

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS  
OF THE  
CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS**

**February 23, 2010**

President Cusack called the meeting of the Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids to order at 6PM in the Boardroom of 111 Library St. NE.

1. Roll Call

Board Members Present: Blickley, Botts, Cusack, Lumpkins, VanderVelde and Witteveen-Lane

Administration Present: Baar, Corrado, Ehlers, Jakel and Warner

Others Present: Elizabeth White, Deputy City Attorney; Marcie Lewis and Margie Kindel, Library Foundation; Jen Nobach, staff member; William Baldrige, Jeff Edwards and Marshall Grate, Board applicants

President Cusack, along with Commissioners VanderVelde and Blickley, took a moment to share good news.

2. Public Comments on Agenda Items – None

President Cusack welcomed the visitors to the meeting.

3. Approval of Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of 1/26/10

**MOVED by Commissioner VanderVelde, seconded by Commissioner Blickley, to approve the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of January 26, 2010. Unanimously carried.**

4. Board Comments

a. Board Vacancy Committee

President Cusack stated that applicant questionnaires are due by the end of the week. She, along with Commissioners Botts and Lumpkins, will be meeting on March 4 to review the applications and will choose 3-4 finalists for the Board's review. The Board will be receiving the applications and questionnaires of the top finalists, for review, following the meeting on March 4. The finalists will be asked to attend the March meeting, where a final selection will be made.

b. Legislative Committee

Commissioner Blickley asked for a legislative update from Director Warner. Director Warner reported that she, along with Nancy Robertson (State Librarian), Gretchen Couraud (MLA Director) and a few other individuals were allowed to address the legislature in Lansing. A well coordinated push for Mel and Mel delivery, state aid and penal fines was made. She noted that there will be a state-wide push in March to make calls and appointments with legislators as well as a letter and email sending campaign to the House and Senate. She stated that she would let the Board know when that will occur specifically. President Cusack asked if we could make an obvious effort to inform our patrons at Main and the branches, perhaps through a bookmark.

6. Other Reports

- a. Statistical Report for January 2010
- b. Staff Changes

Commissioner VanderVelde commented on the improvement in statistics. She also asked if any of the open positions have been advertised outside of the Library. Mr. Baar confirmed that some have been advertised externally.

7. Staff & Foundation Reports

- a. Library Director's Report

Director Warner reported that Taste of Soul Sunday was a huge success with an attendance of 1,800. Commissioner Witteveen-Lane said she was amazed by the event, it was wonderful.

Commissioner Lumpkins commented on the Library's outreach efforts; great opportunities and happy to see these relationships and partnerships developing.

Assistant Director Ehlers distributed an abstract of the IMLS grant we applied for in conjunction with Calvin College and gave a brief update on the RFID project. She explained it will be an approximate \$1.5 million project overall with about \$875,000 of that in cost sharing and in-kind contributions. Approximately 50 students from Calvin, Grand Valley and Kendall College will be involved as well.

President Cusack thanked those involved for their work on the grant and commented that she is glad to see staff working hand-in-hand with the Foundation which ensures more opportunity for success.

Ms. Ehlers did note that if we were not to get the grant, we are prepared to move forward with the project and Calvin is committed to working with us, though we would need to find funding for portions of what the grant would have covered.

b. Financial Update

Mr. Jakel reported that our revenues and expenses are right on track and he hopes to finish the year with a surplus.

c. Communications Update

Ms. Corrado had nothing additional to add to her written report. President Cusack stated it is nice to have the written update and thanked Ms. Corrado.

d. GRPL Foundation Report

Ms. Lewis had nothing additional to add to her written report. President Cusack welcomed Ms. Kindel stating it was nice to have her in attendance, great for building communication.

