

December 8, 2004

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Skokie Public Library held in the Skokie Public Library Board Room, Wednesday, December 8, 2004.

CALL TO ORDER

John Graham, President, called the meeting to order at 7:29 p.m.

Members present: John Graham, President; Richard Witry, Vice President; Zelda Rich, Secretary; Diana Hunter, President Emerita (arrived at 7:45 p.m.); Eva Weiner; John M. Wozniak; and Carolyn A. Anthony, Director.

Member absent: Susan Greer.

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

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR AND CLOSED MEETINGS OF NOVEMBER 10, 2004

Mr. Witry made a motion, seconded by Dr. Wozniak, to approve the minutes of the regular and closed meetings of November 10, 2004, subject to additions and/or corrections. There being no additions or corrections, the minutes were approved and placed on file.

Review of Closed Minutes

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

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES FINDS THAT THE NEED FOR CONFIDENTIALITY STILL EXISTS FOR THE MARCH 10, 2004; JUNE 9, 2004; OCTOBER 13, 2004; AND NOVEMBER 10, 2004 CLOSED MINUTES.

The motion passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA (Financial Statements; Circulation Report; Library Use Statistics; Report(s) from Department Head(s); Gifts)

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

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, 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 HEADS
4. GIFTS: IN MEMORY OF WAYNE PATRICK BRENNAN FOR THE PURCHASE OF BOOKS: \$1,245. FROM DAVID AND GAIL WEISMAN, \$125. FROM CYRILLE BRENNAN, \$50. FROM JAMES AND LYNETTE SHAVER, \$35. FROM JOHN SCHWARTZ, \$25. FROM STEVEN J. DIOGO, \$20. FROM JUDY A. BURNS; \$100. FROM SKOKIE AREA CHAPTER AARP IN APPRECIATION

The motion passed unanimously.

BILLS

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

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE BILLS AND THE BUILDING AND EQUIPMENT FUND BILL, SUBJECT TO AUDIT.

The roll call vote for approval was unanimous.

AUDIT – 2003-2004 FISCAL YEAR

Mrs. Anthony explained the completed audit was finally received December 1, three weeks after numbers were agreed to and finalized. There is no management letter with this year's audit, but McGladrey & Pullen required that Irene Tam, Administrative Assistant for Accounting and Mrs. Anthony sign a four page statement of 28 affirmations and confirmations regarding information provided to the auditors and an acknowledgement of uncorrected misstatements regarding three known errors. The latter consisted of: (1) two unresolved capital leases totaling \$31,900., (2) unrecorded stock investment of \$4,000. (GE), and (3) property taxes receivable and deferred understated by \$8,335.

Ms. Tam included debt service payment for principal and interest on the capital leases in her general fund statement and provided information regarding the extent of the lease to the auditors. The auditors were also informed of the stock investment. It appears that the auditors are finding fault with the way some expenses and liabilities are posted. This may be partly due to adjustment to accrual accounting and the new rules under GASB 34.

Certainly all information was disclosed to the auditors. In the past, they have been helpful if all was not posted just right. Now, because of experience in the accounting industry, they will not make adjustments to the Library's recording, but simply comment on it.

This was a difficult audit to complete. It required more involvement on Mrs. Anthony's part than for prior audits as well as a significant amount of time for Ms. Tam. They had to fight to untangle commingled expenses in the Library Project Fund and Building and Equipment Fund. Neither the revenue collection for the Library's building debt, nor the debt payments were clearly visible in the Library's statements because the debt is considered the Village's and shows within the Village audit. This approach, while reflecting the legal position of the Village's responsibility for the building debt, does not show the revenue which the Library collected from Cook County for the Library levy which was inclusive of the amount needed for debt repayment. Mrs. Anthony argued that this was problematic, particularly because the amount collected was \$43,883. short of what was needed for debt repayment, necessitating expense from General Operating Fund revenues.

In response to their complaints, Bob Nowak, Director of Finance, Village of Skokie, prepared a supplementary statement and the auditors included the supplementary balance sheet shown on p.20.

