

Durham County Library Board of Trustees  
Tuesday, February 12, 2008  
First Floor Auditorium, Main Library

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Call to Order: Chair Ken Berger called the meeting to order at 6:05 P.M.

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

Absent: Mohammad Rashdi, Trustee

Approval of the Agenda: The agenda was approved with no changes.

### Special Session Addressing the Director's Report at the December 11, 2007 Meeting

Statement by the Chair: Mr. Berger began by reading a statement [\[Appendix 1\]](#) that reviewed the events that had taken place as a result of the Director's Report at the December 11 meeting. He also clarified the role of the board, and outlined some standards for behavior that will now be followed in meetings. For example, trustees will need to be recognized before speaking, and all will be respectful of staff and fellow trustees.

Statement by Trustee Lang: Mr. Lang stated that Mr. Auld's comments (in December) came as a surprise. He had no forewarning and nothing had been addressed either in writing or verbally. Mr. Lang apologized for the demeanor that was conveyed in previous discussions.

Comments by other Trustees: The other trustees who were present expressed their perceptions and concerns about the December Board meeting and the events that ensued.

Statement by the Director: Mr. Auld [\[Appendix 2\]](#) thanked the Board members for their comments and acknowledged that this situation has been weighing heavily on all involved. For any misunderstanding and confusion, Mr. Auld apologized both to the entire Board and specifically to Trustee Lang.

General Discussion as needed: There was no further discussion by the Board.

Approval of Minutes of the December 11, 2007 Meeting: Amendments were suggested for the minutes. Mr. Lang moved that the minutes be approved with the requested changes and Mr. Roberts seconded the motion. The motion was passed.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. Auld asked Ms. Gina Rozier, the Library's new Marketing Manager, to give this report.

The clip report was circulated. Highlights included the ad for the Estate Sale (which raised \$7,000), the theme for this year's Summer Reading Program which will be "Catch the Reading Bug," the NEH Grant match was made, the Friends and the Foundation will be sending a joint invitation to the celebration, the Library's website will be undergoing a redesign, E\*vanced will be going live March 1<sup>st</sup>. Patrons will be able to register for library programs and make room requests online. All programs and events listed in the tabloid will be on the website.

Ms. Rozier stated that she has made her mission to accomplish Goal 1.6 of the Strategic Plan – The library will aggressively market its services throughout the community.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Mr. Auld formally introduced Ms. Rozier who started on January 28<sup>th</sup>.
- Mr. Berger asked for corrections to the schedule of committee meetings had been emailed to the Board. Ms. Dillahunt-Andrews noted that there will not be a Board Development and Evaluation Committee meeting on February 15, 2008.
- Trustees Conference will be held March 16 – 18, 2008 at Sunset Beach, NC. Mr. Lang, Ms. Dillahunt-Andrews and Ms. Sykes have registered. Any other trustees who are interested should notify Mr. Auld by Friday, February 15.
- Mr. Berger noted that the changes in the library's meeting room fees were mentioned in the Clip Report. He also pointed out comments by Commissioner Ellen Reckhow and a letter to the editor from Michael Pollock of the People's Alliance about the change in meeting room fees.
- Mr. Hewitt asked if the Board could continue to meet in the Library's Auditorium. Mr. Auld answered that we will have to check the meeting room calendar. Meeting in other library locations could be a possibility.
- There will be a ULC Audio Conference on February 27 in the Board Room called "Welcome, Stranger: Local Responses to Global Migration" addressing library services to immigrants.
- ULC 2020 Foresight provides an opportunity to engage with like-minded individuals across the country. Mr. Auld will request user names and passwords for all Board members.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** Ms. McNeill distributed the narrative that accompanied the Financial Report. Mr. Hewitt asked if the Library was ever audited. Mr. Auld replied that the Library does not have a regularly scheduled annual audit. Mr. Berger asked if the report could include the final figures for the previous fiscal year. Mr. Auld commented that this report shows a quarter by quarter comparison. Ms. McNeill noted that the previous Financial Report included year-end numbers. Mr. Lang explained that he was looking for final figures for 2006-07 on the chart and that he wanted to see actual expenditures. Mr. Auld and Ms. McNeill will report a report of total expenditures by department for Thursday's Planning & Budget Committee meeting.

#### **NO COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Planning & Budget will meet Thursday, February 14 at 4 pm with the County's Budget Analyst to discuss the upcoming budget.

#### **EXTERNAL REPORTS**

Library Foundation – Ms. Bush reported that the NEH Match was met. Mr. Berger acknowledged Ms. Bush's hard work and the Foundation's appreciation of her stepping up in Sandy's absence. Ms. Bush thanked the community for its generosity. The Jonathan Henderson Memorial Fund surpassed the \$10,000 mark, raising \$12,800 to become a named endowment. After twelve months, the endowment will be able to issue funds. The Foundation is working hard to get its accounting process in order. Mr. Lang asked if a date had been selected to celebrate the match being met. Ms. Rozier answered that a committee is working on planning the event, but that no date had been set.

