MEETING MINUTES
EVANSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Wednesday, February 23, 2011
6:30 PM
Evanston Public Library, 1703 Orrington Avenue, Friedberg Room

Members Present: Sharon Arceneaux, Gail Bush, Mildred Harris, Lynette Murphy, Susan Newman, Christopher Stewart, Susan Stone

Members Absent: Diane Allen, Dona Gerson

Staff Present: Mary Johns, Paul Gottschalk

Presiding Member: Christopher Stewart, President

DECLARATION OF QUORUM
With a quorum present, President Stewart called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

CITIZEN COMMENT
Sue Eddington and Joan Kelly recommended focusing limited resources on the Main Library and not funding the South Outpost.

ITEM FOR CONSIDERATION
FY2011 Funding for Neighborhood Services
Trustee Newman noted the generous offer made by the Evanston Public Library Friends (EPLF) to pay for the rent of the proposed site of the South Outpost. Noting the shortfall in funds available to staff the Outpost, Ms. Newman proposed allocating $35,000 from the book sale, $10,000 from the endowment, $10,000 from additional fund raising and reducing the staff costs by opening the Outpost on March 15th. This proposal would cover the necessary funding of $57,869 for the Outpost.

Trustee Harris also thanked the EPLF for all their work and contributions. She stated that she felt the Board was being rushed to make a decision by February 28th deadline. There are other locations in Evanston that should be considered for a branch library.

Trustee Arceneaux noted that she and Dona Gerson, as members of the South Branch Transition Committee, had recommended that the Board not open a South Outpost but rather support the EPLF storefront. She felt that had their recommendation been adopted, the Board would not have to make a rushed decision. Trustee Bush said the Board had voted to explore other options, including opening a Library-supported Outpost.

Trustee Murphy stated that she thought the Library could not afford this; there is a perception that the Library has the funds, and it does not.
President Stewart said that in December the Board had voted a FY2011 budget including closure of the South Branch library. The Transition Committee was formed to look into the future of the South Branch, its services, location and programs. In January the Friends proposed two options: 1) the Friends would operate their own space or 2) they would find a space and work out a lease with the Library. He thinks that the Library is under-funded, under-staffed and does not believe the Board should make a short-term decision. President Stewart concluded that he cannot support the funding of the South Outpost.

Trustee Bush recalled that at the December meeting, the Board was told that the lease had been terminated at the South Branch. The Board did not close the branch since there was no choice for the Board. It is very important to maintain continuity of library services.

Trustee Newman said that she was being conservative and conscientious with her proposal by not using all the funds in the areas mentioned. She thinks that the Library must continue to offer services in South Evanston and look at new ways of offering those services.

Trustee Stone said that she thought that the staff at the Main Library was stretched to the limit. She suggested using all of the funds at the Main Library.

Trustee Murphy stated that the upcoming strategic plan will drive budget decisions.

Trustee Arceneaux said that she lives in the 5th Ward and that the West Branch there closed a long time ago. She is concerned about equitable service delivery for all neighborhoods. Ms. Bush said that closing one library to open another is not the answer.

Trustee Newman called for the vote. Trustee Stone moved and Trustee Arceneaux seconded the motion to be amended to include $3,000 for IT services. The motion is that the Board of the Evanston Public Library approve the expenditure of $60,879 for the purpose of funding the South Outpost from March through December 2011, as amended. The vote was five (Trustees Arceneaux, Harris, Murphy, Stewart and Stone) against and two (Trustees Bush and Newman) in favor of the motion. The motion failed.

Ms. Johns outlined the plan for the disposition of the books from the South Branch.

The Board stood adjourned at 8 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Phillip Baugher
Administrative Assistant, Administrative Services