

Durham Public Library

Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Wednesday, March 14, 2018

Approved 4-11-18

Present: Roni Pekins (Alternate), Charlotte Ramsay, Jenna Roberts, Susan Roman, Bill Schoonmaker, Carolyn Singer, and Nancy Webb.

Guest: Peggy Thrasher.

Absent: Toby Ball (Alternate), Anne Knight, and Dianne Thompson.

The meeting was brought to order by Chair Jenna Roberts at 6:55 PM. Roni Pekins was made a voting member of the board upon Bill Schoonmaker's anticipated early departure.

1. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda was made by Susan Roman and seconded by Nancy Webb. All were in favor. Bill Schoonmaker asked that the Public Session be moved up in the agenda because he had to leave early. All were in agreement.

2. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the last meeting were not available at this time. Although minutes from prior board meetings have been approved, they have not yet been posted on the DPL website. A discussion ensued regarding the need to post minutes in a more timely manner. Jenna Roberts noted we are not required to post minutes, but must make them available upon request. During Judy Haskell's tenure as Interim Director it was decided to just keep the minutes electronically. Several Trustees, however, felt that we should reconsider this practice and post board meeting minutes both on the DPL website and in hard copy in easily accessible notebooks.

3. Public Comments

Jenna Roberts and Charlotte Ramsay noted they had forwarded letters to the Trustees they had received concerning the recent resignations of staff members. Three members of the community had heard various things and had expressed concern. All Trustees understood they were not at liberty to discuss personnel issues, even though there was significant misinformation circulating.

A discussion followed on how the Trustees could keep the public better informed of changes at the Library. For example, Jenna noted that during Interim Director Judy Haskell's tenure, many staff members were unable to make staff meetings. Consequently, the decision was made to hold "leadership meetings" instead. Under this model, Chair Jenna Roberts and Vice Chair Charlotte Ramsay would meet weekly with the Library Director as well as the Director of Children's Services and the Director of Adult Services.

Each respective department head would then be responsible for briefing their staff. This practice continues under the directorship of Rose Bebris.

Jenna also noted that she worked with staff to develop their skills. Staff were provided with access to research materials, webinars on how to develop budgets, how to build leadership teams, and how to do evaluations. Funding for professional development was also made available so staff could attend workshops/conferences. It was during this time a decision was made to cross train staff. This was not the policy of the previous Library Director.

Because the Trustees are not allowed to discuss personnel issues, all recognized the difficulty, and therefore frustration, of not being able to respond sufficiently to the inquiries.

Carolyn Singer further noted that following the departure of a long term Director, staff often have difficulty adjusting to new leadership styles. Also, Trustees noted that during the building of the new Library, Tom Madden was exclusively focused on the planning process. He was very “hands-off” during this time and left day-to-day operations to others.

Trustees commented that over the past three years considerable time was spent on strategic planning sessions, trustee workshops, and that a community survey was commissioned in order to assess library strengths and challenges. Trustees then used the survey and strategic planning results to guide the selection of the new permanent Library Director following Tom Madden’s departure. Better customer service emerged as a top priority of survey respondents. Survey results also indicated not everyone felt welcome, and that programming was not always offered at convenient times.

Sensing a cultural shift was in order, these priorities were kept in mind during the selection process of the new Library Director. Rose Bebris was hired in that she was determined to be best suited to lead the Library in this new direction.

All DPL Trustees want to affirm their support of Rose Bebris.

Susan Roman suggested that staff bios be posted somewhere in the Library given the addition of several new staff members. While at the polls on March 13th, she said many residents commented on the helpful and pleasant demeanor of Cheryl, Jesse, and Amy.

Roni Pekins, Bill Schoonmaker, Nancy Webb, and Carolyn Singer felt the Trustees needed to make a statement clarifying the staff departures – which were all resignations. (To clarify – no one was discharged/terminated.)

Jenna will draft a statement and offer to the Trustees for edits.

4. Treasurer's Report

Susan Roman moved that we accept \$457.85 in additional revenue. Charlotte Ramsay seconded the motion. All were in favor, motion passed.

Bill Schoonmaker said he had moved the remainder of Sibylle Carlson's memorial fund to pay for the story walk that should be installed in April. He also suggested we designate the remaining memorial funds (Stuart Parker and L. Pat Habif). Trustees felt these funds should be allocated to staff needs.

The 2017-2018 Annual Appeal currently stands at \$22,326. It will be officially closed out 3/31/2018.

Jenna Roberts and Susan Roman will follow up with Library Director Rose Bebris to post a notice in Foster's regarding the public hearing to accept and designate the use of the 2017-18 Annual Appeal. Notice of the public hearing must be published prior to March 28, 2018 in order to have the hearing at our 4/11/18 meeting (10 business days prior to the hearing).

Bill noted he had closed out accounts at Federal Savings Bank, but not yet at Citizens Bank. Accounts have been consolidated at People's Untied Community Bank.

Bill has almost finished onboarding Anne Knight relative to the Treasurer's responsibilities. All that is remaining is for him to show her how to do the monthly reports. Bill graciously said he would be available to help if needed.

Charlotte Ramsay made a motion to accept \$8,490.00 in expenses (to ENE Systems of NH) for Lennox Stage 1 condensing coil and re-piping for the air handling unit. Susan Roman seconded the motion. All were in favor, motion passed.

5. Non-Public Session (7:35 PM).

Charlotte Ramsay made a motion to go into non-public session – RSA 91-A: 3; II; a, b—30. Susan Roman seconded the motion. A roll call was made, all were in favor, motion passed.

Bill Schoonmaker left at 8:00 PM.

A motion to come out of the non-public session was made by Carolyn Singer, and seconded by Susan Roman. All were in favor. The non-public session ended at 8:20 PM.

8:22 PM Back to Regular Meeting.

Susan Roman made a motion to seal the minutes from the non-public session, motion seconded by Jenna Roberts. All were in favor.

The hiring process is underway for one position, the other two PT positions will be posted shortly.

6. Chair Update

Jenna Roberts asked Trustees to review the schedule for future meetings presented in the Agenda.

We will hold a board strategic planning session in June. Roni Pekins will send a Doodle Poll to Trustees to establish a convenient date. Since this is Year 3 of our current Three Year Strategic Plan, we expect this workshop to be longer than last year's.

Jenna Roberts noted Trustees need to evaluate Library Director Rose Bebris soon. Jenna will bring a template for an evaluation to the next Board Meeting.

The FY2018 operating budget needs to be finalized soon as well.

7. Friends' Report

The Friends asked staff to provide them with a Wish List so they could distribute approximately \$10,000 in funds. Since the Board of Trustees is also asking for a staff Wish List, Jenna asked that expenditures be clearly designated as "from the Friends" or "from the Board of Trustees".

There remains a chronic shortage of cookie bakers and book sorters.

Bill Schoonmaker attended the Friend's meeting (in addition to other Trustees) to address concerns about the recent staff departures. Again, the inability to discuss personnel issues coupled with a significant amount of misinformation, frustrated the Trustees in attendance. All Trustees voiced their support of Library Director Rose Bebris.

8. Old Business

Two individuals have expressed an interest in serving as Alternate Trustees. Does an onboarding process for Trustees need to be developed?

9. New Business

Jenna is to draft a statement concerning changes at the Library.

A motion was made by Susan Roman to adjourn, seconded by Nancy Webb. All were in favor. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Submitted by Carolyn Singer

