

WICHITA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Directors

January 20, 2004

The regular meeting of the Library Board of Directors was held at 12:00 Noon on Tuesday, January 20, 2004 with the following present: Ms. Donna Aldrich, Ms. Barbara Baker, Mr. Randy Brown, Ms. Susan Estes, Mr. Matt Goolsby, Mr. Ed Koon, Mr. Gerald Layman, Ms. Evelyn Neier and Ms. Helen Parli. Absent: Ms. Sarah Bagby, Ms. Jane Eshelman, Ms. Cathy Landwehr, Ms. Nancy Ogle and Mr. Tim Moore.

Staff present: Cynthia Berner Harris, Director of Libraries; Mary K. Bird-Guilliams, Coordinator of Collection Development; John Ellert, Coordinator of Support Services; Julie Linneman, Coordinator of Programming/Outreach; Ginny Ray, Coordinator of Customer Service; Larry Vos, Coordinator of Reference Services; Seif Al-Shaer, Operations Section Manager; Jennifer Heinicke, Special Projects Librarian; and Lucille Holder, Administrative Aide II.

Also in attendance: Ms. Janice Goudy, League of Women Voters.

Ginny Ray, Coordinator of Customer Service, gave the staff presentation regarding the library's collection agency -- Unique Management. This company only works with libraries and uses seminary students to make contact with customers. In 1992, library staff investigated the possibility of using a collection agency as the library was losing approximately ten percent of its annual materials budget. Of the 265,805 library accounts in the Dynix database, 37% contain outstanding cash balances. The total value of fees, fines, and lost materials is approaching two million dollars. At present, accounts that exceed a \$40 balance threshold are sent to Unique. In 2002, we sent 1,694 accounts with outstanding balances totaling \$158,000 to collection. More than \$37,000 of materials was recovered and over \$23,000 in fees collected through collection agency efforts. Overall, the experience has been very good with little staff involvement on our part and an increase in revenue and returned materials. The Board thanked Ms. Ray for the interesting presentation.

In the absence of Tim Moore, President, Gerald Layman, First Vice President, called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m., a quorum being present.

Minutes of the regular meeting held on December 16, 2003 were presented. Barbara Baker moved (Aldrich) that the minutes be approved as presented. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Finance Committee Report

Susan Estes presented the Finance Committee report.

Operating Fund Bills in the amount of \$791,687.49; Grant Fund Bills of \$53,079.51; Prior Year Grant Fund Bills of \$10,076.40; and Memorial & Gift Fund Bills of \$669.78 totaling \$855,513.18 for the month of December 2003 were presented, as well as the Financial Report for December 2003. Ms. Estes moved that the Financial Report and bills for December 2003 be approved and payment authorized. **Motion carried unanimously.**

The Finance Committee recommends approval of the 2004 State Grants-in-Aid special fund budget of \$246,367. Randy Brown moved (Goolsby) to approve the 2004 State Grants-in-Aid budget and forward to City Council for budget processing. **Motion carried unanimously.**

The Finance Committee recommends approval of the 2004 South Central Kansas Library System special fund budget of \$88,745. Ed Koon moved (Goolsby) to approve the 2004 SCKLS budget and forward to the City Council for budget processing. **Motion carried unanimously.**

The Finance Committee discussed a proposal from Unique Management to change the fee charged to customers for accounts sent to their collection agency. The proposal is to move to a new flat fee pricing structure. We would pay \$8.95 instead of the current \$4.95 charge for each account sent for collection, however we would not be billed the 40% percentage for secondary placement of accounts not resolved within the first 60 days of collection effort. Using this fee structure for 2003 would have saved the library more than \$12,000 in fees. Staff proposes increasing the fee charged to customers when their accounts are sent to collection to match the actual cost assessed to the library. With almost \$2,000,000 outstanding on these accounts, there is concern about materials recovery as well as fee collection. The Finance Committee recommends the proposal as presented by staff. In the future, additional actions will be considered such as lowering the \$40 threshold to \$25. Matt Goolsby mentioned he would be willing to go down to \$25. Ms. Berner Harris indicated that staff would do a cost-benefit analysis to compare the additional costs of lowering the threshold against projections of revenue to be gained by the increased collection activity. Randy Brown moved (Goolsby) to approve the library's moving from the current fee system with Unique Management to the flat fee pricing system and raising the fee charged to customers for accounts sent to collection from \$5.00 to \$8.95. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Operations Committee Report

Nancy Ogle, Chair, was absent. Ms. Berner Harris stated she would incorporate the Operations Committee information during her Director's report.

Planning & Facilities Committee Report

Ed Koon, Chair, gave the report of the Planning and Facilities Committee.

At last month's Board meeting, discussion was held concerning sanitary sewer easements at Rockwell. The Law Department has directed the Library Board to take action on approving the agreements. Mr. Koon moved on behalf of the committee to authorize the First Vice President of the Board, Gerald Layman, to sign and have staff forward said agreements to the Public Works department. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Koon asked the status of the Patio Room being used as a police substation. Ms. Berner Harris deferred to Matt Goolsby who spoke with City Council members regarding his

advocating the need for a substation at the Library. The Mayor indicated interest in this possibility and asked Mr. Goolsby to request that Ms. Berner Harris provide information at a future City Council workshop. There has been a competing offer to relocate the substation to the Old Town area. Janice Goudy, representative from the League of Women Voters, interjected the comment that she is a member of the United Methodist Urban Ministry Board, which is working on the possibility of establishing a daytime homeless shelter. There is only one shelter open until 1 p.m. daily and all others are night shelters. Ms. Goudy mentioned that the opening of a new shelter might provide relief for the homeless people who occupy the Central library daily. Mr. Koon expressed a good argument for the substation to relocate at the Central library is that the Old Town area already has a police presence when needed mainly on weekends/evenings; while there is no police presence at the library. Matt Goolsby moved (Aldrich) to ask that Ms. Berner Harris be directed to consult with Acting City Manager Holdeman about bringing the Library Board's interest in housing a police substation before the City Council as suggested by the Mayor. **Motion carried unanimously.**

