

December 10, 2003

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 10, 2003.

CALL TO ORDER

John M. Wozniak, President, called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

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

Members absent: Diana Hunter, President Emerita and Eva Weiner.

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

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF NOVEMBER 12, 2003

Mr. Witry made a motion, seconded by Mr. Graham, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of November 12, 2003, subject to additions and/or corrections. There being no additions or corrections, the minutes were approved and placed on file.

After review of the Skokie Public Library 2003 closed minutes, Mr. Graham made a motion, seconded by Mr. Witry:

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES OPEN THE FOLLOWING SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY CLOSED MINUTES: MARCH 12, 2003; APRIL 9, 2003; MAY 14, 2003; SEPTEMBER 10, 2003; AND OCTOBER 8, 2003. THE BOARD FINDS THAT THE NEED FOR CONFIDENTIALITY STILL EXISTS FOR THE JUNE 11, 2003 AND JULY 9, 2003 MINUTES.

The motion passed unanimously.

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

Mr. Graham made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Greer:

MOTION: THAT THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS BE APPROVED, 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. CORRESPONDENCE: LETTER FROM THOMAS P. ENGLISH, BOYLE, FLAGG & SEAMAN, INC. TO CAROLYN ANTHONY DATED NOVEMBER 14, 2003 RE CLAIMS; MEMORANDUM FROM ROBERT J. NOWAK, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, VILLAGE OF SKOKIE TO ALBERT J. RIGONI, VILLAGE MANAGER DATED NOVEMBER 21, 2003 RE 2003 TAX LEVY ORDINANCE; AND LETTER FROM ROBERT J. NOWAK, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, VILLAGE OF SKOKIE TO CAROLYN ANTHONY DATED DECEMBER 2, 2003 RE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY APRIL 30, 2003 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT
5. PERSONNEL: TERMINATION: DEBORAH VAUGHAN, PART-TIME REFERENCE LIBRARIAN, ADULT SERVICES DEPARTMENT, EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 31, 2003
6. GIFTS: \$100. FROM SKOKIE AREA CHAPTER AARP IN APPRECIATION; AND \$250. FROM GLORIA BLOOM IN APPRECIATION

The motion passed unanimously.

BILLS

Mr. Graham made a motion, seconded by Mr. Witry:

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE BILLS, THE 2001 BUILDING EXPANSION PROJECT BILLS, THE LIST OF BILLS FOR PAYMENT APPROVAL AND INVOICE NO. 0062907 FROM O'DONNELL WICKLUND PIGOZZI AND PETERSON FOR \$7,716.67 DATED NOVEMBER 10, 2003, AS PRESENTED, SUBJECT TO AUDIT.

The roll call vote for approval was unanimous.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

USAGE--Circulation in November was 130,748 for an increase of nearly 15% over the same month last year. Although the strongest gains continue to be in the circulation of audiovisual formats, Adult book circulation was up more than 8% and youth circulation

nearly 6%. Even the gate count was up almost 8%. Additionally, there were 4787 uses of electronic databases to which the Library subscribes.

E-RATE—The Library received a check for \$4,794.00 for e-rate payment for fiscal year 2003. We have only applied for telephone service excluding the Internet so that we would not be bound by mandatory filtering requirements.

HOUSE CLOSING--The contract for 7929 Park Avenue has been signed by all parties. The Library paid earnest money of \$20,000. The closing will occur on or before December 19 and the residents will remain in the house until December 26.

PAYMENT FOR SKOKIENET--In the NSLS report this month, the System has decided to charge for participation in NorthStarNet as a way of recovering some of the funds cut by the State. NSLS maintains the servers that store and process all of the community information compiled by participating libraries. They provide technical support for maintenance of the files and software for formatting the entries, calendar, etc. At the rate of .025 per capita, it will cost the Library \$1,583.70 for maintenance of SkokieNet this year. Fees for FY2004 have not been determined as yet. The cost is not unreasonable and SkokieNet is well worth it. Nevertheless, this is an unplanned expense and a new development in services from NSLS. We have always paid a small amount for continuing education sessions at the System, but other services have been totally subsidized by the State. There is discussion of modest charges for other services also.

RADIO PROGRAM--The radio program Mrs. Anthony taped for "Vantage Point", a program of Northeastern Illinois University, will be aired on WTMX-FM (101.9) Sunday, December 21, at 6:30 a.m. The show is on the PATRIOT Act and its impact on public libraries. It was taped in mid-September.

LACONI PANEL--Mrs. Anthony was a panel member at a LACONI Administrators' Forum panel on referenda November 14 at the Chicago Public Library. Her portion was about the Cost Benefit project as a means of deriving information about the value of library services that could be communicated to the public.