Mrs. Anthony continues to be concerned about the amount of revenue the Library receives from the property tax levy. According to the 2003 audit, the Library received \$6,586,103. (again, excluding revenues for debt payment) in property taxes. In 2004, the amount was \$6,605,596., an increase of only \$19,493. over 2003. Yet the 2002 levy which funds the 2004 Fiscal Year was 4.8% higher than the 2001 levy funding Fiscal Year 2003.

Because McGladrey & Pullen has been the auditor for five years, the Village will select a new auditor for next year. Mrs. Anthony is hopeful that we have been through the bumps of the changeover to accrual accounting and the new GASB rules and that our audit experience will be smoother next year.

During discussion mention was made of using a CPA on an ad hoc basis if needed.

A motion was made by Mr. Witry, seconded by Dr. Wozniak:

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ACCEPT THE AUDIT AS PRESENTED BY MCGLADREY &
PULLEN, CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS.

The motion passed unanimously.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mrs. Hunter arrived at 7:45 p.m.

USAGE----Circulation was up 4.65% in November, led by large gains in circulation from the Bookmobile as well as increases in the use of AV materials. Circulation of books to adults was also up 3%. Interlibrary Loan showed a big jump in use, reflecting the update of the Library's holdings in OCLC. Renewals by Web have become increasingly popular. The Gate Count is unchanged from last November, but a greater portion of Library use is by non-residents. This is a phenomenon that the Marketing Committee is reviewing.

STAFF DAY----The Library will be closed Friday, December 10, for Staff Day. The event will be held in the Library and will include a mix of speakers from the outside, staff presenters, service awards and fellowship. Gail Kay and Cathy Maassen are again chairing Staff Day.

LEVY HEARINGS----The 2004 levy, including the Library's levy, will be presented by the Village Board at their meetings December 6 and 20. Mrs. Anthony will attend in the event that anyone has questions about the Library's levy.

THEFT OF MATERIALS----Youth Services has experienced a rash of materials thefts this fall from nonfiction areas of the print and AV collections. RFID tags have been removed and hidden behind shelving. We are investigating and will document the extent of the loss. We have also explored possible means of discouraging further incidents. Youth nonfiction titles are being treated with an additional overlay for the RFID tag that should make removal of the tag very difficult.

OUTREACH PRESENTATIONS----Deborah Grodinsky and Tobi Oberman have made presentations about Library services to the Literacy classes meeting at the Library and also to the two classes meeting at Temple Judea Mitzpah. Staff are looking for opportunities to introduce library services to Skokie's newer residents. Tracy has been negotiating with the Village for access to their address list for new residents and is planning a mailing.

UNITED WAY----The annual United Way staff campaign was held in November, coordinated by Gail Kay. Seventy two staff members, representing 45% of staff, contributed a total of \$4,695.00 to the United Way, an increase of 8% from last year. This generosity is commendable, particularly because staff have also been generous in gifts for the soldiers in Iraq and for the Assist-a-Family holiday collection here in Skokie.

VISIT FROM NEW ULC EXEC-----Martin Gomez, the new Executive Director of the Urban Libraries Council, came for a visit and tour one day in November. He was most impressed with the Library and opined that he should live in Skokie instead of Evanston.

Mr. Gomez is a former Director of the Brooklyn Public Library and former President of ALA, among other positions. He started off with a survey of member priorities and will conduct a planning session with the Executive Board at Midwinter. Mrs. Anthony continues to serve as Chair of the Capacity Development Strategy Group.

CONTINUING EDUCATION----Mrs. Anthony attended two workshops this past month. One was a LACONI Administrators workshop on Library security held at the Harold Washington Library. A representative of a private security consulting firm, the heads of security for Harold Washington Public Library and the CPL branches and a security representative from one of the suburban libraries presented an informative program on ways of maintaining order without alienating visitors. All agreed that public libraries are a particular security challenge because the desire of security is to "button things down" while our mission is to offer open access to all. The other workshop was on Community Networking and it was held at NSLS. Frances Roehm and Mrs. Anthony heard a professor from the Library School at the University of South Carolina talk about how building community networks improves the quality of life and improves the economic potential of a community. He talked about the importance of discovering people's information needs, going out to meet them where they are and involving them in service development.

