

WICHITA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Directors

May 20, 2003

The regular meeting of the Library Board of Directors was held at 12:00 Noon on Tuesday, May 20, 2003 with the following present: Ms. Sarah Bagby, Ms. Barbara Baker, Mr. Randy Brown, Mr. Gillard Cohen, Ms. Jane Eshelman, Ms. Cathy Landwehr, Mr. Gerald Layman, Ms. Ronda Limon-Lowderman, Mr. Tim Moore, Ms. Nancy Ogle, Ms. Helen Parli, Mr. Karl Peterjohn and Ms. Lois Ruby. Absent: Mr. Ed Koon. 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: Dr. Jim Erickson, President of the Friends of the Library; and Ms. Carol Nazar, Wichita Public Library Foundation Executive Director.

During lunch, Jennifer Heinicke spoke about the Summer Reading Club website <http://www.wichita.lib.ks.us/summer>. The website gives basic information on the Summer Reading Club and Teens Read, and links to other sites for a complete listing of summer activities. One can search information by library, date, or performer. The website will be placed in local community newspapers and billboards. Jennifer will be able to keep track of the number of visits to the site. The Celia and Leonard Levand Trust is underwriting the majority of costs for all public libraries serving Sedgwick County choosing to participate in this year's summer reading program. The total is \$70,000, of which the Wichita Public Library's share is \$20,000. The Board thanked Jennifer for her informative presentation.

Tim Moore called the meeting to order at 12:12 p.m., a quorum being present.

Minutes of the regular meeting held on April 15, 2003 were presented. Gillard Cohen moved (Baker) that the minutes be approved as presented. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Tim Moore stated that any discussion of the Planeview Library issue would be saved for the 'Unfinished Business' agenda item.

Finance Committee Report

Karl Peterjohn, Chair, presented the Finance Committee report. Operating Fund Bills in the amount of \$392,734.97; Grant Fund Bills of \$50,176.71; Prior Year Grant Fund Bills of \$885.84; and Memorial & Gift Fund Bills of \$1,429.76 totaling \$445,227.28 for the month of April 2003 were presented, as well as the Financial Report for April 2003. Mr. Peterjohn moved that the Financial Report and bills for April 2003 be approved and payment authorized. **Motion carried unanimously.**

The Wichita Public Library was selected to receive an LSTA (Library Services and

Technology Act) special populations grant in the amount of \$3,000. The money is to be used for adult Spanish language materials at the Evergreen Branch. A City Administrative Regulation requires that the City Council approve all federal and state grants received by City departments. Therefore, Mr. Peterjohn moved on behalf of the Finance Committee that the Board authorize staff to prepare as a City Council agenda item requesting acceptance of the special grant fund and subsequent budget. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Berner Harris will be appearing before the BRC (Budget Review Committee) tomorrow defending the library's budget submittal.

Operations Committee Report

Nancy Ogle, Chair, reported that the Operations Committee is still awaiting guidance from Jay Hinkel, City Law Department, on meeting room policy.

Some library staff attended training on the U.S. Patriot Act presented by law professors from Kansas University. The Operations Committee will review recommendations.

An update on the entire WPL Operations Manual will be requested of the Operations Committee starting this fall.

Planning & Facilities Committee Report

Gillard Cohen, Chair, gave the Planning and Facilities Committee report as follows:

There is interest in restoring a library facility at Planeview. This will be discussed more under 'Unfinished Business.'

The Alford and Evergreen branches have had minor maintenance issues. The City's Public Works Department is continuing to work with the respective project architects and contractors to ensure correction of any problems.

Public Affairs Committee Report

There was no Public Affairs report. Board members received copies of all newspaper articles and correspondence received by the Library concerning the Planeview issue.

Friends of the Library Liaison Report

Helen Parli, Friends of the Library liaison, reported that the Friends Board last met on May 1. Money was approved to bring in children's author Patricia Polacco in April 2004. Charley Whitworth answered bookstore operations questions. Marge Zakoura-Vaughan and Rita Muci are to be contacted as substitutes if needed for the bookstore operation until a new store manager is hired.

Director of Libraries Report

Ms. Berner Harris reported that Barbara Baker was re-appointed to the Board at today's City Council meeting by Council Member Martz.

We are struggling with some staff positions that are vacant and indefinitely frozen by City Personnel. Because of this temporary staff shortage, a decision was made to scale back the Auditorium exhibits as it entailed a great deal of Art Music & Video staff time. At full staff, this section has four full-time and three part-time people. Presently, they have two full-time and three part-time. Our new Collection Development selector is temporarily assigned to help out in this section.

We have received word that we will be receiving a subsidy from the Kan-Ed program in the approximate amount of \$2,000 to \$4,500. The money will be used for Internet vendor bills.

