

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

Na'im Tyson, who presided, called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm.

Present were: Millie Burns, and Julie Mills Worthey

Absent: Winston Maharaj and Marcia Dupree

Also present: Terry Kirchner, WLS Executive Director; Chris Hansen WLS Trustee; Charlotte Schachter, President and Ruth Shire, Friends of the Mount Vernon Public Library; Gary Newman, CSEA Unit President; Joshua Ashew, John Boykin, Clensten Clarke, Randir Narain, Joseph Pombo, Deborah Ramsey, Geraldo Soares, Rebecca Steere and Tamara Stewart, Library Patrons; Cheryl Berent, Maxine Grandison, Scott Griffith, Leroy Lea and Cheryl Thomas, Library Staff; and Mary Harper, Administrative Assistant

MINUTES:

Upon a motion by Millie Burns, seconded by Julie Mills Worthey, the board approved the minutes of the meeting of November 21, 2012 by a vote of 3 to 0.

PERIOD OF PUBLIC EXPRESSION:

Charlotte Schachter read a letter from the executive board of the Friends of the Mount Vernon Public Library expressing their shock and extreme disappointment at the sudden resignation of Donna Hurwitz as the Director of the Mount Vernon Public Library (see attached).

Ruth Shire said that the Friends had questions they would like answered.

How and why did the library lose its tax exempt status? Everything the library buys now will be more expensive. What has the board done to get it back?

Mrs. Shire said that the New York State Board of Education has declared the library to be a school district library. It must have an elected budget and board. She asked what the library's plans to adhere to this were.

Millie Burns said that the new requirement for 501C3 tax exempt status comes out of the Patriot Act. The library was supposed to file in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011. The IRS notified the library, but nothing was done.

Ms. Burns said in the absence of a capable staff, director or business manager, the board has taken on the task.

Millie Burns said that the library is not the only institution that this has happened to. It may be one of many that still have not completed the requirements.

Ms. Burns said that she has researched the library's past minutes online to 2008 and did not see any discussion about this.

She said that this is simply a matter of not filing timely tax returns.

Ms. Burns said that she made the first phone call to the IRS the day after she found out.

Millie Burns said that she wants people to understand that this has a history going back to 2008. As soon as it came to this board's attention we acted on it.

Ruth Shire asked was it to be understood that this board has acted on the tax exempt status. Ms. Burns said that trustee; Tyson would further address this in his report.

Mrs. Shire asked was there any answer available to the question about the New York State Board of Education requirement that trustees be elected.

Millie Burns said that in 2011 she had a meeting with Barbara Lilley, of the New York State Division of Library Development about the concept of the library going for the vote.

Barbara Lilley made it clear that this was a long standing issue prior to this board.

Ms. Burns said that the board made an attempt to take the budget out to vote this year, but it didn't happen.

The board is not ignoring it, but it fell to a lower position.

Millie Burns said that she thinks it is important to let people know that these problems are longstanding.

Ms. Burns said that this is a volunteer board that has daytime jobs.

The problems here are huge and longstanding. This board is doing what it can small chunks at a time.

Na'im Tyson said that he had taken on the task of planning the election. He said that he went to the City Clerk and was sent to the Board of Elections. The Deputy Commissioner of Elections sent him back to the City Clerk.

Mr. Tyson said that he is going to have to change the way he approaches this task.

Ruth Shire said that this non-paying board of trustees is taking on what a director would be doing. The library needs a director.

Millie Burns said that this board is doing the work of the director. They had been doing it when there was a director, the last one and the one before.

Ms. Burns said that the work here is monumental.

Charlotte Schachter asked what the answer was. Ms. Burns said to her the answer is handling the problems in small bites.

Tamara Stewart said that she agreed there were problems and that they were longstanding. She said that she commended the board for taking on the tasks

Ms. Stewart read a letter addressed to the board regarding what she felt were ongoing concerns about the viability of the library; the loss of the director and the proposed cuts to the library's budget. She also expressed concerns about the loss of the library's tax-exempt status and calls from city officials for the library administration to be taken over by the school board.

Ms. Stewart said there was a potential for the library's charter to be revoked. She also expressed the feeling that the board had alienated all of the library's major stakeholders.

Gary Newman said that he did not feel it was right for the board to arbitrarily cut off people's comments.

Mr. Newman invited everyone in the room to come to the city council meeting at 7:00 pm tonight. As many people as possible are needed.

Gary Newman said that there are many things that he would like to say, but he feels he is constrained by the economic and political situation.

Mr. Newman said that he would leave his comments until next year.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Na'im Tyson received a letter regarding expansion of computer classes from the class participants.

Millie Burns said that she had received an email about exhibiting the work of Fannie Miller Beard.

Ms. Burns said that a client of the Bernstein Institution wanted to donate securities to the library. The library received a call saying that they would not be considered for the gift.

Millie Burns has received a proposal for new wall panels for the Rotunda.

Na'im Tyson said that Terry Kirchner had re-sent the central library plan of service document.

Mr. Tyson said that he received an email from ArtsWestchester asking for support. They had a cut in funding of approximately \$250,000.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Board President Na'im Tyson gave a brief speech at the budget hearing on December 6th.

Mr. Tyson said that he has not yet had a meeting with the Mayor. The meeting was postponed and will be rescheduled for Friday at 10:00 am.

Na'im Tyson went to the civil service meeting which he found quite informative.

A staff meeting was held to bring the staff up to date about getting a new director.

Mr. Tyson sent a memo to ArtsWestchester about the memorandum of understanding when they want to display art in the library. Another memo was sent about the public art project. The recipients included Janet Langsam, as well as city officials.

