamara Stewart said people have spoken to her about issues at the library such as lack of parking and customer service. Lack of weekend hours has also been a complaint.

Ms. Stewart suggested that people may also prefer to go to libraries near their workplace, which is not necessarily a reflection on Mount Vernon.

She said she has also heard that lack of computers is another reason why people prefer to go elsewhere. The library may need to find out more specifically what the reasons are.

A forum has not been available to have this conversation with the community.

Julie Mills Worthey said that she does not know if the board has been unwilling to create public forums, but the board has been challenged with many issues.

Robert Mc Donald inquired about the outcome of the library survey.

Nishan Stepak said that a total of 450 people participated. The survey was designed for people to have personal input.

Millie Burns asked was it correct that the library sent out an eblast for the book signing event and the task force event. She asked if Mrs. Lindsay used this list for all the book signings

Ms. Burns said that the Dr. Edwards event was \$189.00 per hour. She asked Mrs. Lindsay to find out about the payment

Opal Lindsay said that Dr. Edwards made the payment to the Foundation because of the library's IRS status. She said she sent her an invoice which was itemized.

Millie Burns said that she is not clear on what Dr. Edwards was invoiced for. She asked if Mrs. Lindsay could confirm that security was included in the invoice.

Mrs. Lindsay said yes, security, lights, maintenance. She said she would break it down for the board.

Millie Burns said that someone from security signed out at 8:00 pm and was paid. Mrs. Lindsay signed off on it. Opal Lindsay said this is something that the business manager would have caught.

Millie Burns said that the staff survey was completed at the staff meeting. While they may not have written any comments about administration; she sat in the room and heard comments.

Julie Mills Worthey said that the way you ask the questions is going to determine the response; also the manner in which you distribute them. The survey is geared to get a certain response. If someone does not feel comfortable they may not give an honest response.

Mrs. Worthey said that if questions are asked in a fashion she would think that the persons being asked the questions are geared to respond in a certain way.

Julie Mills Worthey said she is going to review Opal Lindsay's report and respond.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

Na'im Tyson asked if the museum passes procedure is in place and is it being utilized effectively. He asked Mrs. Lindsay where we were at in terms of a policy.

Mr. Tyson said he had a conversation with a patron regarding the passes.

Gary Newman said that there were two sets of procedures. Mrs. Lindsay asked him to write one and then ignored it and proceeded to write her own. She ignored his comments and emailed the librarians asking them to choose the policy. Written responses were sent back.

Mrs. Lindsay said that Mr. Newman's policy was longer and not good for the web site.

Gary Newman said that Mrs. Lindsay's policy needed to be restructured to make it simpler and shorter.

Gary Newman said he has seventy single use tickets from Katonah library, the policy does not apply. He suggested handing out the tickets as people come in.

Millie Burns asked Mr. Newman to summarize the major points that should be included in the policy. She said she purchased a museum pass in June. Rosanna Guinyard has the pass. Rosanna said she has informed the staff.

Gary Newman said that the Friends want to purchase a pass to the Children's Museum, but want to see the policy.

He said he is preparing the forms to use once the policy is settled and we can go ahead.



Mrs. Lindsay has proposed that people reserve the pass two weeks ahead. Gary Newman said he proposed allowing patrons to reserve in the current month through the following month.

He said that he was not told that another pass was available.

He said he is writing up the agreement. There is talk about charging a patron \$300.00 if they lose the pass.

Millie Burns said she suggests they be charged the value of the pass.

Mr. Newman said he wants to hand out the passes in the form of badges so people will not lose them.

Julie Mills Worthey asked Mr. Newman to report back about the passes. She said she hopes there will be an eblast to let people know.

She said that Gary Newman has been authorized to create a policy.

Na'im Tyson asked Mr. Newman to create a policy to be voted on at the next board meeting.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

Millie Burns said that she is not clear on the amnesty process. She said she is not clear on when someone is returning materials they cannot borrow again for 30 days.

She asked what was the thought process regarding reserving the right to prosecute.

Julie Mills Worthey said she accepts that the board has the right to prosecute. By reserving that right the board can determine how aggressively to proceed.

Cheryl Thomas said that patrons are returning empty video game cases.

Winston Maharaj asked why we were not checking if we know this is being done.

The resolution for amnesty is for people who are dissuaded from returning because they know there is a huge fine.

Gary Newman said that he thinks we should keep the amnesty simple. Stopping circulation for thirty days defeats the purpose. Patron's privileges are automatically cut off if they owe \$25.00.

Gary Newman said what you see over and over are teens that have lost their privileges and don't tell their parents or don't have money to pay.

