

Durham County Library Board of Trustees
Tuesday, December 11, 2007
First Floor Auditorium, Main Library

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Call to Order: Chair Ken Berger called the meeting to order at 6:04 P.M.

Roll Call: Mr. Berger did a visual roll call. Present: Ken Berger, Sharon Brinson, Marian Dillahunt-Andrews, Joe Hewitt, Allan Lang, Mohammad Rashdi, Al Roberts and Elsa Woods, Trustees; and Aftab Ahmed, Skip Auld, Anastasia Bush, Rheda Epstein, Lakesia Farmer, Karlene Fyffe, Priscilla Lewis, Joyce McNeill, Angie Pridgen and Susan Wright, Library staff.

Absent: Joyce Sykes, Trustee and Rev. Michael Page, BCC Liaison

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was approved with the following revisions: Old Business: Meeting Room Use Charges, Revisited will follow Public Comments; The Director's Report will come before New Business at the Director's request; and Executive Session for Trustees and Mr. Auld will follow the regular business meeting.

Approval of Minutes of the November 13, 2007 Meeting: Mr. Lang requested that the following amendments be made to the minutes: The administrative staff was to prepare, for Tuesday's meeting, a list of organizations that claimed that they would not be able to use library facilities due to the rental fees and the Board was to have a report on those organizations that have used rooms and paid fees since the fee structure was instituted as well as any comments made by organizations in either category. Also, the Library Staff was to review the Meeting Room Policy and report back to the December Board Meeting.

Mr. Auld requested that the minutes say, "The administrative staff would try to prepare, for Tuesday's meeting, a list of organizations that claimed they would not be able to use library facilities due to the rental fees." Mr. Lang agreed to the change.

Mr. Lang commented that in previous meetings, the Board had addressed the issue of Library Staff condensing the minutes. Mr. Berger noted that he felt that Ms. Farmer had made a diligent effort to record the events of the meeting and that he did not believe that she had intentionally omitted any information. Mr. Auld stated that Ms. Farmer had represented the events of the meeting in the minutes to the best of her ability. Mr. Auld also noted that he would address this more in his Director's Report.

Ms. Woods moved that the minutes be approved with the requested changes and Mr. Roberts seconded the motion. The motion was passed.

Public Comments: Mr. Berger announced that tonight would be the second time the Board had heard public comment and reminded everyone of the procedure. Individuals will have three (3) minutes to state their concern and should do so in a concise, orderly and courteous manner that is respectful to others. They should not deviate from the subject. Comments should be directed to the Board and not to other participants or to the audience.

Michael Pollock and Nicole Rowan, of the Durham People's Alliance addressed the Board about meeting room fees. Mr. Pollock would like to see fees reduced or eliminated for nonprofits. He mentioned several nonprofit groups that use Library meeting rooms and may incur a hardship if the fees continue. Northeast Streamwatch uses the small room at Parkwood each month. If their group's size increases, they will not be able to afford the fee for the larger room and will be forced to look for free space outside the library. The Durham Bill of Rights Defense Committee uses Stanford L. Warren. Many of the groups have less of a hardship now that the library offers

free meeting space, but some of the groups will have a problem if their group outgrows the space. Mr. Pollock also uses the library in Chapel Hill which does not charge for its meeting space. He hopes that other libraries will not follow Durham County's example. Mr. Pollock urged the Board to go back to the old system (at least for nonprofits) where they paid only the refreshment fee. He also said he would be okay with a tiered system that charged based on the amount of money that the group has.

Ms. Rowan thinks it is great that the Board allows Public Comment as a forum to speak out about library issues. Unlike Mr. Pollock, she believes it would be difficult to find alternative free meeting spaces. She is the office person at the People's Alliance and is the one who is often responsible for finding meeting space for the group's activities. Several People's Alliance events that have been held in the Library in the past will have to be relocated because of fees. The Legislative Quorum, for example, did not meet here this year because of fees. The Durham Herald-Sun opened up a free meeting space to the public, but has now closed it to new groups because of the demand. The Main Library is great because there is security onsite, convenient parking and it is in a central location. Ms. Rowan thanked the Board for revisiting this policy and allowing small rooms to be free. She also feels it is okay to charge profit groups and thinks that the \$25 refreshment fee is reasonable.

The Board did not have any follow up questions for Mr. Pollock or Ms. Rowan, and Mr. Berger invited them to stay for the duration of the meeting.

Communications: Ms. Pridgen circulated the Clip Report. The Library was featured in several local blogs. There were several great photos from the Holiday parade and pictures of people browsing in the stacks at North Regional.

