

February 9, 2005

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Skokie Public Library held in the Skokie Public Library Board Room, Wednesday, February 9, 2005.

CALL TO ORDER

John Graham, President, called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.

Members present: John Graham, President; Richard Witry, Vice President; Zelda Rich, Secretary; Eva Weiner; John M. Wozniak; and Carolyn A. Anthony, Director.

Members absent: Susan Greer and Diana Hunter, President Emerita.

Guest present: Barbara A. Kozlowski, Associate Director for Public Services.

Observer present: Richard Cahan, 8513 North Kedvale, Skokie 60076.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR AND CLOSED MEETINGS OF JANUARY 12, 2005

Dr. Wozniak made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Rich, to approve the minutes of the regular and closed meetings of January 12, 2005, subject to additions and/or corrections. There being no additions or corrections, the minutes were approved and placed on file. Mr. Witry abstained from voting.

CONSENT AGENDA (Financial Statement; Circulation Report; Library Use Statistics; Report(s) from Department Head(s); Program Statistics Third Quarter F.Y. 2004-05; Personnel; Gifts; Correspondence)

Mrs. Rich made a motion, seconded by Mr. Witry:

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT, SUBJECT TO AUDIT, AND THAT THE FOLLOWING CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS BE PLACED ON FILE:

1. CIRCULATION REPORT
2. LIBRARY USE STATISTICS
3. REPORT(S) FROM DEPARTMENT HEAD(S)
4. PROGRAM STATISTICS THIRD QUARTER F.Y. 2004-05
5. PERSONNEL: TERMINATIONS: JOSEPH HAYES, PART-TIME SECURITY GUARD, MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT,

EFFECTIVE JANUARY 31, 2005; DONNA RICHARDSON, PART-TIME COMPUTER ASSISTANT, YOUTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 31, 2005

6. GIFTS: \$35. FROM DR. WILLIAM H. WEHRMACHER FOR TREATS FOR STAFF; \$20. FROM THE WOMAN'S CLUB OF SKOKIE/LINCOLNWOOD FOR THE PURCHASE OF A BOOK IN MEMORY OF OLIVE BROWER; \$500. FROM BRUCE AND DOREEN BOLNICK FOR THE PURCHASE OF MUSIC BOOKS IN MEMORY OF ARNOLD J. BOLNICK
7. CORRESPONDENCE: LETTER FROM JESSE WHITE, SECRETARY OF STATE AND STATE LIBRARIAN TO CAROLYN ANTHONY DATED FEBRUARY 4, 2005 RE AWARD OF PER CAPITA GRANT

The motion passed unanimously.

YEAR-TO-DATE BUDGETARY STATUS

The Year-to-Date Budgetary Status was noted.

BILLS

A motion was made by Mr. Witry, seconded by Mrs. Rich:

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE BILLS, SUBJECT TO AUDIT.

The roll call vote for approval was unanimous.

BALANCE SHEET FOR THE NINE MONTHS FROM 5/1/04 THRU 1/31/05

Because cash flow has been such an issue in the past couple years, Mrs. Anthony distributed the report for the same period last year for comparison purposes. As was true last year, the Fall property tax collection looks good at this point in the year. This is a bit deceptive because some of the money is trickling in from prior levies, reflecting the slow collection and distribution of revenues.

The tax bills for the Spring collection have been sent, with a due date of March 1. Last year, the property tax collection for the year ended up being \$140,324. short of budget. We are behind last year's collection of Corporate Replacement Taxes at this point in the year. It is not clear why this should be when corporations are alleged to be healthier this

year and last year's total collection in this category was \$245,461. An additional \$39,743. was received recently and is not noted on the balance sheet.

The collection of Fines and Fees is up about three percent, less than would be predicted by the circulation of videos and DVDs. Assuming the same rate of collection to the end of the year, our total revenue from this source will be just under \$329,000. as compared to \$319,037. last year. This will be \$30,000. less than budgeted.

Interest earned is less than last year, not surprising since we have not carried much of a cash balance this year.

