

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
December 21, 2011
6:30 PM
MINUTES

Julie Mills Worthey who presided called the meeting to order at 6:40 pm.

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

Also present: Donald Partrick, CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Gary Newman, CSEA Unit President, Althea Anderson, Hafeezah Basir, Monique Harding, Robert McDonald, Deborah Ramsey, Kevin Robinson, Rebecca Steere and Tamara Stewart, patrons; Maxine Grandison, Scott Griffith, Leroy Lea, Rebecca Newman, Nishan Stepak, Cheryl Thomas, Chris Williams, library staff; and Mary Harper, Administrative Assistant.

PERIOD OF PUBLIC EXPRESSION:

Tamara Stewart suggested the library purchase the complete musical works of the late rapper Heavy D, who was Mount Vernon native.

She also inquired if there were any details about the library budget. She asked if the library were to open on Saturdays could the chess program be reinstated.

Julie Mills Worthey said that the board had instituted first Saturday openings for the library. The library will be open the first Saturday of each month except in the summer. She said that they were hoping for additional programs on that day.

Mrs. Mills Worthey suggested that the Heavy D collection include not just musical works, but films as well. The cost for this collection will be investigated.

Nishan Stepak inquired about the library's not for profit status.

Chris Williams said that there could be a problem with Saturday staffing. Upstairs circulation and the children's room have to be covered. He said there is also a problem on Fridays, if any one is out either day it is a problem.

Mrs. Mills Worthey asked that the staff communicate their problems on staffing issues.

Mr. Stepak asked was there was any word about the Central Library status.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that she has received a report and there have not been any permanent or recommended changes. She said at this point she does not want to suggest that she has a full understanding, but will remain vigilant.

GRIEVANCE STEP II

The Step II Grievance for Scott Griffith, Overtime Pay was presented to the Board of Trustees Discussion of the grievance was tabled for discussion in Executive Session.

Julie Mills Worthey asked that the parties attempt to address the grievances in an informal way. She said that the board should be able to come up with a resolution

Gary Newman reminded the board that Robert Copeland has been working out of title as a custodian and needs to be paid from the day he started working out of title.

Gary Newman said if the custodian exam is given, the library can ask for a parallel promotional list for the library. Mr. Copeland should be the only one on that list.

Millie Burns said that was not what she had been told. Her understanding is that the current list has not expired and the library must hire from the existing list. Whoever is hired from the list must be reachable. She was told that a promotional exam would be open to anyone in Mount Vernon who has the title of cleaner. Anyone with the highest score must be hired. It is not restricted to Mount Vernon Public Library.

Mr. Newman said that did not sound correct.

Ms. Burns said that she was not mistaken. She said she was surprised to hear this and questioned it and this is what she was told.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that she would ask for an opinion in writing from Civil Service.

Gary Newman reminded the board that since there has been a search for a new director, no Head of Buildings has been assigned. The library has not had a situation where there is no coverage.

PUBLIC SESSION:

Gary Newman said that the staff is planning a new beginnings party and is hoping that the Board of Trustees will attend as honored guests. They are looking at the date of January 20, 2012 at the CSEA Local in Greenburgh.

Julie Mills Worthey thanked Gary Newman and said she would make an effort to join.

OLD BUSINESS:

Chris Williams reported on the progress with the amnesty program. He said that \$599.80 of fines had been forgiven. Ninety two books have been returned, also 13 DVD's and one CD

Mr. Williams said he did not suspend the patron's privileges for the thirty day period. He said that it did not seem like amnesty. He decided the best way to promote amnesty is to forgive the fines.

Julie Mills Worthey asked Mr. Williams to explain his decision despite the board's recommendation to suspend privileges.

Mrs. Mills Worthey asked if he thought the patrons would have been reluctant to return the materials if they knew their privileges would be suspended.

Julie Mills Worthey asked was there anyway to control the materials so a delinquent patron returning materials could not immediately take them out again. She said that she was concerned that the patrons would take out the materials again to have in their collection.

Mr. Williams said that the system is not that sophisticated and a notation to the patron's record would have to be done manually.

Leroy Lea asked was it necessary to put the materials back in circulation immediately. Julie Mills Worthey said that you would want the items to go back on the shelf as soon as possible.

Tamara Stewart suggested that the library ask the city to put the amnesty information on their website. She said the information she is getting is that the word is not going out to the community.

Nishan Stepak suggested sharing the library's calendar of events with the city website. He said he had contacted several news organizations about doing outreach. Mrs. Mills Worthey said that there is one month to do outreach. We may want to broaden that outreach while the amnesty is still alive.

