Evanston Public Library
Board of Trustees
Wednesday, May 21, 2008
7:30 p.m.
Library Board Room

Approved June 18, 2008

Members Present: Maidel Cason, Brooke Roothaan, Ellen L. Schrodt, Christopher Stewart, and Susan Stone

Members Absent: Dona Gerson, Susan Newman, Lynette Murphy, and Karen Terry

Staff Present: Mary Johns, Library Director
Paul Gottschalk, Administrative Services Manager
Kate Todd, Administrative Coordinator

Call to Order

President Stewart called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

Approval of the Minutes

Trustee Roothaan moved and Trustee Stone seconded, MSP – Approval of the April 16, 2008, minutes of the Library Board.

Passed unanimously on a voice vote.

President’s Report

President Stewart asked if all Board members have signed up for email messages from ILA’s Executive Director, Robert Doyle. State funding is a struggle right now. President Stewart and Library Director Mary Johns met with State Senator Jeff Schoenberg, who has been a strong advocate for libraries. They thanked Senator Schoenberg for his support of the Children’s Room renovation project.

President Stewart has been re-elected to the NSLS Board. He plans to invite a speaker to discuss Open Meetings Act issues related to Email for the next Board meeting.

Old Business

Planning Process Update

Director Johns brought Board members up to date on the planning process now underway. Joey Rodger spoke to staff at the In-Service Day. Paul Gottschalk and Director Johns have met with Ms. Rodger, and plan to hold focus groups with the following: child care providers, educators, youth, and youth workers. Director Johns sees this process as the initial step in
determining the “public value” of Evanston Library service, and addressing the “necessity vs. amenity” issues.

Director Johns distributed a page of suggested interview questions to Board members and asked that each Trustee interview 5 people. Director Johns asked to have the questions returned by June 10, 2008. Responses can be anonymous. Evanston residents are preferred.

Financial Reports

Mr. Gottschalk noted that the current financial statement is for the first month of the 2008-09 fiscal year, and as a result there is not much to report. The Endowment Fund’s loss of under 1% is actually acceptable considering the overall adverse economic climate.

Library Director’s Report

Ms. Johns said she was very impressed with the staff In-Service Day. Staff members submitted suggestions or comments regarding important issues facing the Library. Some of these will be topics for staff discussion. Others will be action items.

The migration of Library computers to the City’s network is ahead of schedule. The City’s Department of Business Performance and Technology (BPAT) is providing training for Library staff.

Christie Chandler-Stahl and Kate Todd completed the City’s Leadership Development Program. Many other Library staff members were recognized at the City’s service recognition day reception.

The Evanston Community Foundation has awarded the Library’s LEAP program a grant to bring their innovative early literacy program to home daycare providers. The Library will train daycare providers in the program, and then prepare “LEAP-into-Reading” bags for providers to check out and use at home.

The Loft has won a design award in a competition sponsored by the International Interior Design Association (IIDA) and the American Library Association (ALA). The award will be presented at the ALA conference in July. Both Mr. Stewart and Ms. Johns will be attending ALA and the award ceremony.

The Library has a number of key staff positions that are vacant or soon to be vacant. Restructuring of senior staff may be the best way to make the most effective use of time and talent. Director Johns reports directly to the Interim City Manager, Rolanda Russell.

Finally, as the Library investigates self-check replacements, staff are also looking into ways of phasing in RFID technology.

New Business

After Hours Fall Fund Raiser
Mr. Stewart initiated a discussion of ways to introduce the Library to the many new Evanston residents living in the downtown area. He suggested something along the lines of “Do the Dewey,” a popular ticketed event which includes local businesses held at the Des Plaines Public Library. Board members considered this idea along with others. Trustee Stone will look into the possibility of partnering with one of the Evanston summer fairs, such as the Fountain Square Art Fair. Board members suggested including a marketing plan as part of the new 3-year strategic plan.

Food and Beverage Policy

Trustee Roothaan reported that no local libraries had designated eating areas for patrons. Some libraries allow covered drinks, and two had coffee vending areas. Trustees asked that the Library’s Administrative Team discuss the current policy and investigate whether there is a way to make a place available for patrons to eat at the Main Library.

Art Committee Update

A report from this committee was postponed to the next Board meeting.

Evanston Library Friends

Ms. Johns read a report from Trustee Terry regarding the future of the Evanston Library Friends. Ms. Johns will be polling administrative staff about volunteer opportunities. Kate Todd has contacted Nancy Flowers in the City’s Dept. on Aging about involvement of Seniors at the Library. More work needs to be done in this area.

Other Business

Trustee Stone asked that a discussion of “green” strategies for the Library be on the next Board agenda.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine A. Todd, Administrative Coordinator
Evanston Public Library