JEAN WILKINS TO RETIRE----Director of the State Library Jean Wilkins has announced her retirement, effective December 17, 2004. She has served in the position six years and previously coordinated OCLC services at the State Library. Jean sustained per capita grants in hard economic times and instituted SYNERGY, the library leadership program, among other achievements.

TECHNOLOGY NEWS----The Library of Congress has announced the National Digital Newspaper Program which will digitize 30,000,000 newspaper pages from 1836 through 1992 and will be available in 2006. The National Endowment for the Humanities is also working on the program which is the most ambitious retrospective digitization project yet undertaken. Meanwhile, Google, the popular Internet search engine, has introduced Google Scholar for those who want access to more academic information and Froogle for those who want to target consumer information. This development offers significant scoping of the universe of information available via Google.

NILES TOWNSHIP PROPERTY TAX COALITION

Mrs. Anthony attended the annual meeting of the Niles Township Property Tax Coalition November 15. Representatives from Niles Township and from the law firm of Franczek Sullivan P.C. reported on the current status of the Coalition and the appeal process. Mrs. Anthony distributed a financial statement for the Coalition for the past year and a statement of billing to the Skokie Public Library, showing that the Library owes \$609.58 for its share of Coalition expense in the past year. The billing per appellant varies depending on action taken (whether an assessment was paid for, legal filing, etc.) and the other parties participating in the case. Generally, an elementary school district, District 219 and Oakton Community College are involved in all appeals while the Niles Township Administration, Village of Skokie and Skokie Park District are involved in some appeals.

In the legislative update, there was comment about the impact of P.A. 93-715 which put a 7% tax cap on the annual increase in assessment. This will start in 2004 in our area. There is a three year sunset provision on the Act. The effect of the Act will be to slow growth in the EAV; put pressure on rates; shift the tax burden to commercial/industrial entities; increase the number of appeals.

While there has been an increase in the number of residential appeals filed with the Property Tax Appeals Board (PTAB), those appeals account for less than 20% of refunds. Most commercial and industrial appeals, resulting in 80% of the refunds, are filed through the Tax Objection Complaint process. These appeals are filed in the Circuit Court. Unlike with PTAB appeals, individual taxing bodies are not notified of the appeal and have no right of intervention because all taxing bodies are represented by the State's Attorney (Dick Devine). The Niles Township Property Tax Coalition proposes to join with Chicago in making an appeal which would assert the intervention right of other taxing bodies in TOC cases. The NTPTC would pick three cases to use in the appeal at a cost to the Coalition of \$3,000-\$5,000.

The Niles Township Property Tax Coalition requests that the Boards of participating governmental entities adopt a resolution authorizing intervention in Tax Objection Complaint Proceedings in the Circuit Court of Cook County. Mrs. Anthony distributed a sample resolution.

The other news regarding legislation is that there has not been support for refund recovery legislation in the State legislature. Part of the problem is that various groups have come with different proposals for addressing the losses due to tax appeals.

Representative Lou Lang is proposing a forward reduction in the Assessed Valuation instead of a refund of a prior year. It is asked that taxing bodies come together to support this approach.

Mrs. Anthony thinks this is a good idea and she recommends the Board's endorsement of Representative Lang's proposal. Exact phrasing has not yet been established. It is in the stage of, "if this were put forward, would it be supported?"

After discussion, it was the consensus of the Board that they would support Representative Lang's proposing a forward reduction in the Assessed Valuation instead of a refund of a prior year and asked Mrs. Anthony to convey this to Representative Lang.