Friends of the Library – Ms. Bush announced that the Friends have started satellite book sales which will be offered year round. North Regional sold all of its books the first week and made \$250. This was all with no publicity. Mr. Lang asked if the Board could be notified in advance of the book sales. Ms. Bush answered that once the Friends have established a routine, she will

notify the Board. Mr. Berger also asked if the satellite book sales could be posted prominently on the website.

Friends of Stanford L Warren: no report

**NEW BUSINESS:** none

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Mr. Auld highlighted some of the items listed on his written Director's Report.

- The County Commissioners approved an additional \$1.3 million for the expansion of Southwest.
- Mr. Auld and Ms. McNeill staffed a booth at the ALA Midwinter Conference to recruit for the Regional Managers at North and East and for Deputy Director. If no one is selected for the branch manager positions, the positions will reopen prior to the March Public Library Association conference.
- The Auditorium in the Main Library was going to be redone in Vinyl Composition Tile (VCT), but because of concerns about noise, the carpet will be replaced instead. This carpet will be a little more expensive, but a higher quality. The carpet will be replaced in one or two months. A carpet remnant will be placed in the Staff Lounge to allow the carpet to be tested.
- C.L.A.S.S. (Customers Leaving Appreciated, Satisfied and Sold) Customer Service Training is being offered for all library staff.
- Duncan Smith will train the staff on Readers' Advisory.
- New Staff Orientations will be held on February 20 and 22.
- We will be selecting the architect from 3 who interviewed. Seven architects put in bids. Expect to hire in one month.
- Mr. Berger suggested that the statistical report list North Regional/North Branch, as the figures cover the period before the opening of North Regional.
- Mr. Lang noted that North Regional had the highest circulation of any branch in December.
- Mr. Lang asked for more information about the UNC Public Policy Group. Mr. Auld shared that the group met with Brenda Hall, Manager of Stanford L Warren and toured Bragtown and McDougald Terrace.
- The manager of the Bragtown Library will supervise the Early Literacy Program.
- Mr. Auld is meeting with the Strategic Plan Goal Champions and will invite them to the April Board Meeting to give an update.
- Mr. Hewitt asked if the New Employee Orientation was for new staff or if it was a new program being instituted. Mr. Auld responded that New Employee Orientation had not been done in the time that he has been in Durham and that all employees who have started working within the last two years will be invited. The orientation is open to any staff who may not have attended an orientation previously or who would like a refresher. The orientations will be held quarterly. They will take place at the Main Library and will last two hours. Topics will include the library's mission, philosophy of service and strategic plan. The Employee Handbook is also being revised.
- Ms. Woods asked if there were any complaints about Friday hours. Mr. Auld said there have been some, but the plan is to reopen on Fridays once the regionals are open. Mr. Berger asked if there was any sense of how the Sunday statistics compare to the Saturday numbers. For the next meeting, Mr. Auld will report on Saturday and Sunday hours.
- Ms. Bush thanked Ms. Pridgen for her work as Interim Marketing Manager and for providing direction to the Marketing Department. Under her guidance, the webmaster and graphic designer were hired and the latest *Best of Friends* newsletter was completed.

- Mr. Ahmed commented that he appreciates all that the Board does. He is thankful for the freedom of expression in meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 pm after a motion by Mr. Lang and a second by Mr. Roberts.

Respectfully submitted,

Lakesia W. Farmer  
Administrative Assistant

**NEXT MEETINGS:** March 11 and April 8, 2008

## **Appendix 1**

### **Comments by the Chair to the Board and Senior Staff Library Board Meeting February 12, 2880**

At the end of the December 11<sup>th</sup> board meeting, in his Director's Report, Skip Auld delivered a long and impassioned speech in which he stressed the hard work and organizational changes underway by the staff. He also criticized the board, first a single member, and then as a whole, raising questions about its support of the staff, its functioning interactions, and alleging a misunderstanding of its role. Having had no warning of what Skip was going to say, I made brief comments after he spoke, trying to assure the staff that we do support them, and that our role may mean that we at times ask the difficult questions, make difficult requests, but we all share the same goal of providing outstanding library service to the citizens of Durham County.

The next day I responded by email, at greater length, centering on the role of the board. There then followed a series of email exchanges, phone calls, and a few informal conversations, all of which made it clear that there was no agreement between the director and senior staff, on one hand, and trustees on the other, as to the proper role of the board. There was no way that I could see to continue board functions under these conditions. So, after much soul searching and consultation with some of my fellow trustees, and a failure to successfully schedule a special meeting during the holiday season, on December 22<sup>nd</sup>, I suspended all board meetings until further notice.

