

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

**March 31, 2009**

President Meyering called the meeting of the Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids to order at 6:04PM in the Boardroom of 111 Library St. NE.

1. Roll Call

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

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

Others Present: Elizabeth White, Deputy City Attorney; Mary Knudstrup, GREIU Representative; Kimberly VanDyke and Sylvia Harris, Neighborhood Ventures; Bill Ott and Randy Stewart, staff

2. Service Award Recognition

Director Warner presented Mr. Stewart with a 20 year service award. On behalf of the Board of Library Commissioners, she thanked him for his service to the Library.

3. Presentation – Neighborhood Ventures

Ms. VanDyke stated that Neighborhood Ventures has undertaken a placemaker project in the Madison Square neighborhood and would very much like to forge a partnership with the Library. She explained that the goal of the project is to create space in the community, for the community to enjoy, that the community has had a part in creating. Beautification of that area is their top priority.

Ms. Harris explained that the placemaker they envision placing on the Madison Square property would be a multi-sided monument/information kiosk that would take up a 13x13 ft. area on the northwest corner. It would include permanent information as well as an area for community events and would be surrounded by native plantings. She explained that all maintenance of the placemaker, as well as the plantings, would be the responsibility of Neighborhood Ventures. She stated that they'd like to begin construction in June and be finished by the fall and hoped to gain site approval from the Board at this meeting.

The Board had several questions and concerns regarding the actual design (which there was not one yet), maintenance of the area, potential graffiti, the library's financial responsibility, and obstruction of the current library sign. The Library would also like an agreement that the Library retain ownership and that

the placemaker could be removed in the future for expansion or other use of that space by the Library at any time.

Ms. VanDyke stated that they are unable to move forward with a design until they have site approval. Once the site has been approved, the designer would then complete up to three designs which the community would vote on. Director Warner expressed her surprise that they only have one site in mind and would expect to gain approval this evening when the Board had no previous information and no design to look at.

President Meyering requested more information before the Board would give their approval. Ms. VanDyke said they would be glad to come back at a later date with designs.

4. Public Comments on Agenda Items – None
5. Approval of Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of 2/24/09

Commissioner Lumpkins stated that Director Warner was referred to as Commissioner Warner on page two of the minutes and requested that correction be made.

**MOVED by Commissioner Blickley, seconded by Commissioner VanderVelde, to approve the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of February 24, 2009, as amended. Unanimously carried.**

6. Board Comments

Commissioner Blickley commented on the Technology Plan and how easy to understand and readable it is. Commissioner VanderVelde agreed.

Commissioner Cusack asked if other Board members received the letter from the gentleman in Rockford. Director Warner stated that we would prepare a response for President Meyering's signature.

Commissioner Cusack also asked that Director Warner forward any future email correspondence from MLA to the Board.

7. Committee Reports – None
8. Other Reports

- a. Statistical Report for February 2009

Commissioner Cusack stated she is still concerned with the drop in circulation. Director Warner stated that the biggest drop in circulation is occurring at Ottawa Hills and Yankee Clipper which border Kent District branches. For the most part, all other branches have been steadily

increasing. She stated that if we continue to see such declines after we go live with MelCat, we might want to do some very pointed PR at those two branches. Mr. Ott added that we are now gathering our own statistics rather than relying on those provided to us from Lakeland.

Commissioner Witteveen-Lane commented on the rise in library cards. Director Warner attributed this to newly implemented card guidelines as well to the switch to Evergreen.

b. Staff Changes Report

Commissioner Cusack commented on Amy Cochran's transfer to Seymour and asked if she will still be involved with the Small Business Resource Center. Director Warner stated that someone new will take over those responsibilities.

10. Staff & Foundation Reports

a. Library Director's Report

Director Warner had nothing additional to add to her written report.

b. GRPL Foundation Discussion

President Meyering reported that the Foundation met on March 24. This meeting focused on strategic planning and all Library board members were invited to attend. He stated that the Foundation identified four areas of importance – to establish the Ryerson Legacy Society; develop one campaign only for fundraising; formalize communication between the Foundation and the Library; and develop a list of compelling initiatives. The Foundation will meet again on May 5.

Director Warner stated she asked the Library's management team to prioritize the Foundation's list of initiatives. Ms. Ehlers distributed the Library's prioritized list of Foundation fundraising to the Board for their information.

President Meyering stated that those Board members who sit on the Foundation board along with the Director and Ms. Ehlers would be meeting on April 3 to discuss further.

c. Financial Update

Mr. Jakel briefly summarized the budget and reported that the Library should end the fiscal year with a surplus. He stated that the surplus realized from the capital fund will be allocated to future building improvements.

Commissioner Cusack commented that because technology is so essential to the Library's operations, would we want to consider creating a reserve for technology needs similar to what we have done for building improvements. Director Warner stated that if we were to take on RFID ourselves, then perhaps we would.

Mr. Jakel distributed a summary of tax captures taken from the Library from 1997 to present. Commissioner Cusack asked if those figures could be compared to the property tax revenue increases.

10. Old Business – None

11. New Business

a. Technology Plan Presentation

Mr. Ott stated it is a requirement to have a current Technology Plan in place and on file with the Library of Michigan in order to continue to receive Universal Service Funds. The Board complimented the thoroughness and readability of the plan.

**MOVED by Commissioner Botts, seconded by Commissioner Lumpkins, that the Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids is in support of the Library's Technology Plan. Unanimously carried.**

b. Health Care Proposal

Mr. Baar stated that currently one of the steps the City has taken to contain health care costs is an employee contribution toward health coverage. For several months, the City and Library's non-represented employees have been contributing and soon the represented employees will be required to make these same contributions as well.

Mr. Baar stated that the Library would like to institute a new health care plan for employees separate from the City's plan that would also require an employee contribution. He stated the plan that seems to be most favorable is Priority Health Choice POS (point of service). He distributed information which showed rates, savings and contribution costs. He stated that the City's current composite rate per month per employee is \$1,234.60 compared to Priority Health which is \$795.10 per month per employee.

Benefits of this plan are cost savings to the Library and to the employees who are required to contribute. The plan offers the Library the greatest opportunity for savings while providing a similar level of coverage and encourages employees to change some unhealthy lifestyle choices through financial disincentives.

Mr. Baar noted that whatever plan that is decided upon must be negotiated with the Union. Those conversations have already begun.

12. Information Items – None
13. Grand Rapids Employees Independent Union, Library Rank & File and Supervisory Units – No Report
14. Agenda Items for Regular Board Meeting (April 28, 2009)
  - a. Appointment of Board Member to the Literacy Center Board  
  
Commissioner Botts stated he would be willing to sit on the Literacy Center's Board.
15. Public Comments – None

Meeting adjourned at 7:55PM.