

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
September 19, 2012
6:30 PM
MINUTES

Marcia Dupree who presided called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm. Julie Mills-Worthey presided once she arrived at 6:45 pm.

Present were: Julie Mills Worthey, Na'im Tyson and Millie Burns

Absent: Winston Maharaj

Also present: Gary Newman, CSEA Unit President; Althea Anderson, Hafeezah Basir, Karen Blaine, Rebecca Steere and Tamara Stewart, Library Patrons; Scott Griffith, Rebecca Newman and Cheryl Thomas, Library Staff; Donna Hurwitz, Library Director and Mary Harper, Administrative Assistant

MINUTES:

The approval of the minutes of the meetings of June 26, 2012, July 9, 2012 and July 19, 2012 was tabled.

PERIOD OF PUBLIC EXPRESSION:

Scott Griffith inquired about old computers in the children's room. He said that a patron was interested in obtaining one.

Na'im Tyson said that he does not know at this time what will be done with them. He said that he would defer to the director.

Millie Burns said that the library's hands may be tied in how they dispose of the computers based on what funding was used to acquire them.

Karen Blaine said that she was at the board meeting in July and spoke about renovations to the children's room.

Ms. Blaine said that she noticed the Children's room has new computers.

She said that the board talked about funding and fixing the roof. She asked if a proposal had been sent and to whom.

Na'im Tyson said in July or August a CD with pictures of the roof was sent to the roofing company. The company sent a representative to check the roof, but the library has not heard back from them.

Mr. Tyson said that he is only speaking about the roof and is not aware of any proposal.

He said that he is not aware of any money available or what form it is in.

Karen Blaine asked if a proposal was sent, who it would go to. She said that another trustee had mentioned a proposal. Ms. Blaine asked if the board felt there would be a discussion anytime soon.

Marcia Dupree said that she is sure there will be a discussion, but does not know when. Ms. Dupree said that the board would follow up.

Ms. Blaine said that she has written a letter and would like to know if volunteers can come in and help with the children's room.

Donna Hurwitz said that she and Trustee, Burns met with Jim Killoran of Habitat for Humanity. Several areas of the library were toured and there was a general discussion about renovations to the children's room.

Tamara Stewart welcomed the new director, Donna Hurwitz.

Ms. Stewart asked had the library heard from the state regarding the ability to remain open given that the library budget was not taken out to vote.

Tamara Stewart asked if the library administration had spoken to the Mayor regarding funding for 2013. She said that she had spoken to the Mayor and he indicated he had not been approached by the library.

Donna Hurwitz said that she had called the Mayor's office and attempted to make an appointment. She was told he was out of town. She said that she will try to make an appointment next week.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Julie Mills Worthey said that the trustees hosted a reception to welcome Donna Hurwitz to the Mount Vernon community and the greater library community.

The member libraries are pleased to have a new director on board.

Mrs. Mills Worthey met with Terry Kirchner to discuss where the library stands with the CLDA budget. She said she was pleased to hear that Mr. Kirchner and WLS have innovative and responsive ideas.

The library hopes to have a CLDA budget from WLS that will allow us to move forward with plans.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Donna Hurwitz reported the following:

Since assuming the directorship of Mount Vernon Public Library on August 27, 2012, she has met with several city officials and leaders of the education, arts, and library community. She also hosted a reception to meet the staff of the library on her first day.

On September 4th at the convocation for city public schools at Mount Vernon High School, she met the Acting Superintendent, Dr. Judith Johnson and also met the President of the City Council, Roberta Apuzzo.

On September 5th Mrs. Hurwitz met with Comptroller, Maureen Walker, as well as Tom Rajala and Duhane Rose.

Many in the WLS community came to the reception held by the Board of Trustees on Thursday, September 6th to introduce Ms. Hurwitz to the officials and residents of Mount Vernon.

Dr. Judith Johnson, Council President Roberta Apuzzo, and Tom Rajala from the Comptroller's office attended, as well as Terry Kirchner, Executive Director of the Westchester Library System (WLS).

Other attendees included Mount Vernon Public Library's liaison to WLS, Chris Hansen, Asst.

Superintendent of Business for the Mount Vernon school district, Timothy Costello, WLS Board President, Dave Donelson, library directors from the surrounding towns and cities that border Mount Vernon and many patrons.

Director Hurwitz also held an introductory meeting with Terry Kirchner with Board President Julie Worthey and trustee Millie Burns on September 10th.

Donna Hurwitz met with Joanne Mongelli of Arts Westchester and consultant Nazanin Monroe to discuss their proposal of placing public art at the Second Avenue entrance.

Exhibits of the three maquette finalists are now on display in the library's rotunda and are available for comments and voting by the public.

Donna Hurwitz also greeted the "Friends of the Library" of Mount Vernon Public Library" and thanked them for their continued support of the library.

Ms. Hurwitz had a brief press conference on the morning of September 13th and spoke with Joe Parisi, editor of The Inquirer. In the afternoon she attended a workshop at City Hall given by Civil Service on New York State practices. At that time she also met Kimberlee Johnson as well as other city and state officials.

