



Minutes of the Regular Meeting of
The Board of Trustees
Webster Groves Public Library
October 15, 2014

The meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Webster Groves Public Library was held at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, October 15, 2014. President Nancy Marshall presided and Library Director Tom Cooper kept the minutes. Also present: Trustees Joan Esserman, Bob Herdler, Bill Kuc, Jackie Brenne, Pete Ruger, Nicole Chaput, Andrew Rushing, and Bethany Curtis. Absent: City council Liaison Greg Mueller.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m.

Public Agenda

There was no public agenda.

Minutes of the September 17, 2014 Meeting

Mr. Ruger moved to accept the minutes as presented, Ms. Chaput seconded, and the minutes were approved.

Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

President's Report

There was no president's report

Librarian's Report

Mr. Cooper reported on the progress of getting some roof leaks fixed.

Advance Planning

Ms. Chaput reported on a meeting of the Advance Planning Committee, with an eye towards a new round of strategic planning. The hope is to convene a new strategic planning committee soon, implement a new community survey, and settle on a list of new service goals for the library. The committee is meeting again next week.

Automation/Systems

There was no report from this committee.

Building and Grounds

The contract has been signed with Furfaro Design/Build Landscaping to complete our new landscaping. The work should get away as soon as it stops raining. The work will be overseen by SWT Landscaping.

Finance

Mr. Herdler presented the financial report for September 2014. It was an expensive month, including the payment to St. Louis County Library of over \$27,000 dollars for reciprocal checkouts, and the payment of over \$15,000 to MoreNet, the library's Internet Service Provider. MoreNet used to be subsidized by funds from the state, and was much less expensive. With Governor Nixon's withhold of those funds, the bill has more than tripled.

Human Resource

There was no report from this committee, though trustees did ask whether the library was on track with the changes approved in the new organizational chart. Mr. Cooper suggested that we should have a Human Resource Committee meeting soon to discuss this.

Policy

There was no report from this committee.

Old Business

Mr. Herdler took up the discussion of reciprocity with St. Louis County. He is more convinced than ever that this is a program which needs to end, and there is no way to justify the ongoing expense or to verify the amount. He believes that even with the new agreement that we would not be charged for renewals, we would see only a temporary reduction in the amount we pay and it would soon creep back up to current levels. He noted that Mr. Cooper has reservations about ending the program, and sought a sense of how other trustees felt on the matter.

A discussion ensued in which several themes predominated:

- If citizens of Webster Groves feel that they don't like certain tax-supported services, such as the school district, and want to send their children somewhere else, that is a matter of personal choice, and the school district is not going to pay their out-of-district tuition. Why does the library do this?
- The thousands of people who use and appreciate their tax-supported library are shortchanged by the outflow of funds to other library districts, which could provide greatly enhanced collections and services here.
- There is a need for education of the public, so they understand that they have free options for library use at the eight other libraries in the Municipal Library Consortium: that it is only use of St. Louis County Library that incurs fees.
- Any survey that is done as part of strategic planning should ask questions to elicit the reasons people are going to County Library rather than using their own library.

- There may be ways to revise the reciprocity agreement, short of ending it completely, that would make it less of a financial burden on Webster Groves Public Library.

While Mr. Herdler thought that January 1, 2015 would be good as the initial date for the end of the relationship, other trustees were not as optimistic that the necessary planning and education could be in place that soon.

New Business

Mr. Cooper noted that he has had a few patron requests to hold children's birthday parties at the library. So far he has told people that the Board had discussed no provision for holding private parties here. He spoke of some of the logistical problems of scheduling and implementing birthday parties. Some of the trustees felt that it was an idea at least worth exploring. Mr. Cooper will work with the Children's Staff to develop ideas for making it work.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

The next meeting of the Library's Board of Trustees will be held on Wednesday, November 19 at 7 p.m.