Na'im Tyson said that he spoke to Janet Langsam on Friday regarding removal of the "Fish Tales" exhibit.

Mr. Tyson said that potential candidates for the director's position had been contacted. The board will meet with one this evening.

Na'im Tyson said that the board had decided to hire an outside tax consultant to advise how to move forward regarding the 501C3 tax exemption. This person has a lot of expertise.

The two steps needed were to provide the IRS with form 1023, then to file form 990 for each year in the 1023. The documents must be completed and sent to the IRS along with the fees.

A narrative must be reviewed by the board and also submitted.

Mr. Tyson said that he could not present the narrative at this meeting because he was working on other projects.

The library has an extension to file the necessary forms until February 13th.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Na'im Tyson reported the following:

The library has exercised strong fiscal discipline with the budget.

There are significant savings in salaries.

Building operations are under budget.

Mr. Tyson has not heard from Brian Johnson on whether he has delivered the report to the Mayor regarding the library's roof repair.

Julie Mills Worthey said that building expenses were reduced, but we have not addressed the sprinkler system or smoke barrier. Na'im Tyson said that he thinks Donna Hurwitz had received a quote.

Na'im Tyson said that he has been instructed by Tom Rajala not to include the expense for the sprinkler system in the 2013 budget. The city wants to address capital funds.

REMARKS OF THE TRUSTEES:

Millie Burns said that she has been dealing with movie screenings.

Ms. Burns said that she has ordered more appropriate chairs for screenings and other events that don't include art supplies and other things that would bring the chairs to a quick ruin.

Ms. Burns said that she has been lining up screenings.

She met with Eugene Jarecki the director of the film "The House I Live In" and is trying to arrange a screening.

Mr. Tyson said that he would like to extend a personal thanks to Jesse Van Lew and Robert Copeland of the maintenance staff for their work during the hurricane.

Na'im Tyson expressed condolences to Jovanna Easterling and Debra Bracey Harris for the recent loss of their grandmothers. The board has ordered flowers for Debra Harris to be delivered.

The information about the emergency procedures and the bomb threat card has been sent to the insurance broker. The insurance company still wants information about the sprinkler system and fire wall.

Na'im Tyson said that the updated version of the CLDA budget needs to be reviewed in order to meet the December 31st deadline.

Terry Kirchner said that a survey had been sent to all the member libraries.

In a response from 34 of the member libraries, a list of databases rose to the top.

Gale Connect Genealogy will be used to supplement Ancestry.com

Lynda.com is for the staff and is used to promote online training.

Morningstar Investment Research is a database that allows people to look at stocks

McNaughton is a way to look at all the libraries.

DVD's is a way for the library to develop a nomadic collection.

Millie Burns asked if Mr., Kirchner could tell which libraries were interested in which theme. Terry Kirchner said that he had not decided and there would be a meeting on January 18th with the goal to participate in Google docs with the 38 member libraries.

Ms. Burns asked what the criteria for using Lynda.com were.

Mr. Kirchner said that it had been used by the staff before. It has 30 seeds and all of them are being used.

METRO has offered WLS to join with them to get Lynda.com at a discount.

Rock Languages is less expensive than Mango and it offers ESL.

Learning Express and Job Now have already been used and there is a desire to continue them.

There is ongoing training for staff in different topics.

Julie Mills Worthey said that they had a conversation about making the central library a place for training more often.

Terry Kirchner said that is still on the table. Lots of places are being looked at.

Mr. Kirchner said there will be a note on the databases that were paid for with CLDA funds.

Millie Burns said she had asked about the specifics for the CLDA budget. She asked if eBooks were included.

Terry Kirchner said that they were not in the final budget, because they did not have enough money set aside.

Upon a motion by Na'im Tyson, seconded by Millie Burns, the board approved the CLDA budget for 2012-2014.

The board did not have the final CLDA budget to review at the November meeting or at the special board meeting in December.

Na'im Tyson said that he has the draft of the plan of service. The plan will be circulated to PLDA and approved by WLS. This draft is more detailed than the one received in November.

Terry Kirchner said that the plan of service is a request from New York State and serves as a guideline for the system and the central library.

Mr. Kirchner said that roles for public training and staff training are included. He said that it is important to promote the role of central library services and have people appreciate what central library funds are used for.

Upon a motion by Millie Burns, seconded by Julie Mills Worthey, the board approved the Central Library Plan of Service.

NEW BUSINESS:

Na'im Tyson said that he would like to take a multi-pronged approach toward the June 30th deadline of taking the budget out to vote.

He suggested that some board members work with the city, some with the county and some with the board of education.

Julie Mills Worthey said that she had started communication with the school district lawyer. This is an essential step to get the school board on board with the charter change in order to get petitions to take the budget out to vote.

Mrs. Mills Worthey said that she will follow up with the school board and will attend the January school board meeting.

Julie Mills Worthey said that clarification is needed on whether the library budget vote can be removed from the school district vote.

Millie Burns said in her conversation with Barbara Lilley she was told that it could be.

Mrs. Worthey said that she did not find that information during her research.

Millie Burns asked what Mrs. Worthey anticipated at the county level.

Joseph Pombo said that he is a Democratic district leader that works closely with Reginald Lafayette and Lyndon Williams. He offered his services to assist with the voting process.

Na'im Tyson said that he would like Millie Burns' help with talking to the Mayor and making him aware of the efforts. He said we have no other options. Ms. Burns said okay.

ADJOURNMENT:

Upon a motion by Julie Mills Worthey, seconded by Millie Burns, the board meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm to discuss personnel matters.

Respectfully

Secretary