We have received the Per Capita Grant notice and will receive \$79,121.65. Last year, we received the Grant in early February with a submission date of July 15, 2003. Since this year's Grant application was not due until October, it is possible that the Grant money may not be received until April or possibly even in Fiscal Year 2006.

The larger amount of revenue in the Other category reflects our three successful LSTA Grant applications as well as pass through funding for Illinois Clicks.

On the Expenditure side of the equation, expense for salaries is 3.7% greater than last year reflecting Cost of Labor and Step increases for staff. Expense for FICA and IMRF is up 33%, with only a small part of the increase due to FICA expense on a slightly higher salary budget. Most of the increase of \$108,088. is due to increased expense for IMRF which is outside of our control. Public bodies subject to tax caps are seeking legislative relief that would exempt pension contributions from the tax cap.

Other Operating Expenditures are down nearly 6% as compared to last year. This is partly due to holding the line on certain expenses and partly due to deferred payment of some expenses due to cash flow issues.

As was true last year, Library expense is running considerably ahead of revenues, although the deficiency is more than 6% less than last year. Mrs. Anthony will watch the situation closely during the final three months to the close of the Fiscal Year.

Regarding the increase in the employer portion of IMRF, Mr. Witry questioned if there was an administrative appeal process. Mr. Witry asked that Mrs. Anthony speak with Library legal counsel Heidi Katz about this.

PROJECTED OPERATING BUDGET FY 2006

Mrs. Anthony reported that given the 7% increase for the 2004 Tax Levy which will fund FY 2006, and assuming a continuation of corporate tax appeals, we can expect to collect 4.5-5.0% more in property taxes in FY 2006 than this year in FY 2005.

Continuing to follow trends that will affect the budget, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that salaries for civilian, state and government workers increased 2.1% from December, 2003 through December, 2004. This is the figure on which we base our across-the-board cost of labor increase for the new Fiscal Year. Increases in personnel expense are less in salaries and more in health benefits and pension at the present time.

For the present year, the line for Health, Dental and Life Insurance will be nearly 7% underspent. Therefore, we are tentatively budgeting a 6% increase in the line which would still allow for a potential double digit increase in expense. The NSLS contract for insurance does not renew until July, but we should have a pretty good indication of the likely increase in costs this spring, before the budget is adopted.

Mrs. Anthony is proposing to keep the Conference, Membership, Workshop line the same. Although we will save money on the ALA Annual Conference since it is in Chicago in June, there is a PLA National Conference in Boston in March, 2006 that will be popular.

Library Cable Network Expense is also unchanged for the coming year. Although there are currently only four libraries in the consortium as compared to a high of six in previous years, the consortium is generating money from contractual work to keep the member contributions down.

Mrs. Anthony is proposing to increase all the library materials lines by more than three percent. It is important to keep up the supply of new materials. Although videos are declining in importance, DVDs and CDs are increasingly popular so an internal adjustment in allocation will be made among the AV formats.

The Capital line is much larger than it has been. We anticipate expense of around \$35,000. for underground sprinklers and a new CD/DVD cleaning/buffing machine. Any shortfall in revenues may be absorbed by this line, but it is hoped that we will have a surplus at the end of FY 2006 to add to the working cash fund for improved cash flow.

Mrs. Anthony will continue to refine the budget before adoption in April.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

USAGE---Circulation in January was up nearly seven percent over last year in spite of a Saturday closure due to snow this year. The biggest gains were in the circulation of audio

formats although video formats for adult and both adult and youth books also posted healthy increases. The Gate Count is down slightly, but a 50% increase in remote renewals gives indication that remote use of Library resources is increasing. A check of database usage shows that over 90% of the use of Live Homework Help from Tutor.com is from outside the building. Use of self-check is also up, accounting for 11% of check-outs from the Library.

NLS AWARD----Mrs. Anthony has been named the NLS Staff Member of the Year. She learned that Sarah Long nominated her, with some help from SPL staff. It is always gratifying to receive public recognition. Representative Lou Lang will also be recognized as Legislator of the Year at the NLS Awards Banquet March 18.

