

May 5, 1966

Minutes of the special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Skokie Public Library with the nominees for the President's Citizens Advisory Committee on Library Expansion, May 5, 1966, in the Lecture Room of the Library.

Library Board members present: Conroy V. Erickson, Mrs. W. C. Griffin, L. O. Green, Donald Kraft, Mrs. Daniel Petty, and Rabbi Karl Weiner, Miss Mary Radmacher, Librarian.

Members of the Committee present: Mrs. Seymour Chaplik, Mrs. William DuBow, Mrs. Milton Estes, Mrs. Norman Feit, Mrs. Harold Stluka, Messrs. James Hansen, Ralph Kasten, Frederick Mocking, Robert Nordin, Edwin Simon, and Father F. J. Trainor.

Mr. L. O. Green, President of the Library Board, opened the meeting with a welcome to the Committee expressing the Board's appreciation for their taking time from a busy schedule to attend the meeting.

The members of the Board of Directors were introduced to the Committee. and the Committee in turn introduced to the Board.

Mr. Green explained that the selection of this Committee was made from various organizations of Village-wide representation and the names were submitted by these organizations. Organizations were chosen - not individuals. Failure of the November 9, 1965 referendum resulted in calling this meeting. He stated that the Library Board had made an in-depth study of the needs and failed to communicate with the public on the facts behind the recommendations made. He further stated that the Library is confronted with a situation which is becoming more critical each day because it is not adequate today due to the explosion of knowledge and tremendous increase in volume of printing. This community has a high level of readership - perhaps higher than any other community. The Board is confronted with the problem of what to do to present

the kind of service this community wants, and the question is how much the community is willing to pay in the way of increased taxes. We are hopeful that this Committee will help us determine this. You must be a sounding board of the feeling of this community. All of you have contacts with a wider group of people than some of us and we are genuinely seeking your help.

Mr. Green continued by giving a short resume of the history of the Library and stated the measure of a community is its cultural level and its interest in its young people as told by the kind of library it has. Mr. Green acquainted the Committee with the Butler Bill and its impact on levying taxes for library services. He stated at the time the Library was built it met the standards of two books per capita and - 1-1/2 seats per thousand population but the standards have changed. He continued with the following, the Library now has 150,000 volumes with a circulation in 1965-66 fiscal year of 564,563, and 38,000 registered borrowers. The book budget is the highest of any public library in the State of Illinois with the exception of the Chicago Public Library. The Skokie Public Library is recognized world-wide.

Mr. Green stated that charts which had been distributed to each person explained how the Library functions and the laws regarding election of the Library Board; also that while we are permitted a tax levy of 1.2 we cannot levy it. The tax can only be levied by the Board of Trustees of the Village of Skokie. The law says the Library Board of Directors shall determine the budget, transmit it to the Village Board of Directors which shall then levy a tax to raise the funds for the Library. They cannot alter or change the budget of the Library. The Board of Trustees of the Village Library cannot erect a new building without approval of the Board of Trustees of the Village. The Library must submit plans to the Village for approval or rejection. If approved they may say "this is wonderful - go ahead and build but we are not going to float any bonds." When this happens the Library can accumulate taxes - there

is a law permitting this. On the other hand, the Village Trustees may say, "we will issue Village bonds (not Library bonds) but these are redeemed by the Library building taxes." There is one other way -- the Library may mortgage its property but the Village must approve it. The Board of Library Directors under the law is charged with the responsibility of the operation of the Library, employment of an administrator, and the kind of service it provides. The Board is responsible for the selection of books in this Library, but book selection is a professional job. This Board has only one policy on the selection of books - we will not agree to any censorship of any book in this Library. The Board is responsible for the service the Library provides. How do you evaluate service? The Library is the cultural agency in a community to stimulate interest in books, art and all aspects of culture. This Library also provides a reference service, readers advisory service and a record collection.

Mr. Green continued, saying that the Library Board is composed of six members and elects its own president who serves for a term of two years. Various members of the Library Board serve on the following committees. Community Relationship - Rabbi Weiner; Publicity - Mr. Erickson; and Land and Sites was under Mr. Louis Weingart who has resigned. He explained that the Library Board does not become involved in the administration of the Library as this is the Librarian's job. The Board does determine the policy but how it is implemented is up to the Librarian.

He mentioned the difference there will be in the library of the future with the use of the computer, memory banks, etc. and informed the Committee that the new Board member, Mr. Kraft, is an expert in this field.

The meeting was interrupted at this point for Miss Radmacher to give the Committee a conducted tour of the Library.

Upon resumption of the meeting the President introduced the Librarian,

Miss Mary Radmacher, who gave a brief talk and explanation of the papers which had been distributed to each member of the Committee.

Mr. Green recapped the meeting by saying the Board will help in any way and be available at any time. He read the Resolution for appointing the President's Citizens Advisory Committee for Library Expansion as passed by the Board and stated it is hoped the Committee will make recommendations, but final decisions will be the responsibility of the Board itself. Also, if their recommendation is that a referendum be held, it is expected the Committee will assist in educating the people to support it.

Mr. Green announced for the purpose of this first meeting Mr. Edwin Simon had been appointed to serve as chairman and had graciously consented to act a liaison between the Committee and the Library Board. The President requested, on behalf of the Board, questions be channeled to the Chairman and he, in turn, to some member of the Board. That member will then refer it to the proper staff member for reply.

In conclusion the President again thanked those present for their willingness to serve on this Committee and stressed how much their work will mean to this community in the future for the functioning of their Library.

The combined meeting was concluded at 10:20 p.m. at which time the Citizens Committee met.

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Selma Petty

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Secretary