

**Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting
of the Board of Directors
HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY
September 4, 2008**

Present: Jo Champlain Casey, Gregory Davis, Stephen Goddard, Connie Green, William Large, Elizabeth Noel, Enid Rey, Annette Sanderson, Paul Shipman, and Geraldine Sullivan.

Also present: Louise Blalock, chief librarian; Jenny Benedict, deputy chief librarian for public services; Gary Furtek, business manager, and Catherine D'Italia, special assistant, Office of the Chief Librarian. Steve Goode, *Hartford Courant* reporter and members of the community attended the meeting.

President Geraldine Sullivan called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes

Board Action: Motions to approve the minutes of the June 5, July 25, and August 12 meetings were made, seconded and approved.

2. Announcements and Communications

Chief Librarian Louise Blalock announced gifts from the Aaron and Simon Hollander Funds. Annually the library receives gifts earmarked for furniture and equipment.

3. President's Report

President Geraldine Sullivan began the meeting by introducing Connie Belton Green, newly appointed by the Court of Common Council.

President Sullivan told the board that she and Chief Librarian Louise Blalock had met with Mayor Eddie A. Perez and Council President Calixto Torres and the mayor proposed the following:

The City will provide \$50,000 to the Library from the City Council's Civic and Cultural Affairs funds. Upon completion of the Audit Commission's report on the Library initiated by the Council and the City's 1st Quarter report, the Mayor, Council and Library board (the "parties") agree to meet and identify an additional \$150,000 drawn from savings found in other areas of the City's budget, including any found in the Audit Commission's audit of the Library. Additionally the Library will agree to re-open the closed branches and keep all branches open until the end of the fiscal year 2008-09. And lastly the Library board will agree to collaborate with the Mayor and Council and keep them informed of future Library actions related to branch closings.

President Sullivan asked the board for their comments and a lengthy discussion followed which included discussion about the financial condition of the city; the likelihood of money being found through the audit; the negotiated \$200,000 that was not delivered; and the importance of re-opening the branches and keeping the dialogue open. Paul Shipman suggested that the city administration was attempting to control library policy by withholding funding.

President Sullivan presented a draft for discussion purposes of a letter agreement to the mayor in response to the mayor's proposal. The following is the wording of the letter agreement in regards to actions to be taken by the library:

The Library agrees to the concept outlined above and responds to your proposal as follows:

- (i) the Library accepts the \$50,000 contribution to be provided by the City from the Council's Civic and Cultural Affairs funds;
- (ii) the Library will agree to re-open the closed branches on or before Monday, September 15, 2008;
- (iii) all branches will remain open until the end of the fiscal year 2008-09;
- (iv) with respect to the Audit Commission's report and its findings, the Library will not cut or eliminate any programs and/or services during fiscal year 2008-09 as a means of finding savings to contribute towards the remaining \$150,000 needed for the re-opening of the closed branches. At the heart of the Library's value to the community are the programs it offers to children, which provide learning enrichment, guided study and a safe haven for young people. Programs that support adult literacy and learning help to stabilize families by increasing employability and life skills. Citizenship programs enable new residents of our city to become quickly acclimated and become economically self-sufficient, engaged citizens of Hartford. To eliminate these programs would result in a significant loss of services for the people of Hartford. Notwithstanding, the Library agrees to consider non-programmatic savings identified in the Audit Commission's report;
- (v) the Council and the City agree to fund the additional \$150,000 minus any cost savings from the Library (discussed herein in paragraph (iv)). All funding decisions shall be completed no later than two weeks after the City's 1st Quarter report is released.

Discussion followed reiterating many of the same topics that were discussed earlier on the mayor's proposal. Stephen Goddard questioned whether the mayor would sign an agreement.

Board Action: A motion stating that the sense of the board was to wait for the audit completion and send the letter with some restructuring as needed, seconded and approved.

4. Committee Reports

Development

Greg Davis reported that the development assessment is being conducted and asked that board members take some time and complete the development survey needed to complete the assessment.

The next meeting is a joint meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee and the Development Committee on October 2.

Finance

William Large reported on the quarterly meeting with Fiduciary Investment Advisors. While library funds did reflect losses they managed fairly well in relationship to the market. Fund A lost \$39,530 and Fund B lost \$111,135. Large reminded the board that the equity market is cyclical and the Board has chosen a long term strategy.

Nominating

Jo Champlin Casey welcomed Connie Green to the board following her appointment by the Court of Common Council. Casey placed the names of Linda Bayer, Jody Morneault, George Scott and James Thompson in nomination as Corporators.

Board Action: A motion to elect the four new Corporators was made, seconded and passed.

The next meeting of the committee is September 16.

Security Task Force

President Sullivan gave a brief report on the task force's work and said there would be recommendations within the month and that there will be costs to implement recommendations.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 8.

Strategic Planning

There will be a joint meeting of the Strategic Planning and Development committees on October 2.

5. Chief Librarian's Report

The chief librarian told the board that the library closed FY07-08 with a balanced year-end budget but that it is provisional because the city had not yet closed its year.

The chief librarian said that year-end Performance Report showed strong outcomes, but it is likely that will change with the reduction of services throughout the system.

The chief librarian announced her retirement effective at the end of the calendar year. She said; "I have had a rewarding experience in Hartford as the Chief Librarian, enjoyed working with the talented staff of the library, and have been especially honored to serve the people of the City. I appreciate the goodwill and support that has been extended to me by board members past and present over the years. I am grateful for all the opportunity that has been offered me during my tenure."

President Sullivan thanked the chief librarian for her service and remarked that her vision had brought the library into the 21st century.

6. Old Business

No old business was brought to the table.

7. Other Business

The Chief Librarian requested a motion to authorize her to sign the E-rate grant.

Board Action: A motion to authorize the chief librarian to sign the E-rate grant was made, seconded and approved.

The chief librarian requested a resolution to authorize her to sign a Connecticut State Department of Education grant.

Resolved, that Louise Blalock, who is the Chief Librarian, of this corporation is empowered to execute and deliver in the name and on behalf of this corporation a certain contracts with the Connecticut State Department of Education, and to affix the corporate seal.

Board Action: A motion to pass the resolution was made, seconded and approved.

Under new business President Sullivan informed the board about CT Statute 11-36 which allows for 50 citizens to request a referendum that would designate up to 3 mills for library funding. A local attorney had alerted President Sullivan to the statute. The sense of the Board of Directors is that the possibility of a referendum should be explored. Gregory Davis, Stephen Goddard, Paul Shipman, Connie Green and Enid Rey will pursue information including speaking with the director of Bridgeport Public Library. Bridgeport will have a referendum this year.

8. Public Comment Session

The following members of the community spoke: Sabrina Hope, Donna Thompson-Daniels, Councilman Larry Deutsch, Carla Williams and William Baker. The community members' words were heartfelt and several wondered if the board could reconsider its earlier action.

Board Action: A motion to reconsider the earlier action on waiting for the audit was made, seconded and approved.

Board Action: A motion to send the letter agreement to the mayor with a change in opening date was made, seconded and approved.

President Geraldine Sullivan moved the meeting to Executive Session on personnel.

Respectively submitted,

Louise Blalock, Acting Secretary