Evanston Public Library
Board of Trustees
Special Meeting
Monday, October 4, 2010
6:30 p.m.
Community Meeting Room

The meeting was called to order by Board President Christopher Stewart at 6:40 p.m. President Stewart referenced the agenda and advised that the meeting concerned the Library Budget for the fiscal year 2011. Vice President Susan Newman called the roll.

Members Present: Diane Allen, Gail Bush, Dona Gerson, Lynette Murphy, Sharon Arceneaux, Mildred Harris, Susan Newman, Susan Stone, and Christopher Stewart.

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Mary Johns, Library Director; Paul Gottschalk, Administrative Services Manager

President Stewart introduced Joan Bundley, a professional parliamentarian, who was present at the Board’s request.

Citizen Comment

Vice President Newman called the citizens who wished to speak. Eight people spoke and a short film was shown. The speakers supported maintaining the existing branches and proposed a new west side branch.

At the last meeting, a Board member asked for a reconsideration of the motion to follow as a guideline while preparing the fiscal year 2011 budget that there be no increases over the Library levy of 2010-2011, excepting only increases due to salary and benefit increases, including increases brought about by union contracts. President Stewart recommended that, if there were no objections, this motion to reconsider be repealed. There were no objections, and the motion was repealed.

Trustee Newman moved for adoption of the 10-month fiscal year 2011 budget in the amount of $3,894,926 as prepared by Paul Gottschalk at the direction of the Library Board. Trustee Stone seconded the motion.

Prior to discussion, Mr. Gottschalk advised that this budget had been submitted to the City’s Budget Team.
Trustee Bush asked if the budget maintained the branches at the current scaled-back level of four days per week, and, if so, asked what the additional cost would be to restore branch operations to five days a week. Mr. Gottschalk advised that the budget retains the reduced hours and that the cost to restore five-day service would add $46,645 to the proposed budget. He also clarified that the proposed budget assumes that the South Branch would remain at its current location and does not include restoration of the driver/custodian who had formerly serviced the branches, those duties having been assigned to other existing library personnel. The proposed budget maintains the current hours at the Main Library.

Trustee Gerson moved to amend the primary motion. She moved to accept the proposed budget with inclusion of potential savings in the amount of $122,496 as outlined by Mr. Gottschalk. Trustee Allen seconded the motion. Discussion of those savings ensued.

Mr. Gottschalk provided three possible reductions which totaled $122,496:

1. Savings of $43,331 by opening the Main Library at 10:00 a.m. Monday-Saturday.
2. Savings of $41,665 by closing the Main Library at 8:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday.
3. Savings of $37,500 through a re-organization of administrative services.

Trustee Gerson said that she realizes that there is a need for economy and wants to show the City government that the Board is aware of this and is willing to compromise so that the branches remain open. By adopting these cost reductions the branches could remain open on the current four-day schedule, and the proposed budget would be reduced to $3,772,430.

Mary Johns was asked what the impact of reducing the hours at the Main Library would be. She said there would be staffing implications through the elimination of some positions and/or reduced hours for employees. Fewer hours of service would affect library users through reduced access to services, including meeting rooms.

Trustee Allen asked Mr. Gottschalk to expand on an earlier comment he had made about pension changes in the proposed budget. Mr. Gottschalk said that several years ago the City offered an early retirement incentive (ERI) to employees through the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF). Earlier this year the City issued bonds to pay for pension expenses resulting from the ERI and charged back those debt service costs to each department. The Library’s portion of that charge was $69,763 and is reflected in the proposed budget. Mr. Gottschalk said that in addition to this new cost, overall salaries increased by
12.5%, health insurance increased by 14.5% and IMRF pension costs, including the ERI debt service, increased by a total of 89%. Of the total $380,032 increase in the proposed budget, $159,809 is attributable to branches.

Trustee Bush proposed a secondary amendment to restore services at both branches to five days per week which would add $46,645 to the proposed budget. This secondary amendment was seconded by Trustee Newman. A roll call vote was taken on the secondary amendment. The voting was: Murphy, No; Gerson, No; Harris, No; Stewart, Yes; Allen, No; Bush, Yes; Arceneaux, Abstained; Stone, Yes; Newman, Yes. The vote was a tie; therefore, the motion did not pass.

The primary motion and the first motion to amend remained on the table.

Further discussion ensued about the first motion to amend (reduction of hours at the Main Library and the administrative re-organization) until Trustee Gerson called the question to close discussion. Trustee Arceneaux seconded the motion. Voting was: Murphy; Yes; Gerson, Yes, Harris; Yes; Newman; No; Stewart, No; Allen, Yes; Bush, No; Stone, No; Arceneaux, Yes. The motion to close debate did not pass and further discussion ensued.

Another call to close the debate was made by Trustee Newman and motion was seconded by Trustee Arceneaux. Voting was: Bush, No; Stewart, No; Allen Yes, Arceneaux, Yes; Stone, Yes; Harris, Yes; Murphy, Yes; Gerson, Yes; Newman, Yes. The motion to close debate passed.

An amendatory motion was made by Trustee Newman to maintain the current schedule at the Main Library and to approve the administrative re-organization. The motion was seconded by Trustee Stone. Voting was as follows: Gerson, No; Allen, Yes; Bush, No; Murphy, Yes; Stewart, No; Harris, Yes; Newman, Yes; Arceneaux, Yes, Stone, Yes. The motion passed.

Trustee Newman moved to make an amendment to restore one day of service at each branch at a cost of $46,645. Trustee Bush seconded the motion. Trustee Murphy asked if the budget included support for other neighborhood services. Mary Johns said that the budget supported no new significant neighborhood services but did include Literacy Education at Play (LEAP), services at Robert Crown and Fleetwood-Jourdain. Trustee Newman indicated that developing better community outreach was a primary interest of the Board over the coming year. Trustee Bush said that restoring the day at each branch was a step toward where we wanted to go and that cutting services sends the message that the Board is willing to continue accepting diminution of library services to the community.

Trustee Gerson argued that the budget was being increased well beyond salaries and benefits. Trustee Allen indicated that the majority of the increase in the
budget was the result of increases in salaries and benefits and that a marginal amount was going to the branches and collections. President Stewart said we were not looking for increase in services, simply restoration of services and that no increase was being suggested to restore the 20% reduction in collections imposed last year. Trustee Bush echoed President Stewart’s comments, saying that the City must acknowledge the decrease in services to the community. Debate ended and the new amendment adding one day of service at each branch at a cost of $46,645 went to a roll call vote. The voting was as follows: Stone, Yes; Arceneaux, No; Bush, Yes; Allen, Yes; Newman, Yes; Harris, No; Murphy, No; Gerson, Yes. The motion passed with 5 to 3. President Stewart did not vote.

Trustee Bush moved to accept the budget as amended by the primary amendment and second amendment, in the amount of $3,904,071.

Trustee Stone seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken as follows: Stone, Yes; Arceneaux, Yes; Bush, Yes; Allen, Yes; Newman, Yes; Harris, Yes; Gerson, Yes; and Murphy, No. The motion passed. President Stewart did not vote.

President Stewart read Resolution 2010R2 that was being sent to the City requesting that the City collect the library levy in the amount approved by the Board. (A copy of the resolution is attached to these minutes). A unanimous voice vote of the Board approved the resolution.

Trustee Gerson wants to acknowledge the fine work of the Book Sale volunteers and suggested that some Board members discuss with them the use of the funds they raise. Trustee Allen said that she would like to be part of that discussion.

Board President Stewart said that there being no further business before the assembly, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Allen-Jacobi
Secretary
Evanston Public Library Board