PLA CANDIDACY---Mrs. Anthony will be running on the PLA ballot for the Steering Committee of the Issues and Concerns Cluster. The Steering Committee oversees the PLA Committees on Intellectual Freedom, Legislation, Library Confidentiality, Public Policy, Recruitment, Research and Statistics and Workload Measures and Staffing Patterns. If successful, Mrs. Anthony would also serve on the PLA Board.

ELEVATOR REPAIRS----There is a cracked panel of glass in one of the public elevators that is being boarded up and will be replaced by CabWorks. We also expect the reinstallation of an occasionally malfunctioning switch for one of the elevators next week.

THEFT CASE----Mrs. Anthony went to Court January 19 in the matter of the Library theft. The case has been continued to February 23 for a period of extended discovery.

ALA MIDWINTER----Meetings in Boston for ALA Midwinter were worthwhile. Mrs. Anthony chaired the Capacity Building Strategy Group for the Urban Libraries Council, reported to the ULC Board and went to an information session to hear the outcome of a ULC Board retreat. She also attended a meeting of the Advisory Committee for a forthcoming book Facilities for Results, part of the PLA Planning for Results series of publications. In addition, she was invited to participate in two small discussion sessions which were exploring current issues. One was convened by OCLC and the Council on Library Resources to discuss changes in public library reference. There were about 15 people from public libraries and representatives from the sponsoring agencies as well as the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute for Museum and Library Services. The other group was seven directors from progressive public libraries talking with Innovative Interfaces CEO Jerry Kline about what's new in libraries and at

Innovative. We were lucky that the conference was not the following weekend when we would have all been snowed in.

CARPET REPAIRS----J&J Invision, the carpet company, has informed us that a representative will be out February 22 and 23 to do warranty work on the carpet on the first floor in locations near the grassy courtyard where the carpet is faded. Apparently there is a color blending technique that restores the color in the affected areas. We have not yet been notified when the carpet replacement on the second floor will begin.

CONNECTIVITY----After hearing at least a month ago that Connectivity intended to settle with the disaffected former low voltage employee and would be getting the fire alarm plans and drawings for us, Mrs. Anthony has heard nothing. Mrs. Anthony checked with both Jack Lesniak and Jim Dyer who also have heard nothing. We retain their final payment of \$33,000. We may yet need to contract for the work to be done and subtract it from Connectivity's final payment.

SYNERGY APPLICATIONS----Mrs. Anthony served as a reader for the State regarding applications for the new class of SYNERGY, the statewide leadership training program. SPL had a successful applicant who cannot be named until the entire list is published.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES----Mrs. Anthony attended the Annual Installation Luncheon for the Skokie Chamber of Commerce. Because it is the 80th anniversary of the Chamber, they had a historical theme and the program was presented by our own Frances Roehm. She showed slides prepared together with Jane Hagedorn of Skokie history and some early businesses in Skokie. The program was informative, entertaining and well received. Mrs. Anthony also attended a meeting of the Oakton Adult Education Planning Council. They requested that the Library present a training session for their teachers on finding community resources on the Web.

HOUSE BILL 1078----Mrs. Anthony received a memo from Marty Paltzer of the Niles Township Property Tax Coalition that Representatives Lou Lang and Elaine Nekritz have sponsored House Bill 1078. This bill amends the property tax code to make the outcome of PTAB or court cases involving appeals of assessments be a reduction in the next tax year's assessment rather than a cash refund.

APRIL ELECTION----COMMENTS BY THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Mr. Graham announced that Mr. Cahan will run as a write-in candidate. Mr. Graham is not aware of any other write-in candidates. The Village Clerk will not certify the election

results until April 26. This is later than usual because of the provisional voting requirements.

REVISION OF ALLOWABLE EXPENSES FOR PLAN 125

Mrs. Anthony explained that for a number of years now, the Library has participated in Plan 125 which allows employees to set aside pre-tax earnings for payment of childcare expense as well as unreimbursed medical and dental expenses. Twelve employees are enrolled in the Plan for 2005. The way the Plan works, one must declare in December of the prior year how much is being set aside from each paycheck and in total for the year. While some expenses such as dental work may be known and planned for, frequently staff are guessing as to the amount, based on prior experience.