Mr. Witry made a motion, seconded by Dr. Wozniak:

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
APPROVE THE RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING INTERVENTION IN
TAX OBJECTION COMPLAINT PROCEEDINGS IN THE CIRCUIT
COURT OF COOK COUNTY.

The motion passed unanimously.

INSURANCE RENEWAL

Mrs. Anthony distributed the Premium Summary page as well as a summary page for the Illinois Public Risk Fund and the quote for the Directors and Officers coverage. Mrs. Anthony stated that there is no increase in premium for the Directors and Officers insurance.

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
APPROVE THE INSURANCE PROPOSAL FROM TRAVELERS IN
THE AMOUNT OF \$53,338., THE INSURANCE PROPOSAL FROM
ILLINOIS PUBLIC RISK FUND FOR \$38,668.00, AND THE
DIRECTORS & OFFICERS LIABILITY COVERAGE FOR \$5,851.00
FOR THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY FOR 2004-2005 AS
PRESENTED BY BOYLE, FLAGG & SEAMAN, INC.

The roll call vote for approval was unanimous.

TELEPHONE MAINTENANCE

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

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
APPROVE THE RENEWAL OF THE ANNUAL TELEPHONE
MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT FROM NORTECH
TELECOMMUNICATIONS FOR \$10,385.00 FOR 2005.

The roll call vote for approval was unanimous.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES 2004-2005 – INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT

Mrs. Anthony distributed the Interim Report on Goals and Objectives 2004-2005, reflecting progress made in the first six months of the Fiscal Year. Taken as a whole, these objectives give a good overview of staff priorities, working methodology and allocation of time.

Priorities are on outreach to new user groups, improving the convenience and ease of use of library services and applying technologies to library services. Few of the objectives can be accomplished by a single person. Most require interaction among several staff members from different departments. A number of objectives require interaction with persons from agencies outside the Library. Achievement of the objectives is rarely a straightforward process, but generally involves exploration of alternative methodologies or a data collection process. It is possible to see how a research project such as the Web Site Usability Study informs efforts for achievement of multiple objectives.

Staff have made good progress toward achievement of the year's objectives.

Discussion followed regarding the Library being user friendly with a human touch even though we increased the way we do things electronically; use of the Smartcard; remote registration; and charging for services.

TRANSFER OF SERVICE CREDIT

Mrs. Anthony is interested in transferring up to ten years of her service credit from the Maryland pension system to the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund as it will benefit her to consolidate her service, extending the service credit for her pension from Illinois.

There is a substantial cost associated with the transfer that she will be asked to pay. It is possible to pay this amount over time on a payroll deduction basis, but it must be completely paid before she retires. For this reason, she is interested in determining the exact cost and beginning the process of payment soon.

IMRF has advised Mrs. Anthony that they need a completed authorization form in order to give her the financial information she is seeking. The authorization requires action by a governing body, attested to by the secretary.

This transfer of credit will have some impact on the employer's contribution rate to IMRF. Mrs. Anthony talked with Christa Ballowe, Village Personnel Officer, and she assured Mrs. Anthony that because the Library's rate is determined together with that of the Village and because the rate is influenced by the number of people currently drawing a pension for retirement or disability, it would be impossible to isolate or estimate the impact of the transfer of credit from Maryland. She said that she has no objection to the transfer and would be willing to sign off on the transfer also.

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

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
AUTHORIZE THE SUBMISSION OF THE OUT-OF-STATE CREDIT
AUTHORIZATION FORM FROM IMRF FOR DIRECTOR CAROLYN
ANTHONY.

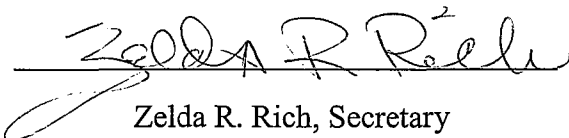
The motion passed unanimously.

COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES

There were no Comments from Trustees.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:22 p.m. a motion was made by Dr. Wozniak, seconded by Mrs. Rich to adjourn the regular meeting. The motion passed unanimously.



Zelda R. Rich, Secretary