A problem has surfaced at the Maya Angelou Branch Library with attendance at Wichita State University's Koch Arena and a winning basketball team causing parking spaces meant for library users to be utilized instead by WSU event goers. The police have recommended adding "Library parking only" signs that would allow police to ticket cars that use Maya Angelou only for parking. Ed Koon moved (Goolsby) that signs be authorized stating something similar to "Library parking only during library hours/events" and authorize the Director to proceed obtaining appropriate signage. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Public Affairs Committee Report

Randy Brown, Chair, gave the Public Affairs Committee report.

KSN news did a story on the library's policies concerning checkout of videos to minors. A KSN intern, aged 17, stated that he had checked out a film with an NC-17 rating. Ms. Berner Harris explained that the decision is up to parents/legal guardians whether their children can check out such materials when they sign up for their library card. Parents are required to sign the card for anyone under the age of 18. Four customers contacted the library as a result of the story. Board members were supplied with those comments as well as a fact sheet on the video circulation procedures and the title in question. It was the consensus of the Board that the current policies and procedures are appropriate and that no action by the Board was required.

The Kansas Library Association legislative agenda has been finalized as follows:

- Enhance grants-in-aid to local libraries by \$3,600,000
- Support the Kansas Children's Internet Protection Act
- Support full 2005 funding of \$10,000,000 for Kan-Ed from Universal Service funds
- Support Open Records exemptions
- Support expansion of *Smart Start Kansas*

Detailed summaries of the above items were distributed to Board members. Legislative day for libraries is February 19.

Jennifer Heinicke, Special Projects Librarian, spoke about free public service announcement tapes from the American Library Association promoting libraries. Mr. Brown suggested that we monitor the availability of such announcements and consider trying to work with local television stations for airtime next December and January.

Friends of the Library Liaison Report

Helen Parli, Friends of the Library liaison, reported that the Friends of the Library met January 8. She imparted the following information:

- The items on a truckload of books that Bud Palmer (auctioneer) was to donate to the Friends of the Library bookstore is not yet available for viewing.
- Dr. Jim Erickson, President of the Friends of the Library Board, has stated that he is concerned about the lack of volunteers in the bookstore and sorting area.

Director of Libraries Report

Board members received a 1950's postcard depicting a children's storytelling hour at the Library. The postcard is a promotional piece for the Wichita Photo Archives.

Included in Board packets was the 4th quarter 2003 travel summary report. These reports will be presented the Board semi-annually as a travel accountability measure.

John Ellert, Coordinator of Support Services, composed an overview of food and beverage service in libraries. The summary was distributed to Board members for informational purposes and as a follow-up to discussion about such services as revenue resources.

Ms. Berner Harris provided background information on a complaint from a foster parent concerning library policies and procedures related to the creation of library accounts for minors in foster care. The library's policy says that a parent or legal guardian must authorize accounts for minors under 18. This works well except for emancipated youth or foster children. In the first situation, emancipated youth are allowed to obtain accounts on their own signature when they can provide legal documentation affirming their emancipated status. For foster children, it is the library's procedure to request a copy of the placement agreement as the documentation of an adult's authority to establish an account on behalf of a foster child. The individual that has been contacting board members about this policy indicated that requiring such documentation is discriminatory. She also indicated that she did not have such an agreement. Mrs. Ray contacted several agencies involved in foster placements, including the one identified as involved with placements for this customer. In each case, the agency confirmed that placement agreements are provided to all foster parents. They further affirmed that using the agreement is an appropriate method to ensure the authority of the foster parent to represent the child. Ms. Berner Harris asked if the Board wanted to change the policy. The Board concurred that this type situation was isolated and believed no changes in the library card policy were necessary.

There was unanticipated computer 'down' time at the first of the year due to human error on Jan. 1. A schedule upgrade last week had some glitches that caused an extra down day; however, the upgrade was completed.

Last Monday, the person who stabbed a library patron on the first floor of Central was found guilty of aggravated battery and received the greatest sentence possible because he showed no remorse in court.

Unfinished Business

None.

New Business

Ms. Berner Harris asked the Board to take action on the 2004 department goals which were distributed in Board packets. Comments about the goals were positive, with some suggestions to add benchmarks and performance measures to help quantify the success of the action plans. It was also suggested that action steps include a review of branch service hours, some consideration about the future of the Comotara branch as we approach the end of the current lease agreement and the need for materials security systems in more of the branch libraries. Ms. Berner Harris stated she would incorporate the suggestions into the final goals document. Ed Koon asked for a Planning and Facilities Committee meeting in the next month to outline details as far as library facilities and long-range planning. Susan Estes moved (Goolsby) to accept the department goals as presented with the inclusion of topics mentioned above. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Announcements

None.

Adjournment

Matt Goolsby moved (Brown) for adjournment. **Motion carried unanimously.** The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be February 17, 2004.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Berner Harris
Director of Libraries