BRaille SATURDAY--While the Youth Services Department had a number of special programs during National Children's Book Week in November, Braille Saturday was a particularly moving occasion. Speakers included former Senator Paul Simon; Paula Sprecher, a blind teacher from the Farnsworth School and a recipient of a 2003 Golden Apple Award; and author Laurie Lawlor who recently published a biography of Helen Keller *Helen Keller: Rebellious Spirit*. Two young blind children read excerpts from the

Helen Keller story in Braille and a couple other students played the piano or sang. Board President John Wozniak attended the program as did Board member John Graham.

The Board asked Mrs. Anthony to send a letter of condolence to Senator Simon's family.

MEETING WITH PARK DISTRICT--Mrs. Anthony attended a meeting with representatives of the Park District about possible cooperation in maintenance of archives of the Skokie Historical Society and other activities such as programming and research assistance that are carried out at the Skokie Heritage Museum. Board member Dick Witry also attended in his capacity as an active member of the Skokie Historical Society. There will be a follow-up meeting December 17.

PHOTO FROM AUTHOR BARBARA KINGSOLVER--Ricki Nordmeyer, Manager of Adult Popular Services, received a letter and signed photo from author Barbara Kingsolver recently for the Library's author wall of fame. This is the first time Ms. Kingsolver has provided a photo for display. She commented that any library that circulates over 1,300,000 items deserves a photo.

BUILDING PROJECT

Mrs. Anthony briefly updated the Board on a few construction issues. Berglund has been at the Library checking on punchlist items. The west parking lot is now striped and usable. Mrs. Anthony will check on the wheelstop issue with Camosy. Connectivity is pretty close to being finished with the fire alarm system and we are ready to schedule the inspection. The Board suggested Mrs. Anthony contact the Mayor re the ComEd pole in the west parking lot.

Mr. Graham made a motion, seconded by Mr. Witry:

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THREE CHANGE ORDERS AS PRESENTED:

COMMERCIAL ELECTRIC (INSTALL FIBER CABLE)	\$1,217.00
CAMOSY, INC. (FLOATING CEILING)	\$2,814.00
CAMOSY, INC. (19 END PANELS)	<u>\$7,769.00</u>
TOTAL:	\$11,800.00

The roll call vote for approval was unanimous.

APPROVAL OF TELEPHONE NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

Mrs. Anthony reported that one of the requests received most frequently is for the opportunity to reserve DVDs and videos. We have not permitted reserves on these media to date because we did not feel that Circulation staff could handle the call volume of notifying patrons that their reserve was available. We have not sent notices by mail for many years because the length of time for mail notification keeps popular items out of circulation for an unacceptably long period of time.

Staff think that they have worked out other procedures related to the reservation of films and will be ready to start implementation with the installation of an automated Telephone Notification System from Innovative Interfaces. Because of the need to integrate this system with our patron database and other components of the circulation system, we need to purchase the product from our current automation vendor rather than accept competitive bids.

Nevertheless, the pricing for a new and enhanced, fully graphical Telephone Notification System is no more expensive than the old system offered by Innovative and represents good value. Mrs. Anthony recommends the purchase of one telephone line with two messages at a cost of \$13,450. After the first year, there will be an annual 12% increment to system maintenance to cover the cost of maintaining the Telephone Notification System.

After brief discussion, Mr. Graham made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Rich:

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE PURCHASE OF A TELEPHONE NOTIFICATION SYSTEM (TNS) WITH ONE TELEPHONE LINE AND TWO MESSAGES FROM INNOVATIVE INTERFACES FOR A COST OF \$13,450.

The roll was called: Mr. Witry—no; Mrs. Greer—yes; Mr. Graham—yes; Mrs. Rich—yes; Dr. Wozniak—yes. The motion passed.

APPROVAL OF TELEPHONE MAINTENANCE

Mrs. Anthony presented the proposed agreement for telephone maintenance from Nortech for 2004. The price of \$9,890.00 per year as quoted reflects an increase of 5% over last year, plus additional costs for an added digital line card and 16 ports which were necessary for new telephone locations occasioned by the building addition.

We have been satisfied with service from Nortech. Mrs. Anthony recommends approval of the renewal of the annual maintenance at a cost of \$9,890.00.

A motion was made by Mr. Witry, seconded by Mr. Graham:

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE RENEWAL OF THE ANNUAL TELEPHONE MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT FROM NORTECH TELECOMMUNICATIONS FOR \$9,890.00 FOR 2004.

The roll call vote for approval was unanimous.

