Evanston Public Library  
Board of Trustees  
Wednesday, January 20, 2010  
7:30 p.m.  
Library Board Room


Members Absent: Diane Allen Jacobi, Lynette Murphy

Staff Present: Mary Johns, Library Director; Connie Heneghan, Branch Manager; Paul Gottschalk, Administrative Services Manager.

Guests Present: Ald. Mark Tendam, City Manager Wally Bobkiewicz, Emily Guthrie, Lori Keenan, Mary Rosinski, Trish Stieglitz, Larry Lundy, Michael Tannen, Jim Hughes, Alice Conner, Karl Banach, Mike Stern, and John Harris.

Call to Order
Karen Terry called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m.

The guests from Koenig & Strey Realtors presented Karen Terry with a $2,560 check that will be used to purchase books for the North and South Branches. The Library Board expressed their gratitude for this generous gift.

Comments
Wally Bobkiewicz spoke of the difficult decisions that were necessary during the development of the proposed FY2010-11 budget. The proposal to close the branch libraries has generated a significant amount of community interest and concern. Dona Gerson asked if there might be some budget relief from improvements in the projected revenue estimates. Bobkiewicz said there would be no significant changes to the proposed revenue estimates for next year. Susan Newman commented on the fact that of the 36 City employees being laid off, 17 of them (47%) work at the Library, yet the Library represents only 5.6% of the City’s General Fund budget. Gail Bush recently attended the American Library Association conference and discussion of the proposed closure of the branches was a hot topic among colleagues from around the country. Karen Terry asked the City Manager about the Council’s process for approving the budget; will proposals such as the proposed library adjustments be considered on a piecemeal basis? Bobkiewicz explained that the Council will have to make decisions on smaller pieces of the budget before the budget as a whole is finalized and adopted. Mary Johns explained that if the branches closed the Main Library would absorb the additional service demands through efficiencies, though there may be longer waits for service and materials.

Mark Tendam said he is supportive of the efforts to maintain branch library service but would not support a Special Service Area that would create a new taxing area around each branch. He is optimistic that the budget can be balanced with restored funding for the branches. Michael Tannen spoke of the groundswell of community support and the unquantifiable consequences of closing the branches. Over 1,500 people have signed a petition of support for the branch
libraries. Larry Lundy spoke of the usefulness of the branch libraries for parents who home school their children. Lori Keenan spoke of the successful public/private partnership to renovate the Haven School Media Center. (Mark Tendam and Wally Bobkiewicz left the meeting at this time).

**Approval of the Minutes**

Christopher Stewart moved and Brooke Roothaan seconded,

MSP – Approval of the November 18, 2009 minutes of the Library Board.

Passed unanimously on a voice vote.

Gail Bush moved and Susan Newman seconded,

MSP – Approval of the January 7, 2010 minutes of the Library Board.

Passed unanimously on a voice vote.

**Director's Report**

Mary Johns reported on several significant gifts to the Endowment for the Evanston Public Library. Philip Farish and Vivian E. Conner each left the Library bequests from their estates. The Vail Family Foundation made another generous gift to their endowment fund. Through Northwestern University President Morton Schapiro, the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation made a $10,000 gift to the Library. This gift will be used to support early literacy for Evanston children.

The annual Fund for Excellence Campaign to enhance the collections surpassed our goal of $75,000. The donors and workers on the campaign deserve extra special thanks.

The annual Hirshfield Poetry Award Ceremony is schedule for April 25th at 2 pm. Poet Bobbi Katz will be the judge.

**Budget Update**

Karen Terry recommended that the Board form a committee to address the long-term funding requirements of the Library. Options that have been raised include a Special Service Areas for each of the branches, public/private partnerships, and the creation of an Evanston Public Library District. These possibilities deserve full evaluation before the Board can decide on a course of action.

Gail Bush recommended that the Board take a formal position on the status of the branches. Brooke Roothaan expressed her concerns about the allocation of limited resources, particularly the inadequate public services staffing at the Main Library. If the branches were closed, there will be no additional resources made available to the Main Library. Dona Gerson expressed her appreciation for the group working on solutions for the future of library service throughout the community.
Dona Gerson moved and Susan Newman seconded,

MSP – Recognizing the economic, cultural and educational value of the Evanston Public Library to the community, the Evanston Public Library Board of Trustees supports the continued operations of the entire library system and opposes the proposed closure of the North and South Branch libraries.

Passed on a voice vote.

Karen Terry and Susan Newman will represent the Board on the “Task Force on Sustainable Funding for the Evanston Public Library”. Broad community participation will be sought.

New Business
Emily Guthrie said that she has been researching the legal aspects of creating a library district and noted that the Wilmette Public Library converted from a municipal library to a district in 1975.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Gottschalk, Administrative Services Manager
Evanston Public Library