The South Central Kansas Library System has announced a proposed plan to separate their operations from the Hutchinson Public Library. The plan would enable the system to concentrate on consultant services and funding for local libraries instead of direct library service. The issue will be voted upon in October.

Ms. Berner Harris had hoped to present a Memorandum of Understanding between Sedgwick County, the City of Wichita, the Historical Museum and Wichita State University for review and approval which would place the posting of the Digital Library on Sedgwick County computers. The Legal Department has not had the time to review the proposed agreement.

Numerous things are being done on behalf of school-age children, as follows:

- Children's author Patricia Polacco may be coming in April 2004 in partnership with the School Library Advisory group and the Friends of the Library;
- The WPL Foundation has written a proposal to the Lattner Foundation seeking \$50,000 to purchase accelerated readers to expand the library's bulk loan capabilities to schools;
- Children's librarians and outreach staff will be giving presentations to 46 of the 59 USD 259 elementary schools to publicize this summer's reading club program. Three school librarians were given the information as they wished to present themselves and fliers were given to the remaining ten public schools, twelve private schools, fourteen parochial schools and all Maize schools. Middle schools received information about the Teens Read program.

Lois Ruby asked if *The Wichita Eagle* would be receiving and publishing Summer Reading Club activities. If the newspaper chooses not to do an article, Gillard Cohen wondered if it would be appropriate to write a letter to the editor. Cathy Landwehr asked if the letter could be sent on behalf of the Board. Karl Peterjohn thought each Board member, as individuals would have more of an impact. Lois Ruby volunteered to compose and send a letter to the editor of *The Wichita Eagle* citing all the activities and happenings the public libraries will be providing this summer.

Unfinished Business

Many newspaper articles have recently appeared by *The Wichita Eagle* reporters

regarding the City's closing of the Planeview Branch library. Mr. Peterjohn stated that he had been quoted accurately in the paper; however, it was the answer to another question. He was quoted as saying there was only one library west of I-235. The question he was responding to was how do you feel about the fact that there are only two city libraries south of Kellogg. Mr. Peterjohn responded that 'if you want to look at it that way, there is only one library west of 235 (Westlink), and only one east of Woodlawn (Comotara located in a Dillon's grocery store).' He also averred that Alford was the newest and biggest branch library in the city.

Mr. Peterjohn commented that we are the only City Board that can make independent decisions that don't have to be ratified by the City Council and that it is important that the Board retain its independence. Gerald Layman commented that the reasoning for closing Planeview was that it was not being used much and that its access to the building was troubling in itself. Mr. Peterjohn visited with the secretary of the Colvin site council and toured the Colvin school building with her. He further explained the understandable concern of the school district security, because of September 11, 2001, and the Columbine school incident. The secretary for the Colvin site council explained to Mr. Peterjohn that people have said they would be using the library, but in fact had not and were wandering into halls and rooms to which they should not have had access. The public library entrance is kept locked and some patrons report being turned away at the entrance by school administrators. Mr. Peterjohn made known that the school district's budget for materials and supplies was \$19,418,365. This amount is significantly higher comparatively to the public library's same budget. At the end of the last school year, the budget had a remaining \$1,500,000 left unspent in their materials and supplies budget.

Randy Brown entered the meeting at 12:38 p.m.

Cynthia Berner Harris summarized the history of the decision to close Planeview as part of the City's budget reductions. She also stated that one person has volunteered to donate \$1,000 a year for two years to support library service at Colvin, and two new adult books were donated for the Kansas Masonic Home to have a book drive for the Colvin library. The City asked library staff for statistics on the history of Planeview's use which were also distributed to the Board today. Ms. Berner Harris has been working with the Assistant City Manager and Director of Finance to brainstorm ideas to solve this issue. One solution is to place library service back the way it used to be. Another option is to stand by the decision as made to not provide library service. Staff have tried to come up with other alternative solutions that would be a 'win-win' situation. While it is true that Colvin elementary library materials are not adequate; they are mid-range compared to other schools. Colvin has 11 books per student; Minneha has the most at 15 books per student; others such as Kensler have less than 10 books per student.

Randy Brown deemed there was a 'disconnect' in discussions between the library board, City Hall and the school district. Mr. Brown feels the Board is willing to discuss options for service in the Planeview neighborhood, yet the school district and City Council talk only about re-opening the Planeview public library. Mr. Peterjohn stated that he met with Mayor Mayans last Friday, May 16, to discuss the Planeview issue. His impression was that the Mayor was looking for options. Mr. Peterjohn also visited with Council Members Fearey, Lambke and Martz. Council Member Martz had been contacted by a former

Colvin librarian whose opinion was that the City was overdue in closing Planeview.