Mr. Williams said that people who have long overdue books no longer come to the library. Most materials returned are about six months overdue.

Julie Mills Worthey asked Chris Williams to contact Unique Collections for data on overdue payments and let her know their response.

Chris Williams asked about the circulation age for children.

He said he had been told to give out library cards to anyone no matter what age. He said they are giving out cards to infants.

Julie Mills Worthey said that a policy should be drafted to place limits on patrons who are unable to sign their name.

Mr. Williams said that parents are getting cards for children because they are tied into computer usage. If they use another card they can stay on the computers longer.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that the more intelligent approach would be to see how the cards are being used.

Chris Williams said that he has suspended guest passes for the cyber corner because people are abusing it. People who had their library privileges suspended were using guest passes. He said that there is a list of sex offenders who are using the library computers.

Gary Newman said that Chris Williams was currently in violation of the law. The public library must allow access to computers and to government documents to anyone who walks in the library whether they have a card or not

Julie Mills Worthey asked if access should be to computers or to government documents.

Mrs. Mills Worthey asked that Gary Newman send her that citation.

Julie Mills Worthey said that it is clear a lot of issues have to do with staffing and the fact that we had to lay off key personnel.

There are a few issues where policies and procedures could be in place; such as circulation age, the manner in which guest passes are issued and the ability of the library to monitor the cyber corner.

Gary Newman questioned why juveniles were allowed to use the cyber corner when previously it was not allowed.

Julie Mills Worthey said that the board members are not librarians and that they rely on the staff to give meaningful, important insight and valuable input so the board can help staff to do their jobs.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that at the last meeting she was not able to fully address the circumstances of the board's decisions and contact with the press.

She said that it is critical that the community knows that the library is an efficient public library and is operating effectively and at a top level to the community.

Julie Mills Worthey said that it is important that statements that come from the library and the board are accurate. The board speaks for the Mount Vernon Public Library and has not delegated that authority to any other person, body or individual.

Na'im Tyson said that the tax consultant is waiting for information from Mary Irwin.

The library has to provide four years of financial statements because the receipts are more than \$5,000.

Julie Mills Worthey said that the IRS is looking for an explanation or information why there was a lapse in the status. This is part of the analysis that IRS takes into consideration. Mary Harper will check to see if the director has received any other correspondence from the IRS.

MINUTES:

Upon a motion by Millie Burns, seconded by Na'im Tyson, the minutes of the meeting of November 16, 2011 were approved as amended.

NEW BUSINESS:

Julie Mills Worthey spoke about "World Book Night" a national program. This is annual celebration designed to spread the love of books and reading.

Organizations are printing tens of thousands of books to donate for giveaway to light readers and non-readers.

They are asking participants to sign up to giveaway a list of 30 books the program feels are worthy of donating. If selected twenty copies of the books will be delivered to a book store or library for giveaway on "World Book Night".

Mrs. Worthey said that this is an opportunity for Mount Vernon Public Library to participate in the giveaway and spread an important piece of literature. She said that she would like the board to endorse this program.

She said she would like to create a table or display for the first Saturday in January to kick off the efforts to promote the library and encourage patrons to participate.

World Book Night is April 23, 2012. People should sign up between now and January. If someone is selected they get to choose the institution where books can be picked up.

Millie Burns said that January was in two weeks and would be too soon for her. She suggested this could be something that the junior trustees could be involved in.

She said perhaps the announcement could be made at the Kenneth C. Davis event on January 12th.

Julie Mills Worthey said that she had received correspondence from the Sleepy Hollow Paranormal Society, a small network of paranormal investigators. They do readings of sites that have experienced paranormal activity. They are interested in the library because it is a historical property.

Julie Mills Worthy said that she had spoken at last week's budget meeting. The next budget meeting is on December 22, 2011. She said she appreciated the support of the staff and community.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that she had received a Christmas card from American Christmas. The first year they were in Mount Vernon they donated a tree to the library. They seem open to continue.

She said that the American Christmas staff is willing to do programming at the library. They suggested working with children's programming or others who are interested.

Millie Burns said that she is interested in a partnership with the Wartburg. She is interested in having community interaction with the residents.

She suggested arranging a craft program at the library specifically for the Wartburg residents.

REMARKS OF THE TRUSTEES:

Millie Burns said that she had received an eblast regarding the current exhibit at the first avenue entrance of the library.

The exhibit was first on display at the Scarsdale Village Hall and then moved to the Mount Vernon Library.