Donna Hurwitz also convened her first staff meeting on Friday, September 14th where she urged the employees to join her in publicizing the size and breadth of Mount Vernon Public Library's collections and cultural offerings and to make all visitors feel well-served and happy to return. She also mentioned raising the standard of service as a goal in itself.

On Tuesday, September 18th, she, along with Trustee Millie Burns, met James Killoran of Habitat for Humanity of Westchester and discussed possible collaborations with that group.

Donna Hurwitz will attend her first meeting of the Public Library Directors Association (PLDA) in Tarrytown on September 20, 2012.

On August 9th, County Legislator, Lyndon Williams visited the children's library and interacted with some of the 134 adults and children in attendance.

118 people attended Reading Buddies on August 16, including a visit by Comptroller Maureen Walker and Rep. Jeff Klein.

Summer finale for Reading concluded August 17, with 192 attendees.

To honor the 11th anniversary of the 9/11 Day of Remembrance, the library had a display by the circulation desk of materials dealing with that sobering day in American history. This week, September 17-23, we also honor the Constitution of the United States with a similar display.

The library's children division had some special programs this summer as well as the regularly scheduled Mother Goose pre-school event twice a week and Family Fun for Tots visited Hartley Park weekly.

The computer lab has increased its hours and we have seen that the evening classes conducted by Ardith Jobson have been filled for beginner and intermediate patrons.

Another program that has seen rapid growth is the loaning of the museum pass for The Children's Museum. With the help of the "Friends of the Library", word has gone out about the availability of this pass.

The staff recently ordered several hundred books, CDs, and DVDs. Our outstanding video collection comprises much of the acclaimed Criterion Series of outstanding films.

Ms. Hurwitz looks forward to working with the Board of Trustees to resolve long-standing issues and to return the outstanding reputation of Mount Vernon Public Library to the status it deserves as the Central Library of Westchester.

FINANCIAL MATTERS:

Na'im Tyson said that the first step to reinstating the library's tax exempt status was submitting form 1023 to the IRS. In August the IRS requested more information. The library has to provide form 990 for every year that was filed.

The IRS is also requesting a narrative from the library explaining why the forms were not filed.

Mr. Tyson said that he is working with the director and the accounting person to get the information together.

Na'im Tyson said that all conversion from MAS 90 to QuickBooks since mid-August has gone through. Some of the numbers need to be ironed out.

Julie Mills Worthey asked if the finances going forward would be more manageable.

Mr. Tyson said yes. The library can also use the time sheet function for processing in house payroll.

Millie Burns said that the library had the possibility of applying for a collection of materials through a grant from ALA entitled "Muslim Journeys Bookshelf". The collection includes twenty five books, three documentary films and other materials.

The deadline for submission is October 25, 2012.

Ms. Burns said that she is requesting the board's approval to work with the library director to prepare an application for submission.

Millie Burns said that over one thousand eblasts were sent out for the reception for the new director. A press conference was also held. The theme was community building.

Millie Burns said that it was suggested in September of 2011 that she contact Habitat for Humanity. Jim Killoran of Habitat for Humanity said that they had donated a bicycle rack, but it was not on the First or Second Avenue sides of the building. The staff lounge, locker room and passage on the lower level are areas toured and considered for renovation with the assistance of Habitat for Humanity.

Ms. Burns said that she was in communication with County Legislator, Lyndon Williams' office about attending the ArtsWestchester workshops that were sponsored by him and ArtsWestchester. Legislator Williams did not attend

Julie Mills Worthey said that she had received communication from staff regarding a donation of bookshelves from Monroe College. She said that she worked with maintenance to determine what the cost would be to transport ninety bookshelves.

Despite the efforts of maintenance, the staff and the board, the library was unable to afford the cost of over five thousand dollars for transport.

Ms. Worthey said that she felt it was important to let Monroe College know that the library was appreciative.

She said that she encourages the staff to let the director know about any donations.

Julie Mills Worthey said that she was able to work with maintenance to clear the garage to perhaps be used as a workshop to do some in house projects.

She said we must be mindful not to allow discarded materials to build up and become hazards.

Millie Burns said that she would like the two pieces of black furniture in the former director's office to be moved to the staff lounge to swap for old furniture currently in there.

Marcia Dupree said that the library is not extremely happy with the current security firm and is in the process of looking at other companies.

Mrs. Dupree said that she has been speaking with US Security and Associates who are interested in putting in a bid. They have worked for Con Edison and the New York Times.

Julie Mills Worthey said that she has contacted R&R Security Services. She said that they will contact Jesse Van Lew for an appointment to be shown the library.

Donna Hurwitz said that she had met with Andre Coleman of the current security company, NJB Security and told him the library was not satisfied with the service.

Two guards were removed from the library on Thursday and replaced with two others.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that she had a conversation with NJB Security regarding her dissatisfaction and the staff's.

The library will be opening the process up for bidding on a new security company.

NEW BUSINESS:

Julie Mills Worthey proposed the library offer all staff participation in a New York State deferred contribution plan.