An alternative which the Director suggested would be to consider placing a collection of books at the neighborhood city hall building next door to Colvin which is open 50 hours per week as opposed to the 28 operating hours of the former Planeview branch library. The mini city hall already has public access computers available for the public.

Ms. Berner Harris stated that a meeting is to be set up soon with the Superintendent of schools, Mayor, interested City Council members, Library Board members, Colvin's Principal, and perhaps others. It is anticipated that the City Council will have the Planeview issue as an item at its next workshop session. Tim Moore commented that he reviewed the Library Board minutes over the past few years to ascertain yet again the problems encountered with the Planeview library, such as difficulty entering the building, patrons denied access to the library by school administrators, and the low statistical use. He is in hopes of not going back to those 'bad old days' of sharing space. Gillard Cohen cited the long-range strategic plan set by the Library Board, specifically the possibility of a bookmobile, which could be catered to the needs of different community types. Mr. Cohen stated that there was no discriminating against a particular part of town when the decision was made to close Planeview, but that budgetary constraints and the problem of mingling school services with public library services were the decisive points. Jane Eshelman expressed favor of the mini city hall use and thought that perhaps it could be considered at other mini city halls. Karl Peterjohn likewise was in favor, citing that it could be put into service immediately, whereas a bookmobile could not.

Another point to consider is what becomes of the books that were at Planeview. The City's juvenile collection assigned to this site reflects an estimated value of \$145,000. Mr. Peterjohn pointed out that this amount equals only one-half of one percent of the school district's materials and supplies budget. He had the impression that if the books were turned over to the school, this issue would dissolve. Randy Brown commended Cynthia Berner Harris and Jennifer Heinicke, Special Projects Librarian, for their work on an alternate solution and perceived that the Board should come to a unanimous decision at today's Board meeting as to its recommendation. Mr. Brown opined that the Mayor and the Superintendent of schools would make the decision.

Tim Moore urged Board members to talk with his/her Council member to ask for re-appointment to the library board and also to encourage the alternate solution for Planeview (the mini city hall). Randy Brown urged focusing on this single issue. Mr. Peterjohn believes the Mayor is looking for the library board's unified recommendation. Gerald Layman asked the Director of Libraries how the mini city hall would work in the way of library service. Ms. Berner Harris stated that a space would be identified where book trucks or shelves could be placed, and that staff would create an initial collection and handle on a rotating basis.

Carol Nazar departed the meeting at 1:09 p.m.

Tim Moore asked the Board for final action/recommendations on service to Planeview and what to do with the books at Planeview. Gerald Layman asked if staff would develop a plan about setting up a library in the mini city hall at Colvin. Jane Eshelman was

concerned about leaving the public library's children's collection permanently since we are already deficient in our collection numbers and therefore not meeting the state's standards. Tim Moore thought the mini city hall at Colvin should be considered as a pilot program before considering it at the other mini city halls in Wichita.

Gerald Layman moved (Landwehr) that staff study the placing of adult books and materials into the Colvin mini city hall on a trial basis and see how it works as a pilot program. This is an action by the Board asking that the City Council look upon favorably.
Motion carried unanimously.

Turning to the second issue of the children's collection left behind after the Planeview branch closed on March 28, 2003, Tim Moore asked the Board's preferred negotiating posture. Karl Peterjohn pointed out that we already have an understanding in place with the phase-out occurring over time. The plan was negotiated with the school principal, school librarian and the director of library media services to implement a three-year loan of the City's materials to the school library as follows:

100% of the City's children's books left for the remainder of the 2002-2003 school year;

50% of the materials left with the school for the 2003-2004 school year; and

25% of the materials left through the 2004-2005 school year.

The school could then migrate into the public library's bulk loan program, and would give the school district time to phase in their new books. This offer was made and accepted in good faith. If the school district wishes to request differently, then the library board could respond. Sarah Bagby asked what happens to the money pledged by citizens? Cynthia Berner Harris stated that the money had not actually been received yet, but could be directed towards the read-athon planned by the Colvin area, or referred to Janet Fowler, the Director of the school district's library media service. A member of the Colvin Elementary site council told Mr. Peterjohn that they had brought up the fact that there was money available to spend on books, but they declined to spend anything on books saying that the City takes care of that expense.

Karl Peterjohn moved (Ruby) that the Board stand by its original agreement with respect to the gradual phase-out of the children's collection at Planeview (as listed above) yet be willing to consider anything the school district would bring up as an alternate proposal.
Motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Randy Brown moved (Bagby) that the Board go into Executive Session at 1:35 p.m. to discuss the Director of Libraries review.

The Library Board reconvened at 1:56 p.m.

Announcements

None.

Adjournment

Randy Brown moved (Cohen) for adjournment. **Motion carried unanimously.** The meeting was adjourned at 1:57 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be June 17, 2003.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Berner Harris

Director of Libraries