Mr. Newman asked do you want to protect the library from habitual abusers or do you want to get materials back.

Julie Mills Worthey said there should at least be an amnesty period before we go to another level to have people regain privileges.

Gary Newman suggested that the amnesty should be timed in a period next year to coincide with the budget vote.

Tamara Stewart said if you are going to offer amnesty you may not want to have a penalty over their heads.

Julie Mills Worthey said that we have collections services to supplement.

She said that she does not see how a period of amnesty without consequences has any value.

Mount Vernon Board of Trustees  
Resolution: LM1-1 2011-11-16

Topic: Amnesty for Overdue Materials

**Declaration of Amnesty for Overdue Library Materials**

Board of Trustees & Patrons,

Alarmed by the number of overdue library materials borrowed by patrons and library staff, hereafter referred to as **borrowers**,

WHEREAS, the continued borrowing of library materials, without the timely return of those materials, will jeopardize the Mount Vernon Public Library's standing of having the largest collection in the Westchester Library System, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees will grant amnesty to all borrowers to return overdue materials no later than December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at the library's close, and the board reserves the right to prosecute those non-compliant borrowers;

FURTHER RESOLVED, any delinquent borrower who has returned all overdue materials during the amnesty period will have their borrowing privileges restored in 30 days, and the procedure for implementation will be designed in cooperation with the head of circulation.

Submitted by: Na'im R. Tyson

Action taken: Unanimously passed; contact with head of circulation required.

Date: 11/16/2011

Effective Time Period: Immediately

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Nishan Stepak said that the system is unable to accommodate this. The borrowing history is wiped clean.

Gary Newman recommended that the board think this through because of the negative publicity.

Julie Mills Worthey said that the aim is to operate the institution with the utmost integrity. If so, we must expect the patrons to do the same.

Millie Burns asked if someone's borrowing privileges are suspended because of delinquency, how is that cleared. If there privileges are suspended anyway we are giving them a break.

Tamara Stewart said that there may be an additional burden placed on the circulation staff. There is additional activity that requires the staff to be vigilant.

Deborah Ramsey said that the record would have to be cleared manually.

Nishan Stepak said this is not the normal procedure.

Gary Newman said that every instinct is telling him there will be God awful confusion  
Julie Mills Worthey said that she is hopeful that the resolution is another indication of the Board's commitment to integrity

Tamara Stewart asked when the resolution goes into effect for Bronx residents who currently have a card. Na'im Tyson said January 1<sup>st</sup>.

Gary Newman asked would Bronx residents be eligible for amnesty. Julie Mills Worthey said yes.

The Board of Trustees resolved the following:

Mount Vernon Board of Trustees  
Resolution: LM2-1 2011-11-16

Topic: Sanctioning Bronx Borrowers

### **Revision of Borrowing Privileges for Bronx Residents**

Board of Trustees & Patrons,

Recalling the policy that Bronx residents can no longer be issued free Mount Vernon Public Library cards, which was effective September 1, 2011 and,

Having examined the current policy for Bronx residents,

WHEREAS, Bronx residents have not had to buy a membership to the Westchester Library System, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that effective January 1, 2012, Bronx residents will no longer be allowed to borrow materials from the Mount Vernon Public Library unless they have a paid membership with the Westchester Library System.

Submitted by: Na'im R. Tyson

Action taken: Unanimously passed; contact with head of circulation required.

Date: 11/16/2011

Effective Time Period: Immediately

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#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

The trustees propose to allow the library to be open one Saturday per month.

They asked whether or not it was conceivable to construct the schedules to do this.

Gary Newman said that it is his sense this is doable and good for the public.

Julie Mills Worthey asked could this start the first Saturday in December.

She suggested the library open on Saturdays, December through June 2011, close July, August and September and reopen October 2012.

The Board resolved to ask the director to notify department heads to construct a schedule for the library to be open the first Saturday of each month from December 2011 through June 2012 and continuing in October 2012.

The resolution passed unanimously.

Gary Newman mentioned the library had the same copy of the autobiography of Frederick Douglas that is going into the library of congress.

Julie Mills Worthey said she thinks this is something the community should be aware of.

Millie Burns said that she wants to follow up on the 100 essential films. She asked in what format it could be created.

Gary Newman said they may need to be recreated.

Gary Newman said that he wants the library to have an association with another facility besides the Wartburg. He said that he thought perhaps Pelham would like to be involved. He said he wants something he can hand out.

Millie Burns said she wants something she can put on the website.

Upon a motion by Millie Burns, seconded by Na'im Tyson, the board entered Executive Session at 9:57pm.

Respectfully,

Secretary