

[NOTE: These minutes are made available to the public prior to Library Board acceptance.]

Wethersfield Library Board Minutes of Tuesday, February 17, 2004

Members present: Donna Brown, Susan Grady, Brad Milvae, Polly Moon, Lucille Plouffe.

Also present: Laurel Goodgion, Library Director; Elaine Zieller, Office Manager; Pam Kelly, Head of Adult Services; Pauline Uchich, Friends of the Library representative.

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by Vice-Chairman Gene Grayson.

- I. Other items for the agenda. *None.*
- II. Public comment. *None.*
- III. Staff presentation: Pam Kelly, Head of Adult Services

Donna Brown arrived at 7:02 p.m.

Polly Moon arrived at 7:03 p.m.

Using Power Point Pam Kelly listed the members of the Adult Services department staff. She listed the many activities of the department, all of which can be described as customer service. She stated the strengths of the department include: customer service orientation, increased level of activity, knowledgeable staff, positive public response to the physical changes in the library and open access to computers and software.

There are several challenges: providing excellent service under the stress of increasing demands and decreasing resources, keeping pace with changes in information technology, maintaining a full complement of staff and dealing with teens after school.

In looking ahead, Pam talked about the improvements that the renovation will bring. She would like to increase the number of public computers and increase the instructional classes offered---but these would require an increase in staffing. Pam stressed the importance of offering benefits to part-time staff in order to retain staff.

Pam mentioned that her staff places holds (reserves) for patrons. Gene said patrons could do this on their own if they knew how. Laurel commented that 25% of the January holds were placed by patrons. There is a bookmark available that describes how to place holds and renew materials. Information provided through the CONNECT catalog is not very clear.

- IV. Financial Report
 - A. Operating budget

Laurel distributed the latest operating budget report from the Finance Department and the latest internal report.

Only 22.3% has been expended from benefits so far this year but all will be expended by the end of the budget year.

Gene suggested that next year a "committed" column should be added to the internal report and that this column be used to show the projected benefits expenses, deducting 1/12 of the funds each month because spending is so uneven from this account. This would give a clearer picture of where the library stands financially.

- B. Trust funds

Laurel reviewed the internal Action Fund report with the Board.

C. Appropriation from Trust Funds.

Gene said that the Board had originally set aside \$10,000 from the fund for the purchase of computers. Due to the need to provide funds for materials this year, the Governance Committee recommends reducing the amount for computers to \$5,700 and re-directing \$4,300 towards materials purchases.

Gene said that the library has great momentum and is receiving very good comments from the public about the library. Some of the materials budget has been re-directed to meet other library operating needs and little is available for materials. In order not to damage the progress that the library has made, the recommendation is to use some of the library trust funds for best sellers, the Automatically Yours books and patron requests so these important services can be continued.

Donna Brown made a motion to approve the one time transfer of \$18,700 from the Trust Fund to the Action Fund to cover the materials costs for the remainder of the fiscal year. The motion was seconded by Lucille Plouffe. All were in favor.

V. Town Council Liaison report.

Christine Fortunato was unable to attend the meeting because she was at the Town Council meeting.

VI. Approval of [Minutes of January 27, 2004](#)

Gene Grayson said that he did not attend the January meeting. Susan Grady suggested some grammatical changes. Brad Milvae moved, and Susan Grady seconded, that the minutes be approved. All were in favor.

VII. Director's Report

Laurel said she had just sent the monthly report to the Board and would rather spend the time on the proposed budget.

VIII. Friends of the Library report

Pauline Uchich reported that the Friends book sale is scheduled for June 11, 12 and 13. The Friends are receiving many donated books but still need more for the sale.

Donna Brown left the meeting at 7:53.

IX. Chairman's report. *No report.*

X. Old Business

A. Mayor's office hours

Gene asked Board members to sign up to attend one of the Mayor's office hours in order to discuss library issues. The schedule was passed around and people signed up.

Polly Moon said that she and Greg Curtin had attended on January 29th and had spoken to Deputy Mayor John Karengakis. Polly said that with so many new Council members there was a need to provide them with information on the library budget issues, staff and renovations.

B. Policies. *Tabled.*

- a. Cooperation with other libraries. *Vote required.*
- b. Conflict of interest. *Vote required.*
- c. Web site links. *Vote required.*

XI. New business

A. Legislative links.

Laurel explained the idea of legislative links: each Board member would volunteer to serve as an information link to one member of the Town Council and develop a rapport with that person. If the person has questions about the library, he or she would then feel comfortable calling the "link" for information. Board members volunteered to serve as links.

B. Report from Community Connections meeting.

Lucille Plouffe, Lucille Domick, Liz Kirkpatrick, Greg Curtin and Laurel met to discuss Community Connections. After that initial meeting, Luci and Lucille prepared a description of the activities for this new group, which Lucille distributed to the Board members.

The Library needs a support group. This group needs to be very vocal. The Library needs to tie into the town's educational system. A library board representative needs to attend the second or third PTO meeting to talk about the library. A member should also attend a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce. The Wethersfield Junior Women's Club could be an advocate for the library, as could Robbins Barstow's group. The Library needs to create a marketing program as the Wethersfield Historical Society has done. Lucille said that she and Luci would like suggestions from the Board members about other groups that should be contacted and asked that this be placed on the March agenda.

C. Proposed budget.

Laurel passed out the Town Manager's budget letter. Laurel was asked to submit two proposed budgets: a flat budget and a budget that included additions needed to continue offering the same level of service.

Laurel commented that the "flat" budget really requires significant cuts. The budget year usually has 26 pay periods but next year there will be 27 pay periods. A pay period will be worth about \$26-27,000. Staff benefits are also increasing. And we want to give some pay increases since none were given this year.

Laurel handed out the budget request package. The two biggest parts of the budget are salaries and materials. In Budget Request II Laurel has requested a full-time library assistant and an additional 15 hr. a week page in order to keep up with the increased usage of the library.

Polly and Brad asked for clarification on what constituted a part-time position. Laurel said she would find out.

In Budget Request I (0% increase) the library would be closed on Sundays and possibly all day on Fridays. There would be no funds for program supplies or fees and the materials budget would be greatly decreased.

Gene compared the Wethersfield Library to surrounding libraries. In terms of budget per capita and circulation per capita Wethersfield was last. Gene commented that the libraries that spent the most had the most use.

D. Budget support.

The Library Board's goal is to get adequate funding for the library.

XII. Adjournment

Lucille Plouffe moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Susan Grady. All were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Pauline Moon,
Secretary