OLD BUSINESS

Meeting Room Fees, Revisited: Mr. Berger provided a little background about the meeting room fees. Changes were first instituted at the request of the County Commissioners. Fees were reduced for nonprofits for all large rooms, excluding the Main Library Auditorium. The Library Board and County Commissioners heard feedback from the community. The Library Board has been given the authority to come up with a recommendation for the County Commissioners. The Board does not have to reach a conclusion today, but the Commissioners are eager for the Board's input. Mr. Auld spoke with Commissioner Becky Heron whose biggest concern is carpet maintenance in the meeting rooms. Commissioner Heron asked if something other than carpet could be placed in the meeting rooms. There would be an echo if linoleum flooring was used. If we go back to the refreshments charge, the fee will not be enough to cover replacement and upkeep of carpets. Groups are charged for any damages that are caused by the group.

Mr. Hewitt suggested going back to the earlier policy. He asked if since the County Commissioners wanted us to realize \$30,000 of income from meeting room fees if there were any tradeoffs in other parts of the budget. Providing meeting space is part of the library's core mission. Mr. Berger noted that with the reduced fees, the anticipated income had been reduced to \$15,000. Mr. Lang supported Mr. Hewitt's comment entirely and suggested that the library staff look for other places in the budget where income could be realized. Mr. Rashdi commented that maybe the Commissioners should have checked the pulse of the community to determine the general feeling about meeting room fees before the policy was changed. Mr. Auld noted that the County Commissioners heard from the community and that is what led to the Board revisiting the policy.

Mr. Hewitt noted that although the Board did not need names of the specific groups adversely affected by the change in the meeting room policy and fees at this time, a list may be needed at a later date.

Mr. Berger reviewed the options for revising the meeting room fee schedule. The Board could decide to (1a) drop fees for nonprofits, (1b) drop fees for profits and (2) return to the old policy which included a charge for refreshments.

Mr. Berger asked Ms. Lewis if the \$25 refreshment fee was adequate to cover the cost of cleaning and repair. It is not, but charging groups for damages is working. The Library passes along the costs that the cleaning service charges. After more discussion, the Board agreed that the meeting room policy should be changed. The old policy will be used for nonprofits. They will be able to use the meeting room at no charge, but will have to pay the \$25 refreshment fee. The new policy will be used for profit/commercial groups. They will have to pay \$100 to use the meeting room. Mr. Berger and Mr. Auld will work with Ms. Farmer to draft a letter to the County Commissioners describing the new policy. After a motion by Mr. Hewitt that was seconded by Ms. Brinson, the Board approved the new proposal for meeting room fees.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Mr. Auld distributed copies of the ULC (Urban Libraries Council) Exchange newsletter which featured an interview with Mr. Auld about Durham County Library and the library's Strategic Plan. The Board will get copies of the newsletter at each month's meeting.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Ms. McNeill distributed copies of the revamped Financial Report. The Financial Report will now be distributed quarterly. This report supersedes the information on last reports and covers the period through the end of September. Some of the highlights are listed below. Mr. Lang asked for future reports to include previous fiscal year expenses.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Board Development: Ms. Dillahunt-Andrews reported that the next meeting would be January 15, 2008 at 6 pm in the Main Library Board Room.

Facilities & Standards: Ms. Woods distributed minutes from the December meeting and announced that the next meeting will be Next meeting will be February 5th at 2:30 pm in the Board Room.

IT meeting – Mr. Hewitt reported that the next meeting would be December 17th at 12 noon at Bruegger's on Ninth Street. This may not be an adequate venue if numbers increase. Kathy Makens and Jill Wagy will attend the meeting

Planning & Budget – Mr. Lang had no report

Policies – Mr. Roberts reported that the Computer Use Policy is on the web. The Resources Selection Policy was sent out November 27 and he received no questions or comments. The Committee agreed that policy is great as is. Mr. Roberts moved that the Resources Selection Policy be approved and Ms. Woods seconded. The Board passed the motion.

Mr. Roberts distributed copies of the revised policy list and noted that the Board will be receiving the list of policies monthly. The Board can address questions about the handout to Mr. Roberts or Ms. Farmer.

Mr. Berger asked if the Public Comment Policy was on the website and Ms. Farmer responded that it should be on the website this week. In response to a question about what policies the

Board should expect to review in the coming months, Mr. Roberts responded that the Group Visits policy should be ready for review next month.

County Commissioners Liaison – There was no report.

