

MEETING MINUTES -- February 21, 2006
Kent County, MD Public Library Board of Trustees

Introduction

The meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Kent County Public Library was convened on 2/21/2006 in the Yellow Building at 3:15PM.

In attendance were Jerry Keiser and all board members except Louise Durocher and Shirley Eklund.

The minutes of the prior meeting of January 9th were presented and approved.

President's Comments

Rebecca Taylor, board president began the meeting with her observations during her recent visit to the Rock Hall branch. The hours of the branch are Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9-6 and Saturday 9-3 and it is staffed primarily by Jean Geibel, and Josie Williamson with the assistance of volunteers. The branch provides computer access along with the traditional Library resources. Jerry Keiser agreed with Jim Blake's suggestion that the Library staff could assist many patrons with conducting simple internet searches on medical conditions and drug therapy.

Children's Programs

Jerry Keiser described the several programs now underway specifically directed to children. The programs are greatly appreciated by both the children and parents. They serve to introduce Library services to young patrons aged between 3 and 6 which will pay dividends to the next generation of Library patrons.

Friends of Library

Mr. Craig Damon, president of the Friends of the Library was in attendance to discuss matters of mutual concern to the Library and the Friends. It was noted that the Friends provides annual funding to the Library averaging about \$15,000 annually. The Friends raise money principally from membership dues and used book sales. The books are donated to the Library which donates them to the Friends for book sales intended to raise funds donated back to the Library. Mr. Damon voiced the concern of his membership that the donation request letter from the Library on behalf of the Foundation could interfere with the Friends membership drive efforts and the charitable donations it receives from the community. Mr. Keiser noted that most public libraries have the same three fund raising groups as Kent County, MD (Friends, Foundations and the libraries themselves) and their operations are more complimentary than competitive. Efforts will be made in the future to coordinate the solicitation of funds so that an individual donor does not receive all three letters simultaneously. It was agreed that a member of the Friends board be appointed to represent the Friends at future meetings of the Board of Trustees and that one of the seats on the Foundation board be filled by a member nominated by the Friends. In addition a liaison group will be appointed to better keep both the Library and the Friends advised of each others ongoing activities and concerns. Mr. Keiser advised Mr. Damon of the request of our auditor that in the future checks from the Friends be issued to the Library rather than directly to suppliers and contractors as is the current practice. The issue involves tax and legal consequences for both the Friends and the Library.

Galena

Following the discussion of issues of concern to the Friends, Mr. Damon, who is also the professional architect involved in the design of the Galena facility, presented the blueprints for consideration by the

Board. The building will measure 30' x 60' and will hold bookshelves, seating areas and a circulation desk. The children's area will, as it is in Chestertown be separate from adult sections The sexual offender list for the Galena area must be reviewed.

The history of our funding requests to the County Commissioners was reviewed. Our response to the Commissioners' initial request for an estimate of required capital investment and annual operating expenses has been significantly reduced at the repeated request of the commissioners. In our first presentation to the Commissioners we estimated required start-up capital at 97,923.97 with annual operating expenses of 74,995.00. At its last meeting, the County Commissioners approved an amount of \$30,000 for the remainder of the current fiscal year ending in June, 2006. The county will assume responsibility for negotiating and paying for the building lease. The impact of these reductions will be a decreased number of books acquired for the branch opening, along with a corresponding reduction in shelving and seating. The book budget alone will be reduced from our proposed \$45,000 to \$15,000; this will be partially offset by a \$15,000 donation from the Friends. The staffing of the branch will be significantly reduced. Concern was expressed by board members that the amount provided by the county may suboptimal to operate at the level of service originally envisioned by the Board.

2007 Budget

The Proposed 2007 budget was approved by the board. Prior to the vote there was extensive discussion of whether preliminary budge figures should have been provided to the office of the County Commissioners. Ms. Fletcher had telephoned Jerry Keiser to convey the Commissioners' request for an earlier than anticipated review of "draft figures" even though the Board had not yet approved them. The board members all expressed great concern at providing even the most tentative figures before they had been voted upon and approved by the Board. It was agreed that advance numbers will not be provided in the future, but also that we will begin our budgeting process at an earlier date so as not to complicate the Commissioner's job by having to summarily refuse their requests.

The only increases in the proposed 2007 budget relate to the Galena Branch. Since the increase in the 2006 budget was quite modest, concern was voiced that we may be placing the Library in the position of having to request a "catch up" larger increase in 2008. It was suggested that for the near future at least, expense tracking should facilitate easy analysis of Galena vs. Chestertown/Rock Hall expenses.

There was discussion as to whether revenue resulting from fund raising should be made available for current operating expenses or be placed with the Foundation for more substantial one-of-a-kind future capital expenditures. This subject will receive further consideration at a future board meeting.

Jerry Keiser addressed the frequent question as to why grant funds are not included in our submitted 2007 budget. The answer is simply that we do not know the nature or amount of grants until we actually receive notice of their approval by the grantor, which is usually well after the presentation of our budget to the county.. Further, in almost all cases, the grants are to be expended for specific purposes and not for general operating expenses.

In response to a request from Commissioner Crow, Jerry Keiser will contact the Lion's Club to request financial support for the Galena Branch.

Audit

During each of the past 3 years, the required annual financial audit of the Library has not arrived by the state mandated due date. Jerry Keiser will conduct an analysis of this situation to determine the extent to which the problem lies with the Library vs. our accounting firm of Anthony, Judge and Ware. If the library has not submitted complete information to the auditor, the Library must be advised immediately so as to avoid future

embarrassingly late audits. Ms. Araminta Ware will attend the next board meeting on 3/13/2006 and we will present the results of Mr. Keiser's analysis at that time. We will also ask Ms. Ware for a definitive letter outlining the reasons the Friends must write their checks directly to the Library, rather than to suppliers and described above. Further, we will discuss the need for a formal contract with Anthony, Judge and Ware outlining the duties they are expected to perform and the timing thereof.

Miscellaneous

Jim Blake presented a book review publication distributed free by a library in another state. Jerry Keiser will investigate further to determine if it would be a worthwhile service to pursue.

Items Requiring Follow-up or Further Consideration

- Advise the commissioners of the donations from the Friends to obtain the "matching funds" agreed upon at the Commissioners' Meeting.
- Confirm that no apparent problems are presented in the list of sexual offenders for the Galena area.
- Develop a critical path in order to have early Board review of the 2008 expenses in order to avoid the need to provide non-approved "draft" numbers on short notice from the County.
- Explore the cost of Book Page.
- Summarize the sequential budget request to the commissioners.