

The Multnomah County Library Board met on Tuesday, May 9, 2006 at Central Library in the U.S. Bank Meeting Room. Chair Dean Gisvold called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

Board members present were: Rob Brading, Gwen Farnham Hyland, Martha Gies, Molly Gloss, Jon Kruse, Marneet Lewis, Diane McKeel, Alice Meyer, Donna Oden-Orr, and Marian Creamer, and Rick Gustafson. Board members Joe Arellano, Stephen Feltz, Mark Garber, Virginia Koontz, and Diane Xiong were excused.

Staff members present were: Molly Raphael, Becky Cobb, Ellen Fader, Cindy Gibbon, Penny Hummel, Rita Jimenez, Lance Murty, Vailey Oehlke, Leila Wrathall, Renea Arnold, Nell Colburn, John Cabrera, Steve Rauch, Fun Martin, Yvonne Chambers and Candy Bertleson. Also in attendance were: Karie Trumbo – The Library Foundation, Debbie Simone – Friends of the Library, Becky Lee – Libraries Yes! and Matthew Lashua, on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners.

The minutes of the April 11, 2006 meeting were approved.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Dean Gisvold reviewed the agenda.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The following reports were filed:

Debbie Simone reported on behalf of The Friends of the Library. Debbie noted that the Friends won three awards, as detailed in the Director's Report. They are now working on supporting the levy campaign and continue to fund the Pageturners program. The Friends' book sale in Gresham last month was very successful, taking in approximately \$18,000.

Dean Gisvold reported on behalf of the nominating committee. Mark Garber is working on a presentation for the June meeting.

Karie Trumbo reported on behalf of The Library Foundation. The Library foundation received a \$50,000 grant from Spirit Mountain to help fund MCL early literacy programs. One of their members, Dorothy Hirsch was featured in the Willamette Week this week as an entrant to the Guinness Book of World Records, being the oldest person to reach the North Pole.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Molly Raphael encouraged everyone to read the Director's Report that was sent out last week to LAB members. Highlights include an award the Friend's of the Library received for recognition of the work they do for MCL. Molly also pointed out that without the Friend's there would be no Pageturners.

Molly also noted the success of the children's author lecture and the featuring of the Central Library in "Heart of Community," a publication due out this fall featuring several libraries throughout the country that are considered the "heart" of the communities of which they serve.

BUDGET UPDATE

Molly Raphael and Becky Cobb presented information provided by the county regarding the 2006-2007 Approved Budget Highlights. The information included an overview of what is in the library budget, with the difference between last year and this year. The biggest increase in cost is for personnel expenses. Another chart showed the break down of the revenue coming from the levy and the General Fund. It was noted that there is a contrast over the last few years in that less revenue is from the general fund and more is coming from the levy.

It was noted that funding received from The Library Foundation is not reflected in the county budget.

The expenditure pie charts showed that personnel costs were going up because of the reallocation of internal services such as IT and facilities. Shared services are no longer in effect and these increased expenses are directly affecting the budget.

Staff previously reflected as county positions have now returned to the library and are charged accordingly. It was also noted that the books and materials budget was declining slightly. The last time the library received healthy funding for books and materials was in fiscal year 1999/2000.

Becky Cobb reviewed the process in the budget outline of what the library will be covering in its presentation. There was a review of the meeting hearing times and we were informed that the budget will be adopted June 22.

Becky also shared the budget manager's message regarding the library levy renewal which was basically what the budget manager outlined for the library in the budget office's report.

Rick Gustafson inquired about the transfer of the General Fund and that the Board fully understands what affect the impact will have on the five year projection. Dean Gisvold pointed out that any reserves will carry over into the following year.

LEVY UPDATE

Jon Kruse introduced Becky Lee from Libraries Yes!, and credited her with being instrumental in the planning and poling of the levy. She has a lot of experience with the county and has worked with Commissioner Cruz and Chair Linn. Becky Lee stated that the levy is "The best and most exciting thing to vote on." this fall.

Jon Kruse stated a need to set the tone of how crucial the levy is. Two thirds of our funding comes from the levy, so if that revenue is taken away it will have a huge affect on the library. Last month they had a team meeting with the commissioners regarding the levy. The goal is to maintain current service levels over the next five years. The levy committee believes that goal can be reached by asking for \$.86/\$1000 which is a 15% increase in the current level. It is the committee's belief that this level will seem reasonable to the voters and anything above it may affect the outcome of the levy.

The focus now is to have a referral from the county commissioners. The committee is requesting the \$.86/\$1000 rate.

What we can do next is support Alice in her presentation of the \$15.25 million campaign. We started with the voter and volunteer support. The next step will be fundraising and gaining support from people who are very supportive of libraries.

Rick Gustafson expressed his concern about the projections, in that we must have projections with respect to the levy and expenditures over the next five years. He stressed the need to have documentation for what the expenditures are and why we are asking for the \$15 million. There was also a concern expressed regarding how much is being carried over from previous years, which could affect the amount of money being raised by the levy and that basically the amount of the levy will affect how voters decide.

Questions involving what the levy rate will be and what are the chances that the proposed levy will pass were asked. A request was also made to have projections in respect to expenditures. Jon Kruse has the calculations in regard to the levy and will copy the Board members with an explanation as soon as he has solid figures, so they can feel comfortable presenting to the Commissioners.

PRESENTATIONS BY YOUTH SERVICES

Ellen Fader, the Youth Services coordinator for Multnomah County Library opened the presentation by explaining that along with the budget challenges there is also a challenge to increase the percentage of children ready to succeed when they enter school. The Early Child Resources department focuses readers from birth to kindergarten through a partnership with the Portland Public Schools and Raising a Reader, a program funded by The Library Foundation.

Renea Arnold, Program supervisor with MCL explained how the library directs services to young children using the premise that the key to literacy is children need to develop pre-reading skills before they enter school. MCL has identified six early literacy skills that are predictive of higher reading success. She pointed out that adults are essential to child development and keeping these skills in mind helps MCL guide parents, staff and child care providers with the tools necessary to help children succeed.

Nell Colburn, Raising a Reader specialist, noted how popular the program is in our community. Their focus is reading from the beginning by helping adult's model behavior for our children. Children will see how important reading is to the adults in their world and that will lead the children to want to read for themselves, primarily by showing the children reading is something of value which allows for understanding the concept of reading.

Reading is like growing. Children make progress a little bit at a time. The Raising a Reader program was initially developed in the San Francisco Bay area where one in three children started school without basic reading skills due to children not being read to in their homes. This program reaches out to children without books and prepares them to enter school as a "reader," by getting more books into their homes and getting more parents and care givers reading books to their children starting from birth. The program doesn't want to just provide books; it wants to empower the providers by teaching them why reading is important.

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 a.m. These minutes are subject to approval at the next scheduled board meeting.