It is necessary for staff to submit receipts for qualified expenses by the end of December in order to claim reimbursement. Any amount which cannot be justified with a receipt is forfeited by the employee and stays in the pool. To provide more flexibility for employees, the Village adopted an extension of qualifying expense to include nonprescription medications. They have issued a list to spell out more specifically what "drug store type" items may and may not be counted. For example, allergy medicine, antacids, birth control and cold medicines may be included. Cosmetics, shampoos, moisturizers and toothpaste may not. Receipts are still necessary to claim these expenses.

Mrs. Anthony recommends approval of the inclusion of nonprescription medications for Plan 125 reimbursement in accordance with the guidelines adopted by the Village.

A motion was made by Dr. Wozniak, seconded by Mrs. Weiner:

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE INCLUSION OF NONPRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS FOR PLAN 125 REIMBURSEMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GUIDELINES ADOPTED BY THE VILLAGE OF SKOKIE.

The motion passed unanimously.

MARKETING PLAN

Mrs. Anthony reported that throughout the Fall, a newly constituted Marketing Committee met periodically with consultant Alexis Sarkisian to formulate a Marketing Plan for the Library. The committee undertook this effort although usage statistics are high and staff are busy because there were questions regarding the Library's penetration

to some parts of the Village. A Village survey, done in November, 2003, reported that 30% of people in Skokie had used the Library in the past year.

The Marketing Committee discussed the long term implications of providing intensive service to a minority of the population and decided that the Library should try to reach more people in the community. With the help of Alexis, the committee learned more about marketing and how it differs from promotion. Alexis defines marketing for libraries as “an assessment of the need for, and the development, implementation and evaluation of library outreach efforts, based upon that assessment, both internally and externally.”

The Committee looked at community demographics and at Library services currently provided; who the programs are intended to serve and who, in fact, uses them. Since marketing involves understanding the needs of specific target groups in the community and shaping services to meet those needs, it is not sufficient to simply promote current services more aggressively. All library staff need to be outreach agents, involved in the community and better understanding people’s issues and needs.

The Library needs to look physically more welcoming to diverse cultures and our collections, programs, exhibits, concerts and film programs should include all cultures, especially the underserved. Although we have made some efforts in this direction, we clearly have not been as successful as we would like in reaching some of Skokie’s newer residents.

Mrs. Anthony distributed a copy of the Marketing Plan that Alexis presented to the Committee, based on their discussions. The Plan identifies three areas of focus •Publics •Partnerships and •Internal and External Promotion. “Publics” refers to groups or segments of the community. It was agreed to begin with a focus on newcomers, the Indian community and families. Through partnerships and collaboration with other agencies in the community, the Library will adapt services to better meet the needs of these groups and strive to communicate this through signage and other means within the building and through external promotion directed to these audiences.

To implement this plan, three subcommittees were set up: Partnerships, Public Relations (Promotion) and Newcomers. The Newcomers Subcommittee will look at the Indian community as part of the focus. It was agreed that the Library already offers many programs to newcomer families but do not necessarily promote it that way, so the PR Committee will look at promoting opportunities for family use of the Library.

Diana Hunter has served as Board representative on the Marketing Committee.

After discussion, Dr. Wozniak made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Rich:

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
APPROVE THE MARKETING PLAN AS PRESENTED.

The motion passed unanimously.

The Board sends commendation to all who worked so hard on preparing the Marketing Plan.

NORTH SUBURBAN LIBRARY SYSTEM

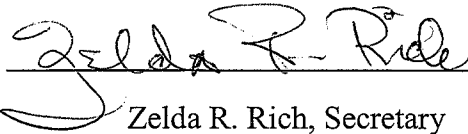
The Board congratulated Mrs. Anthony on being named the 2004 North Suburban Library System Staff Member of the Year.

COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES

Mrs. Anthony commented that the Ella Jenkins performance on Sunday, February 6 was outstanding. Ms. Jenkins really involved the audience and the Auditorium was at capacity. A reception for the Black History Month exhibit followed the performance. Both events were followed by the Young Steinway Concert at 3 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:11 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Witry, seconded by Mrs. Rich to adjourn the regular meeting. The motion passed unanimously.


Zelda R. Rich, Secretary