APPROVAL OF TAX RATE OBJECTION COMPLAINTS

Mrs. Anthony reported that a recent meeting of the Niles Township Property Tax Coalition members with the Coalition's legal counsel Franczek Sullivan P.C. was enlightening in regard to the short collections the Library has experienced in recent years. Mrs. Anthony distributed a report about tax objections as prepared by Franczek Sullivan.

In summary, the report indicates that after the PTAB process was first opened up to Cook County, it became increasingly popular as a means of pursuing corporate tax objection complaints. The PTAB process requires the affected taxing bodies to be notified if a reduction in assessment of \$100,000. or more is sought by the petitioner. Armed with this information, the Coalition has successfully fought and minimized the tax reductions of some of the largest corporate entities in Niles Township.

The trend now is to file a tax objection complaint in the Circuit Court of Cook County. Taxing bodies are not notified of such filings and are represented in the aggregate by the State's Attorney's Office. The chart at the bottom of page 3 shows that the refunds issued by the Circuit Court represent about 80% of refunds as compared to only 20% through the PTAB process.

Franczek Sullivan has spent time combing through print records and compiling a database of corporations seeking property tax relief for 2001 from the Circuit Court. (They have not done this yet for 2002 as the filing deadline will be later in December, 75 days after the property tax notices were issued). Given that it frequently takes 3-4 years to resolve complaints, the Library will continue to experience reduced revenues due to tax refunds for 2001 through calendar 2005.

The cumulative effect of these refunds is substantial, amounting to 3-4% or more of anticipated revenues. The net effect is that a levy increase of 5% by the Board may yield a revenue increase of as little as 1%. Given that a significant portion of the Library's tax

collection is devoted to debt payment which is not flexible, the impact on operations is even greater. As a case in point, the Library this month was about \$80,000. short of revenue in the debt payment fund, necessitating borrowing from the Operating Fund. The amount of levy collection allocated to the Debt Fund is 18% as calculated by Village Finance Officer Bob Nowak. This portion of the levy collection should have yielded an amount sufficient for debt payment.

The Niles Township Property Tax Coalition proposes to ask Franczek Sullivan to petition for the right to directly represent the Coalition in a limited number of cases, namely larger cases representing perhaps at least the top three potential losses for each participating taxing body. An exact formula for distribution of the fees has not been determined, but fees are expected to be in the range of those experienced in the PTAB appeals. For the Library, these fees amount to \$2,000-\$3,000. per year. Mrs. Anthony recommends that the Board support continued participation in the Niles Township Property Tax Coalition appeal process as it shifts its emphasis to pursuit of cases taken to the Cook County Circuit Court of Appeals.

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

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY'S CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN THE NILES TOWNSHIP PROPERTY TAX COALITION.

The roll call vote for approval was unanimous.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES 2003-2004 -- INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT

Mrs. Anthony presented the report of progress in achieving Goals and Objectives set out for this fiscal year. Whenever we compile such a report, Mrs. Anthony is impressed with the amount of focused activity and follow through on intentions that staff has achieved.

Many of the objectives dealt with familiarizing staff and the public with new building features and services or with realizing the service potential made possible by new spaces and equipment. Mrs. Anthony feels confident in saying that staff and the public have embraced and made good use of building enhancements.

LIBRARY CABLE NETWORK CHANNEL 24

The December 2003 Cable Guide was noted. Dr. Wozniak attended the 20th anniversary event of LCN at the Library on December 4.

NORTH SUBURBAN LIBRARY SYSTEM

The report from Pat Groh was noted.

Brief discussion followed regarding North Suburban Library System charging a fee for NorthStarNet participation.

COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES

A suggestion box will be put on the west Circulation Desk for a trial period of two months.

At 8:46 p.m. the Board took a short break.

Mrs. Kozlowski left the meeting.

CLOSED SESSION

At 8:51 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Witry, seconded by Mr. Graham:

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES GO INTO CLOSED SESSION TO DISCUSS A PERSONNEL MATTER.

The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion ensued.

Adjournment

At 9:06 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Witry, seconded by Mr. Graham:

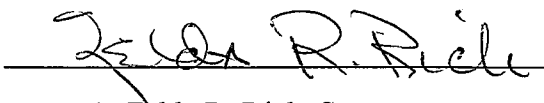
MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES ADJOURN FROM CLOSED SESSION.

The motion passed unanimously.

The Board resumed open session at 9:06 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:06 p.m. a motion was made by Mrs. Rich, seconded by Mr. Witry to adjourn the regular meeting. The motion passed unanimously.


Zelda R. Rich, Secretary