She said that the plan has pre tax contributions that are managed by New York State.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that she would like to propose the approval of a resolution. The application would be completed.

Millie Burns asked if there were a time window. Mrs. Worthey said no.

Julie Mills Worthey said that she met with the Westchester County representative Thomas Milgliano. She said she knows that the staff already has other deferred plans. This is just one more.

Mrs. Mills-Worthey proposed a resolution for this plan for all eligible employees. She said that once the resolution is adopted Mr. Milgliano is willing to come and meet with the staff.

Karen Blaine asked what the library has in store for its next renovation project.

Donna Hurwitz said that she had spoken with Shawn Dunnom who had a wish list. Though they did not go into detail; they agreed that the children's room could use sprucing up.

Mrs. Dunnom expressed the position that she could use some ideas on how to spruce up the room to a twenty first century environment that is safe for children.

Karen Blaine asked if there was a timeframe for redoing the room.

Mrs. Hurwitz said that the library has a few pressing issues that they have to get through, so it is not expected that this year anything can be done.

She said that the library needs a safe building before we address other things.

Donna Hurwitz said that she is aware of what other libraries have and that the children need a better library. She said that she is also aware of the library's budget.

Julie Mills Worthey said that she was advised that there were capital improvement funds. She said that she was optimistic that the library could be included in the 2012 round, but the library's tax status is really critical to getting the funds.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that it would be disingenuous to encourage the director to put a lot of energy in that direction.

Julie Mills Worthey said that she would not be averse to doing some things in the children's room that would not compromise our ability to do major work in the library.

Millie Burns said that there were two Arts Alive grants deadlines that the library did not meet because eligibility required a 501C3. The application deadline for the Big Read grant is February 5, 2013. This also requires a 501C3.

Ms. Burns said that it is important that everyone is aware what a 501C3 does and what it allows the library to do.

Na'im Tyson said that in order for the library's 501C3 to be retroactive, the IRS must approve the explanation. Otherwise we will have to pay the back taxes.

Julie Mills Worthey said she has done limited research and because the change in the tax law is relatively recent, the process of getting retro status is a new one.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said about eighteen percent of not for profits in the country lost their status. Many entities found themselves without status. They just did not know.

She said she is hopeful that we remain open to expressing our status accurately and being aggressive with the IRS.

Gary Newman suggested that the board may want to contact Congressman, Eliot Engel.

Julie Mills Worthey said that it was a good idea and she would look into it. She said that she has been in contact with a not for profit legal agency. The library may need an attorney for the narrative part of the filing.

Millie Burns spoke about a possible screening of "Every Mother's Son" at the library. She said that the filmmakers may be open to coming to the library. The library may have to pay a small compensation.

Julie Mills Worthey said that it sounds like a good idea. She said that she would encourage us to allow time to promote the program.

Ms. Burns said that she wanted to attend a screening of the movie “Herman’s House” but the screening conflicts with tonight’s board meeting. She said that it looks very powerful. A library screening may be helpful to do outreach to some communities.

Millie Burns said that the last exhibit from ArtsWestchester was not what she would have wished. The caliber of the exhibit was not what she would have liked and the reception was not well attended.

Ms. Burns said that she would like to work with the director on a memorandum of understanding between the library and ArtsWestchester.

Ms. Burns said that Joanne Mongelli had spoken about getting the library started with exhibits, then moving away.

Millie Burns said that there is a traveling exhibit, “Grace Before Dying,” a photo exhibition and two 6' x 7' that are handmade by the incarcerated hospice volunteers at the Louisiana State Penitentiary. The exhibit engages diverse communities. It was built for display in correctional facilities in Louisiana and Mississippi, but it has since been exhibited in museums, libraries, farmers' market, colleges, conferences and community centers. There is no rental fee. The only costs include shipping and a donation towards the exhibition's maintenance. The minimum showing period for the exhibition is four weeks. The exhibition comes crated and labeled with instructions for assembly. Advance press materials will be sent upon request. The exhibit is professionally crated and ready to go.

Julie Mills Worthey said that she recalls that the library has curated and presented exhibits in the past without ArtsWestchester. She said she thinks we can go back to that.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that she shares the concerns about the caliber of the exhibits.

Julie Mills Worthey said that we would at least want ArtsWestchester to link the Mount Vernon Public Library to its website. They have a page for public libraries.

Resolution

Board of Trustees Resolution: Authorization for Pursuance of Muslim Journeys Collection

Resolution of the Board of Trustees

WHEREAS, the Board has been presented with a description for the Muslim Journeys Collection; and

WHEREAS, this Board has heard the eligibility requirements for the application; and

WHEREAS, the Board is always interested in expanding its collection of books and other library-related materials;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Board Member Millie Burns and Library Director Donna Hurwitz will work to apply for the Muslim Journeys Collection.

ADJOURNMENT:

Upon a motion by Na'im Tyson, seconded by Julie Mills Worthey, the board meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm to discuss personnel matters.

Respectfully

Secretary