EXTERNAL REPORTS

Library Foundation – Mr. Berger reported that The Foundation met on November 14th. He updated the Board on the status of the house that was donated to the Foundation. The Foundation's Executive Committee authorized the Foundation to pursue different issues associated with the house. The house is located at 5237 Inverness Drive and has a tax value of \$280,000. Some minor clean up and repairs need to be done, and there is also the option of selling the house as is. The library received the title for the house on December 7th. Mr. Lang suggested that a house inspector be hired. Mr. Berger noted that the inspection process has already been started.

Mr. Berger continued with other Foundation Updates. Sandy Sweitzer is leaving the library (January 4). Mr. Berger noted that the NEH Challenge Grant has almost been met thanks to the hard work of Ms. Sweitzer and her team. Mr. Auld added that the Foundation Executive Committee met this morning and the Foundation is about \$50,000 away from making the match. The Library Foundation had to raise \$1.5 million to receive the \$500,000 from the National Endowment for Humanities. The match must be made by January 31st. Mr. Auld has personally signed the Annual Campaign letters that were sent out. Mr. Auld commented that the Foundation's financial issues have been resolved with the donation of the house. Mr. Auld then gave more detail about the donor of the house.

Mr. Auld met with the Marketing Staff to reassign some of Ms. Sweitzer's duties until a replacement can be hired. The Foundation's Executive Committee will meet next week to finalize short term plans during this transitional period.

Friends of the Library – Ms. Bush reported that the December meeting was cancelled, but gave an overview of what was happening with the Friends. The Friends are still recovering from the March fire. The Planning Commission approved the purchase of a new shed which will cost \$7,000. The Friends will purchase the shed and donate it to the County. After a letter of intent is written, this item will be placed on the January consent agenda. Originally, the shed was expected to cost \$20,000, but the new cost freed up \$13,000 for the Friends to make grants at the February Friends meeting. These grants have been pending since October. All of the staff proposals were approved, but funds were not released pending a decision about the shed. Mr. Berger asked for examples of the projects that would be funded. Ms. Bush gave the following examples: Library Youth Partners where a dozen teens do storytimes for elementary age students; Volunteer Recognition; LCD Projectors will be placed in the large meeting rooms in all library locations; Video gaming for teens; Inter Library Loan Software program that will allow you to reserve books from home.

The next book sale will be April 11 – 13, 2008. The Friends do three sales a year (Spring, Summer and Fall).

Friends of Stanford L Warren: Mr. Auld reported that he recently spoke at a luncheon for the group and shared the Library's Strategic Plan.

OLD BUSINESS:

McDougald Terrace: Mr. Berger and Mr. Auld met with China Townsend, Wisdom Pharaoh and Harold Chestnut. They found out that the Learning Center at TA Grady will have its Grand Opening on January 17 and will open for business on January 23.

Bookmobile stops to McDougald Terrace have been stopped because of low participation, a decision that was concurred with by the McDougald Terrace representatives. According to Ms. Townsend, Ms. Pharaoh and Mr. Chestnut, the hours for the McDougald Terrace Library are not meeting the community's needs. Currently, the hours are Monday through Thursday 3:30 – 5:30 pm and Saturday 10:00 am until 2:00 pm. They would like to see the hours changed to Monday through Friday 3:30 – 6:30 pm with no hours on Saturday.

Mr. Auld stated that the library will finish the fiscal year out and re-evaluate service to McDougald Terrace. The library can provide storytime twice a month. The library will do parent workshops if the parents will come. According to Ms. Townsend and Ms. Pharaoh, word of mouth is the best advertising to reach the residents of McDougald Terrace. The Housing Authority will not allow flyers to be placed in their bills.

Mr. Lang offered to pay for the brochures that will be distributed in McDougald Terrace.

Another concern raised was the lack of materials for adults and older teens at McDougald Terrace. Mr. Berger asked if the Friends may be willing to donate books to McDougald Terrace. The books would not be catalogued and checked out on an honor system. The library staff responded that the adult collection was removed from McDougald Terrace five years ago because it did not circulate. It was more beneficial to have children's materials at McDougald Terrace. Ms. Epstein noted that Friends books are not usually what we want in our collection. Mr. Auld reiterated what the library will offer: Storytime, an Early Literacy Center base and four computers. TA Grady has 18 computers.

Mr. Berger mentioned that there had previously been talk about increasing the professional level of the staff. Mr. Auld responded that McDougald Terrace is under the professional oversight of Stanford L. Warren. The library cannot assign a professional librarian to McDougald Terrace at this time.