Ms. Burns said that she wouldn't mind speaking to the exhibitors to help with the visual appeal and perhaps connect the exhibit with the library.

Millie Burns said she is considering using the campaign slogan “@Mount Vernon Public Library” for eblasts.

The Junior Trustees will be invited to attend the Kenneth C. Davis event on January 12, 2012.

Nishan Stepak said that Kenneth C. Davis is a bestselling author who has written books on the meaning of history and education. He grew up in Mount Vernon.

Millie Burns said it is important that this event is successful. Ms. Burns said that she hopes the Junior Trustees can participate.

A book vendor suggested by Ms. Burns will supply the books. Mr. Stepak asked everyone to attend and purchase books.

Ms. Burns asked Nishan Stepak to be in touch with Leonard Marcus who is a children’s book author and native of Mount Vernon. She said she hopes that the Kenneth C. Davis event will give incentive for Mr. Marcus to come to the library.

An extra eblast is needed.

Julie Mills Worthey said that she was thinking that local branches of colleges should know about the Kenneth C. Davis event, perhaps for assignment purposes.

COMMUNICATIONS:

The library has received a letter from Mr. Ronald J. Iorio, the brother of a former page, Seaman First Class, John Joseph Bennett who was lost at sea on the USS Pompano during World War II. A bronze plaque honoring his memory and service is at the library. A photo that hung above the plaque is no longer there. Mr. Iorio is offering the library a framed photograph of his brother’s crew, along with a museum like legend for the plaque.

Julie Mills Worthey suggested that this event be incorporated into a Memorial Day celebration and the local VFW be invited.

Millie Burns questioned if the photo could be given and installed in advance of the ceremony. She said that Memorial Day is a long time to wait.

Ms. Burns said that coming from using New York Public libraries it is a wonderful thing that single branch libraries have the ability to honor their local heroes.

Gary Newman said that there is a situation with different staff members handling the CLD ordering in different ways. He said that it was his understanding that we could not order.

Librarians May Wu and Cheryl Berent are both ordering.

Nishan Stepak said that he had contacted WLS who told him not to worry about the tax situation. He said that he is waiting for confirmation from Fran Feuerman at WLS.

Gary Newman said that the library is not supervised by WLS.

Nishan Stepak said that Cheryl Berent is not ordering.

Julie Mills Worthey asked that all librarians who are ordering CLD share their information with the board so they can have a holistic picture of what is being ordered and match it to the funds.

Gary Newman said that you order throughout the year. You order the materials and pay for it out of CLD funds. He said that he understands that Mr. Stepak is ordering through WLS to alleviate the tax situation.

Nishan Stepak said that prior to the tax situation WLS was taking the orders and applying them to their funds. This change came from the former director who told them to place the order with WLS.

Scott Griffith said that the children's library orders through the person at Mount Vernon, not through WLS. Mrs. Mills Worthey asked that the information be shared so we can make decision before the end of the year.

Winston Maharaj said that he would like to see everything that is ordered. It would be easier to understand if it is sent simultaneously.

There will be a new web page for the Junior Trustees. Trustee Millie Burns and Leroy Lea are going to work together on revamping it. She said that she was hoping to work with Leroy Lea on issues with the web page that come up.

Millie Burns said that she had received an email from Donna Jackson regarding a grant. She was hoping the library could apply. It is not tied to a 501C3. Ms. Burns said that the deadline does not seem doable for the library this year.

Millie Burns discussed with Ms. Jackson the possibility that the person who designed the library logo would be willing to register the logo and gift the ownership to the library.

Millie Burns said that she would like to work on a style guide for library publicity which should include font and logo sizing without distorting the design. There should be a unified standard. She said at some point there should be a central person to whom everything should go.

Tamara Stewart said that she had hoped for a statement about the library leadership in the immediate future.

Julie Mills Worthey said that the library is without a Director for the immediate future.

The task is to create a job description; frame a timeline then make an announcement about what we are looking for. The process may not be immediate. Who steps into the role is critical.

She said that the board expects to ask the staff at some point to partner in the selection process.

We want the very best to sit in that seat.

Chris Williams complained about the direction the library had taken during the last decade.

Nishan Stepak asked if there were talk about an interim director.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said it is something to be considered. It depends on the timeline.

She said that the board was forced to make changes. The question is do we embrace the opportunity or do we just let it happen. Speaking for this board, we do not intend to let anything happen to this library.

Upon a motion by Millie Burns, seconded by Winston Maharaj, the board entered Executive Session at 8:39 pm to discuss personnel matters.

Respectfully,

Secretary