This was a difficult, painful decision. To resolve the dilemma, and get us back on track, activities were underway on several fronts. Emails continued, as well as many private one-on-one conversations. The most prominent effort was a meeting, on January 4<sup>th</sup>, of Skip, Michael, Mohammad and me. Some progress was made, but I felt that, as with most plans, actions were not moving quite the way they needed to. More communications ensued, and the result is the meeting we are having tonight. It is my expectation that what some key players have to say tonight will get us to the point of moving on with our work.

As one of those key players, let me first address the role of the board, which I did, at length, in my email of December 12<sup>th</sup>. So here I will simply reiterate a few key points. The board is appointed by the county commissioners, to advise them, the county manager and the director on various matters, as delineated in the bylaws, relating to library affairs. We are for them the voice of the citizens of Durham. We do not report to the director, nor do we manage the library.

However, in our advisory role, we participate, in various ways, in library operations, including review and recommendations on library programs, policies, regulations, building and construction; participation in the preparation of the annual budget; and recommending director appointments. To accomplish these duties we must, on occasion, ask the tough questions or make the hard requests. We have to do these things because if we don't, we are not doing our jobs.

Second, our interactions with each other and with staff have been called into question. Regarding the first, my perception is that they are generally very good. They could be better, however, and I will address that in a few minutes. As to the latter, I will be the first to admit that there have been times when these interactions have been confrontational. Several trustees, myself included, have pressed on matters in a way and to a degree that could easily have been received as personal and unfair. That was never my, or our, intention. Again, there is room here for improvement.

So what can we do to improve our interactions, to ensure they reflect the mutual respect and shared goals all of us in this room feel in our hearts? Let me suggest a few things, and entertain, when trustees speak later, other thoughts and suggestions.

- We have been very relaxed about speaking out, without much order, and as chair I take responsibility for that. From now on, I would ask that trustees wait to be recognized by the chair before speaking.
- While it is clear that the director bears ultimate responsibility for staff reports and reporting, we will continue to permit, as is fully reasonable, members of the staff charged by the director to report or respond to questions. It is also fully reasonable that questions and suggestions may be, at those and other appropriate times, be directed to those staff, but trustees will be careful to do so in a way that is respectful, and constructive, and, of course, appreciating that the director is still the one in charge of library operations.
- When asking for information, trustees should never use an accusatory tone; when asking for actions, they should be made as suggestions, most usually to the director. The same courtesies must also be extended to fellow trustees.
- Lastly on this topic, staff should never, ever take questions, comments and suggestions made by members of the board as personal—we are all here to work for the best libraries for the citizens of Durham.

Now, let me be absolutely clear about why I made the decision to have Allan speak first after me. This was not the original concept, nor is it something Allan asked to do—he even offered to wait until later in the cue. ***It is not because Allan, by his actions or manner, is the central issue here***; it is not, because the central issue is the role of the board. ***Let me repeat that, so everyone present is clear on this: the central issue is the role of the board.*** Nevertheless, Allan's conduct was the first subject of Skip's speech. It was a public attack done without any warning, without any prior discussions with Allan about his conduct, and I personally feel that Allan was unfairly singled out. It is my decision that Allan deserves the right to speak first. I should also mention that Allan and I have discussed this matter, and, without stealing his thunder, I can say what he has to say should help us as we move on from this event.

After he has finished, I will recognize other trustees who wish to have their say, and then Skip. We will conclude this section of the meeting with general discussion, as needed, including suggestions for further improving interactions between the board and the staff. And then we will

move on. We have much to do, and I know all of us, trustees and staff, want to get back to work.

## Appendix 2

### **Comments by the Director to the Board and Senior Staff Library Board Meeting February 12, 2880**

Our December 11 Board meeting closed with a 30-minute speech that I made without giving Board members a chance to respond. I directed specific criticism at Allan without having said anything directly to him previously. I had a chance to call Allan and talk with him recently, and I apologized for what he felt was a public humiliation. I am sorry for that and again, Allan, I apologize.

I am told that my statement was taken by some of the Board as an attack on the Board. I did not mean that at all. I meant my entire message as a plea for understanding that our library system is in the midst of tremendous organizational change and transformation, and that this transformation has been occurring without benefit of administrative support staff. That is changing, thanks to adding new administrative staff and thanks to all of us learning our new jobs.

When I brought up an example of a library board that doesn't have committees, I meant to say that I feel our Board should review how it operates, not that it should abolish the committees. I meant my statement as a plea for the Board to review its role and committees with an eye toward keeping focus on the big picture concerns and role of the Library Board as an advocate for excellence in library services, as opposed to the management role of staff in developing and improving the operations of the library system. Finally, I meant my statement as a call for all of us to work together for the good of the community.

I look forward to getting back to work with you as a member of the same team.