Mr. Lang suggested that the library publicize McDougald Terrace's events at the grand opening of TA Grady. The library's graphic designer is working on publicity for McDougald Terrace which will include programs which will be occurring in the next couple of months. Mr. Lang also asked if there was a bulletin board at McDougald Terrace where flyers could be placed. There is not one.

Carpet at Main: Ms. Lewis reported that she is in the process of getting quotes again. The original quotes are over 30 days old and cannot be used. The new quotes have not come back yet. Areas on the 1st floor will be tiled from the Staff entrance to the elevator and on the 3rd floor from the elevator to the Administration Entrance. The carpet in the Auditorium will be replaced with VCT tile which is sturdier than linoleum and easier to replace and clean. The carpet in the Main Lobby foyer will be replaced. A separate estimate will be provided for that area. The Auditorium is the priority, and Ms. Lewis is trying to get funding for that area. Ms. Lewis would like to get the Auditorium done in January, but that would mean a week that the meeting room could not be used to allow time for the tile to be installed, set up and buffed. General Services will also paint the Auditorium at that time. Ms. Lewis is looking at a deeper color that will show less dirt. The paint and tile colors will be coordinated. Ms. Woods asked if it was cost that will

keep Ms. Lewis from tiling the lobby. Ms. Lewis responded that General Services strongly recommended carpeting the lobby. Ms. Lewis would also like to close the first floor restrooms to the public. The restrooms would only be available to groups using the Auditorium.

Mr. Lang asked if all of the library's bathrooms (including the branches) could post signs that say, "Please conserve water." Ms. Lewis noted that General Services has already installed new, water-saving faucets and taps on toilets in all County buildings. There are also waterless urinals. To help reduce water usage, the County has also ceased carpet and window cleaning and stripping of floors.

Ms. Brinson asked where people would use the restroom if the 1st floor restrooms were closed. Ms. Lewis answered that the Children's Room has restrooms, but that most people would be directed to the 2nd and 3rd floors. The second floor restrooms are in an open area that is easily viewed by the Reference staff. The restrooms on the 1st and 3rd floors are both in alcoves that are hard to see. Mr. Rashdi asked what would be accomplished by closing the 1st floor restroom. Ms. Lewis explained that the 1st floor restroom requires constant cleaning and repair. There are people who use the sink to take baths and shave. It is easier to monitor the 2nd floor restrooms because they are not secluded. The alcoves are really not safe for children and others. Mr. Rashdi asked if the library had tried posting signs that say the restrooms are for library patrons only. The staff responded that once a person enters the doors, they are considered a patron.

Ms. Woods commented that she does not use the 1st floor restrooms and she does not allow her grandchildren to use them. She asked if the 2nd floor restrooms would become a problem area if the 1st floor is closed. Ms. Lewis does not anticipate a problem because the restrooms are out in the open. Ms. Lewis commented that the 3rd floor restrooms are being used more now that there is seating on the 3rd floor near the restrooms.

Ms. Brinson asked what was planned for people who are handicapped or have physical limitations. The Children's Room restrooms are not handicap accessible. The person could use the elevator to go to the 2nd or 3rd floor. The staff would also be able to unlock the restrooms if a patron needed to use them.

Mr. Rashdi asked if there will be signage that indicates where restrooms are located. Mr. Lang said that he thinks the library staff knows best and if the staff feels that locking the first floor restroom is a good idea, he is fine with it. Mr. Hewitt asked the library staff to be sure that any codes are met with regard to closing the first floor restrooms. Ms. Lewis stressed that if this does not work, we can always unlock the doors.

Mr. Auld mentioned that the library is working on an RFID Project as well as weeding for Main, Southwest and Parkwood. Mr. Auld discussed the possibility of using the Auditorium and the Conference Room to store books during the process which would begin in early February. (After the meeting, it was decided that the project would begin in mid to late October).

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Mr. Auld began his report with concerns about the way the Board interacts with the staff, criticizing one trustee in particular, and asked for understanding of current limitations of staff during a period of profound organizational transformation. He suggested that the Board structure and activities be re-examined in light of the needs of the Strategic Plan. In order that the Board better appreciate the work of the staff, he spoke at length about each of the senior staff present at the meeting. Mr. Berger responded to the Director's Report stressing that he and his fellow trustees very much appreciate the hard work and professionalism of the staff,

and that difficult questions they ask and requests they make are integral to the responsible fulfillment of the board's duties.

After an executive session for the Board and Mr. Auld, the meeting was adjourned at 8:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lakesia W. Farmer
Administrative Assistant

NEXT MEETINGS: January 8, 2008 at Southwest Library and February 12, 2008 at Main Library
(After the Board meeting, the January 8 meeting was cancelled).