MEETING MINUTES
EVANSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Wednesday, December 1, 2011
6:30 PM
Evanston Public Library, 1703 Orrington Ave, Friedberg Storytelling Room

Members Present: Diane Allen, Sergio de los Reyes, Susan Newman, Benjamin Schapiro, Sandra Smith, Michael Tannen

Members Absent: Sharon Arceneaux, Margaret Lurie

Parliamentarian Present: Joan Bundley

Staff Present: Donna Dziedzic, Paul Gottschalk, Beth McGuire

Presiding Member: Susan Newman, Vice President

CALL TO ORDER/DECLARATION OF QUORUM
A quorum was present and Vice President Newman called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

CITIZEN COMMENT
There was no citizen comment.

INFORMATION/COMMUNICATIONS
Paul Gottschalk reported that he had spoken with the donor of the $30,000 gift and the Booksale space on the 1st floor will be named in memory of his sister Sabina Flanagan. The funds will be placed in the endowment and investment income will be used for collection development in perpetuity.

The Fund for Excellence received an exceptionally generous $15,000 gift from Rachel Hayman and Edward Michael.

Beth McGuire reported on the Fund for Excellence campaign. All appeal letters had been mailed and the total amount received to date was over $52,000 with 260 donors.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION
Discussion with Paula Singer about the Library Director Search
Director Dziedzic introduced Paula Singer of The Singer Group, the library director search firm engaged by the Board.

Dr. Singer emphasized that this is an exciting time of transition for the Library. Selecting and working with the Director is the most important job of the Board.

She asked each board member to respond to the following questions in order to help her best position Evanston and the Evanston Public Library to potential candidates.
• What opportunities are here for the new Director?
• Why would someone come here?
• What are the characteristics of the new Director the Board seeks?

Susan Newman said that Evanston is a diverse, vibrant community; the Library has a solid base of funding. The Library has many passionate supporters as evidenced by the opening and success of the Mighty Twig. The Library Director needs to be a creative leader with the Board, staff and community.

Sergio de los Reyes said that the mission of many cultural institutions, including libraries, has blurred in recent years. The rise of the internet and expanded use of e-books have affected core services of libraries. There are other places that have more money and can do a better job of providing research, teaching, and entertainment.

Diane Allen spoke of the need to address the reasons why many Evanston residents use neighboring libraries instead of Evanston. Better collections, services and easier access are likely causes. The recent developments at EPL and its move to a new funding model needs to be framed in positive terms. EPL needs to market itself and all that it provides because many people are not aware of the breadth of services EPL offers.

Benjamin Schapiro said that the Library needs to be marketed as being relevant for people and businesses. Building community connections and partnerships is key. There is pent up demand for better collections and services because so many residents visit and use the libraries in Skokie and Wilmette. Deferred maintenance and capital improvements will need to be addressed. The new Director need not be a specialist but will have to deal with external factors such as the transitional political, the governance situation as it relates to potential caps on budgeting. The Library needs someone who can encourage staff to do their jobs successfully. An external focus is needed (with residents, patrons, donors and elected officials). If the Board succeeds in hiring a great Director then everyone succeeds. The Director may well find themselves in better situation in a couple of years because of their success here.

Michael Tannen said that staff members have been on a roller-coaster the past few years and the new Director need to infuse fresh enthusiasm among the staff. The quality and dedication of EPL staff is an opportunity for an upcoming director. So too, is the recognition that public libraries can play a role in bringing internet access to the public. At the national level, the chairman of the FCC has written that libraries can and should play a role in bridging the internet divide. Here in Evanston, EPL’s visioning plan and Evanston 150 have both concluded that access to the internet is an important goal.

Sandra Smith said she wants a Director who can think outside the box with creative ideas that will bring people back into the Library and provide outreach services for those people who cannot get to the Main Library.

When asked by Ms. Singer, Joan Bundley, the parliamentarian, said that the Library is more than collections; programming turns her on. Pay parking is an obstacle.
Paula Singer said she will develop the pool of candidates and then it’s the Board’s role to select someone they’re happy with. She thinks the Director will need to be politically savvy, experienced with transitions and Board development; someone who is not in a status quo system.

Donna Dziedzic suggested that the Board might want to find someone who is able to develop a supportive environment and has the skill to develop staff to be able to do the things that need to be done.

Susan Newman asked Paula Singer about the pool of potential candidates. How realistic are we? Paula said that Evanston is positioned to get really good applicants; there is a nationwide problem with people selling their home in this economy. A partner finding a job may also be a challenge. However, she said that this an exciting time for EPL with a new funding model, a new visioning plan and an engaged community.

The salary range is identical to other City department directors and will be included in the job description.

Donna Dziedzic said that there are some difficult issues at EPL, but she is not aware of any directorship that doesn’t have some serious issues. There has been tremendous progress made recently. We need to posit the issues in a positive frame. Several Board members echoed this sentiment and that although the last several years have been difficult, EPL has had great successes and is moving forward with an engaged board, an engaged citizenry, and a comprehensive visioning plan.

Paula Singer asked if there is a desire for someone who is visible in the public library community, someone who presents nationally, writes in journals etc. Donna said that a state and national presence increases positive exposure and interest from funders.

**Schedule**
The Board as a whole will be the search committee. The Board will receive dossiers on the top candidates on or before February 8th and will meet on February 8th to select candidates to be interviewed. The Board and Paula Singer will meet on February 20th to prepare for the interviews with the final candidates on February 21st. Paula suggests having them make presentations to the Board as part of interview.

City Manager Bobkiewicz will meet with the finalists as well. Staff meetings with the finalists will be arranged if the schedule permits.

**BOARD REPORTS**

**Evanston Public Library Friends**
Friends’ President Marcia Mahoney said that the Friends have reached 80% of their fundraising goal and are working to extend the lease on the Mighty Twig through August. The Friends are working with Family Focus on a renovation of a library space to support ETHS students with children.
STAFF REPORT
Financial Statements
Paul Gottschalk said that he expects the Library will be under-budget for FY2011 due to three full-time vacancies and that all collection funds will be spent. The Library may not be able to carry over a fund balance to FY2012.

Work setting up the Library Fund for FY2012 has begun and it will include a new chart of accounts, operating and capital reserves, and revenue from development income.

ADJOURNMENT
The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Tannen, Secretary
Evanston Public Library Board of Trustees

THE NEXT LIBRARY BOARD MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11th AT 6:30 P.M. IN THE COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM OF THE MAIN LIBRARY