8. Old Business – None

9. New Business

a. FY11 Budget Discussion

Mr. Jakel reported that the FY11 budget does show a deficit due to the fact that tax revenues are \$216,000 less than what was budgeted for in FY10. Total revenues are projected to be down by about \$135,000. He stated that although this is a big decline, he feels that this can be offset by the addition of state aid to the operating fund and reduced expenditures, primarily relating to retiree health care if we are successful in transferring retirees to a lower cost plan. He explained that he added a vacancy and turnover “credit” because we have found that our compensation expenses have been lower than budgeted over the past 2-3 years. This, along with lower hospitalization insurance, help to offset the increases in retirement fund and retiree health care costs. Using this “credit” will eliminate the cushion at year end, however it was needed due to the decline in revenue and increased retirement costs.

Mr. Jakel stated that insurance claims, insurance premiums and operating transfers out, all charges from the City that we have no control over, have increased from FY10. However, he feels that these expenses can be offset by the reduction in natural gas prices and lower professional development due to fewer conferences falling in FY11 compared to the current year.

Mr. Jakel recommended keeping the materials budget at the same amount budgeted in FY10 and no cuts to services.

Director Warner explained that the Library is expected to present their budget to the City Manager prior to the Board's approval. She requested that if they would like substantial changes made to the budget to please let her know before March 3.

- b. Resolution to Approve Implementation of an Electronic Library Card Application/Signature and Purchase of Signature Capture Pads

Ms. Nobach gave a brief overview of the current and proposed procedures. Brief discussion occurred regarding the need for so many signature pads and issues of privacy. Director Warner reported that she did discuss this proposal with the City Attorney's office who stated this method is as legal as the library's current practice.

**MOVED by Commissioner VanderVelde, seconded by Commissioner Lumpkins, that the Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids approves the implementation of an electronic library card application/signature and purchase of signature capture pads. Unanimously carried.**

- c. Resolution to Authorize an Additional Contribution to Fund the Conversion of Employees from the Defined Benefit Retiree Health Plan to the Defined Contribution Retiree Health Savings Plan

Mr. Jakel explained that the City underestimated our initial contribution for employees who have chosen to convert to the defined contribution retiree health savings plan. Because of this, we must make up the difference with our reserved funds. He stated that by recognizing this cost now rather than later, as we have done in the past, will provide the Library a substantial cost savings in the future. Mr. Jakel stated he would recommend taking a portion of the fund balance to make up for the shortfall of the initial contribution.

Discussion occurred. Commissioner VanderVelde asked if it will be mandatory for the current retirees to switch to the new plan or will they have the option to remain in the current plan. Mr. Jakel stated that we are responsible for providing retirees with a plan, but which plan specifically is not identified. He noted that he and Mr. Baar will be addressing this issue in the next several weeks. Mr. Jakel also stated that union staff have been promised that their initial contributions would be made by March 15.

**MOVED by Commissioner Blickley, seconded by Commissioner VanderVelde, that the Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids authorizes funding the initial contributions for Library employees who chose to convert to the Retiree Health Savings**

**Accounts, and hereby authorize an additional contribution in the amount of \$363,647 to convert employees from the Retiree Health Plan to lower the cost of funding such benefit to a fixed amount in the future. Unanimously carried.**

President Cusack thanked Mr. Jakel and Mr. Baar for their research and work to facilitate the switch in health care providers and retiree health care.

d. Google Ultra High Speed Network Discussion

Commissioner VanderVelde distributed information on Google's high speed network. She stated there are two ways to alert Google to the community's interest, one is by registering as an individual, the other is by registering as an organization. Commissioner VanderVelde proposed that the Library Board respond to Google showing that the Library is supportive. President Cusack felt that she and the Board needed more information before responding as a Library or Library Board. Director Warner stated she would contact the City regarding their role.

10. Information Items

- a. Media Index
- b. Board & Administrator – February 2010

11. Grand Rapids Employees Independent Union, Library Rank & File and Supervisory Units

There was no one present from the Union.

12. Agenda Items for Regular Board meeting (March 30, 2010)

- a. FY11 Budget Approval
- b. Service Awards
- c. Business Librarian Presentation
- d. PLA Conference Reports
- e. Board Candidate Interviews and Appointment

13. Public Comments – None

Meeting adjourned at 7:28PM.