



Minutes of the Regular Meeting of
The Board of Trustees
Webster Groves Public Library
February 18, 2015

The meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Webster Groves Public Library was held at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, February 18, 2015. President Nancy Marshall presided and Library Director Tom Cooper kept the minutes. Also present: Trustees Bill Kuc, Bethany Curtis, Andrew Rushing, Peter Ruger, Nicole Chaput, Bob Herdler and Joan Esserman, and City Council Liaison Greg Mueller. Absent: Trustee Jackie Brenne.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

Public Agenda

There was no public agenda.

Minutes of the February 18, 2015 Meeting

Mr. Ruger moved to accept the minutes as presented, Mr. Kuc seconded, and the minutes were approved.

Correspondence

Mr. Cooper read 5 e-mails and one letter, all from Webster Groves residents, that he had received concerning the contract between St. Louis County Library and Webster Groves Public Library.

1. From Robert Moody, in support of ending the contract. Mr. Moody spoke mostly to the fiscal obligations of a public board, and his perception that this was an important step in continuing the Board's history over the past several years of returning the library to a strong financial position.
2. From Lettie Morse, who noted that County Library had a much larger collection of e-Books than Webster Groves PL, and that was reason enough for her to want us to maintain our relationship with them.
3. From Mike Weltzin, who called the thought of ending the contract 'a dumb idea.'
4. From Robert Koch, who urged the Board not to end an arrangement that provides Webster Groves residents 'access to the much larger collections of materials owned by County Library.' He cited not only their print and audio-visual materials, but the online databases provided through their Website. He further thought the \$.25 fee per item to be a bargain, considering purchasing those same materials would cost much more.

5. From Richard Snyder, who urged the Board not to end the arrangement with County Library, mostly because of the great resources he uses at their Website.
6. From Kelli Unnerstall, who stressed that if there are high fees, it is because Webster Groves residents want to use the service. Ending the relationship would deprive our residents of 18 County Library branches, and what amounts to about 1.8% of our annual operating budget ensures that 'ALL residents have access to one of the best library collections in the region.' She pointed out that she supported the 2009 tax levy increase, but would not have if she had thought the library would try to cut services.

President's Report

There was no President's report.

Librarian's Report

Mr. Cooper reported that the Missouri House Committee for Appropriations—General Administration has approved amendments to HB12 (the omnibus budget bill) and will now send those recommendations to the full House Budget Committee. The amendments ask for nearly \$1.4 million in additional State Aid to libraries, and \$3.1 million to fund the Remote Electronic Access for Libraries (REAL) program. These measures, if eventually approved by the full House, would nearly eliminate the devastating cuts to Missouri's public libraries made by Governor Nixon. He urged trustees to contact their legislators.

Advanced Planning

Ms. Chaput reported that the Strategic Planning Committee has reviewed four proposals from consultants to perform a community survey for us. The Committee is recommending ETC Institute to do this work. While not the least expensive of the proposals, their pricing was competitive. They presented the most appealing methodology for conducting a survey, and came highly recommended by other Missouri public library directors. Mr. Ruger moved to approve the recommendation, Mr. Rushing seconded, and the motion passed. Mr. Cooper will speak to them soon to get a more formal price estimate.

Automation/Systems

There was no report from this committee.

Building and Grounds

Ms. Marshall reported that the Building and Grounds Committee met with Eric Bronner earlier this month to talk about the next phase of the landscape project. Mr. Bronner has already given \$5,000 this year through the Bronner Family Foundation, and promised another \$5,000. Ms. Marshall plans now to speak with the Friends to see if they are willing to provide most or all of the additional funds needed to complete the second phase.

Finance

Mr. Herdler reviewed the Financial Report for January 2015. He estimates we are on track to end the fiscal year with a \$600K to \$650K reserve, even though given this year's expenses we will be somewhat over budget. This should be sufficient to see us through the tax anticipation cycle.

Human Resource

There was no report from this committee.

Policy

Mr. Ruger presented his summary of the January 21 public engagement meeting concerning Webster Groves Public Library's contractual arrangement with St. Louis County Library.

He reported that the Policy Committee met again on February 9. By a 3 to 1 vote the Committee is recommending to discontinue the contract with St. Louis County Library. They are further recommending that the Board take another month to deliberate and consider the matter before it comes to a vote, perhaps at the March Board meeting.

Committee members gave these thoughts on the reasons for their votes:

Ms. Curtis observed that most of the things people criticized about Webster Groves Public Library were things that could be easily changed—such as placement of collections, crowded shelves, etc., and she believes saving the money that goes to service the contract will help make those improvements.

Ms. Chaput, who favors retaining the contract, believes it is an important service. She spoke of the value of our library being integrated with library service across the region. While she does think the fees are currently too high, that is something we can work on through public education and through improvements to our own services.

Mr. Ruger, who also voted to discontinue the contract, believes that a library, similar to non-profit organizations, should use its resources for providing its main purpose, and our main purpose is to provide the best library service to Webster Groves residents.

Ms. Brenne, the third vote in favor of discontinuing the contract, was absent.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

Mr. Cooper reviewed the current insurance proposal from Cincinnati Insurance.

These revisions to the FY 2014-2015 operating budget were considered:

1. Transfer \$10,000 from Full Time to Part Time.
2. Add \$7,000 to Professional Services. This is almost all accounted for by the fees we are paying to law firm Gilmore & Bell to do bond compliance work, which was an unanticipated expense. Brian Krippner, our current agent at

UMB, recommended Gilmore & Bell as the best firm to assist with these filings.

3. Add \$2,000 to Maintenance & Repairs. We are over here largely because of the expense of changing burned out lights, which has to be done by professionals since many of them are very high and hard to change. We are using RJP Electric. They also on their first visit recommended re-lamping the lights in the atrium which burned out too quickly. Since they replaced them they have never burned out, which is nice, but it was a large up-front expense.
4. Add \$6,000 to Equipment. This is mostly because our main server needed to be replaced, an unanticipated expense.

Mr. Herdler moved to approve the budget revisions, Ms. Curtis seconded, and the revisions were approved.

Mr. Cooper reported that Webster Groves Public Library's current annual non-resident fee is \$35, while most libraries in the region charge \$50. He asked if ours could be raised to \$50. Ms. Chaput moved to raise the annual non-resident fee to \$50, Mr. Ruger seconded, and the motion passed.

Noting that the usually scheduled March Board meeting would fall during Webster Groves School District's Spring Break week, Ms. Brenne had asked if the Board would like to reschedule that meeting. It was agreed to move the March meeting to March 25th at 7 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

The next meeting of the Library's Board of Trustees will be held on Wednesday, March 25 at 7 p.m.