

LIBRARY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Thursday, April 19, 2012, 5:15 pm
Local History Room

In attendance:

Peg Boyle Single, Peter Ireland, Eric Lindstrom, Denise Dunbar, Rebecca Goldberg, Robert Coleburn, Mary Ellen Manoch, Amber Collins, Christine Webb, Emer Feeney, Dan Balon, Rachel Van Vliet.

Minutes:

-The minutes from March are approved.

Public Comment:

-Peter Ireland is a volunteer at FFL. He is concerned with several 2010 Statistics. Many sections were down last year, including outreach destinations, volunteers, volunteer hours. The number of permanent donors has dropped significantly as well.

-Between 2007 and 2011, circulation stats were up 16%. Libraries do a lot of business during recessions and 2008, 2009, and 2010 were recession years, which could be a contributor. The door count did increase in 2010.

-Ashley's Response: The development committee's goal is to make sure the number of donors will increase overall. It's not just about the dollars, it's the number of donors. It's a good reflection of the community's view of the library. We don't have the staff to do a more comprehensive renewal of donors. This year, there are new ideas to help renew donors. Thanks to the Friends of FFL, we have online giving as an option (a new service).

Development Coordinator Ashley McAvey

-Ashley is the Development Coordinator at FFL. She has been here for 4 years working with the co-directors.

-This library is working on building a community. Ashley is trying to incorporate this into everything, including the annual report.

-From last year to June 30, we raised over \$51,000. From then until now, we are at \$90,500. This includes a Burlington Electric and IBM Grant. We are working on other grants as well as renewing donors. Ashley will be using social media to find donors, including Front Porch Forum and Facebook.

-Ashley is asking everyone to think of someone to give a FFL donor request to. Next meeting, Ashley will provide us with letters that the board will personalize and send out.

-Dan suggested that the Burlington School District set up a system to donate part of paychecks to FFL, similar to what United Way does.

-Ashley will bring the "lost donors" list to see if board members know them so we can contact them.

President's Report:

-The Webinar on hiring a new library director was cancelled

-Long range plan: Eric sent letter to Legacy, COTS, and VT Refugee Resettlement Program to find representatives for the committee. Eric will contact the home school group for Burlington. Rachel will contact the outreach sites from the SRP to invite people to the committee.

The Future of the Library

-Amber is retiring this year and we need to decide on the future of the leadership of the library.

-Eric spoke with about 12-15 people at the library about their ideas. There was a strong consensus that new energy is needed and we should talk about a different structure of the leadership.

-Eric met with Miro to determine what the steps are. Miro declined to appoint someone. He said that the board can begin a job search. Eric also asked about how we will write the job description. Eric referred to the handbook for the most recent description (singular description and co-directorship description). Miro thinks the library should consider a single directorship.

-The co-directorship started with a board vote originally. The board is authorized not only to "replace" Amber, but to determine what structure will best meet the library's needs.

-We will develop a political document to outline our decision. Miro will then consider salary additions. \$74,000 is competitive with regional market. He seems willing to increase this salary.

-Miro said if we decide to keep the co-directorship, he would consider visiting the board and share his thoughts about the structure.

-How do we manage the interim period after July 1? HR will guide us in this process.

-Whoever has the role of hiring, firing, budget needs to be non-union (whether it be a single director or part of the co-directorship)

Eric opened up this time for discussion on the topic of the future of the leadership of the library

-Peg noted that it would be helpful to have more information about the history of the co-directorship and more information about the reasons staff and Miro want a single director.

-The Co-directorship happened when there needed to be a \$40,000 cut so they picked three employees to take on the director's duties. One had to be non-union, the other two were union, and the directors did this at no extra pay for some time. It was then decided that they would continue to get their pay for the library duties and then 10% for the co-directorship duties.

-Co-directors' duties: Amber does budget, personnel (non union); Robert C does new technology, liaison to other libraries (union); Robert R does publicity, marketing, public relations (union).

-The division of duties made most sense when they had the candidates and then divided duties based on skills set.

-It is important to remember that one single hire will not solve all the issues of the library.

-Eric shared Robert's thoughts (he is sick): The library since 1992 has been doing wonders off a shoe string budget. The co-directorship showed that the library could do so well with such a little budget. There's no reason to think that this will change. He feels that the co-directorship is the best model for achieving what we need to do with what we have.

-Emer shared that she doesn't have a great deal of experience at the library, but she has worked extensively in theater working with producers and directors. There are many situations where having a collaborative directorship works very well, but off times, it really doesn't work well. She believes that a single director will be the best direction with someone who has a strong vision at this point in time. This can re-energize us with new ideas and vision. It's exciting to hear about other libraries that have great innovative ideas and we hope to have this.

-Robert C believes it would be exciting to have a new leader whether it be as a co-director or a single director. There is a combined 87 years of experience between Amber, Robert R, and Robert C. He stated he is very open to a single director. This new director would need assistance from staff.

-If we go to a single directorship, current co-directors (if they do not become the single director) will lose that 10% and can continue to stay librarians (current co-directors can and should apply if we decide to create a single director position!).

-Next, we decide if we will have an assistant director to the single director. If the director needed assistance, a staff member could get additional funding. If a new director comes in, he/she would need assistance from Robert R and Robert C and would most likely not be able to immediately appoint an assistant director.

-Amber believes it would be best to have a director and an assistant director model.

-There is a huge risk when hiring a single director.

-A great thing has been that the co-directors don't need to oversee the librarians because the librarians do such a great job. Only when there is a problem do co-directors step in. We hope a new director will do this as well.

-Rebecca desires a new person to advise her and help the library. There are many changes going on in the community that we need to consider. Diversity and inclusion are especially important. It seems we need to look outside to get new energy and perspective to move forward.

-Christine Webb just attended the PLA conference. She said it was amazing to see so many wonderful programs and people working in libraries around the country. It would be helpful to have a new librarian with experience at other libraries.

-If we decide to change the library's structure, we want to emphasize that we are changing not because there is a problem with the library, but that we want to maximize what the FFL can do.

-In the political document we give to Miro, we want to emphasize that the library is an important part of this community, we have incredible potential, and that we need him to show he values the library with funding.

We did not have a quorum and decided we also did not have enough information to vote on the future of the library.

Co-Directors' Report:

-Robert Coleburn and Amber met with Mayor Weinberger for about an hour on 4/9/12 and discussed the Issues for the Mayor that staff prepared to highlight concerns. Staffing and hours were discussed as were computer issues and the success of the Summer Reading Program.

-Longtime technical services staffer Judith Janone has announced plans for retirement effective 5/1/2012.

-1,450 Summer Reading Program t-shirts were received with the library logo on the back with acknowledgement that the t-shirts were sponsored by the Amy E. Tarrant

Foundation. Extra shirts were purchased this year to give to supervisors of the outreach sites/school librarians to promote the SRP and FFL.

-Robert Resnik and Megan Butterfield were invited by CLIF (The Children's Literacy Foundation) to perform at "Big Rig Day" at Mississquoi Union High School in Swanton on Saturday morning April 14th. CLIF is presenting the Franklin Country/Grand Isle bookmobile with books as part of the event.

-Rebecca met with Renee Reiner and Mike DeSanto of Phoenix Books (moving to Bank Street, Burlington in May) to discuss different ways of collaboration. We made plans to promote author talks (at the library and the store) with book displays and flyers, discounts they will offer to us for SRP participants and for our Books for Children Gift Campaign.

-Megan Butterfield represented the Fletcher at the annual VT Dept of Libraries Summer Reading Program workshop in Northfield. She returned with terrific ideas for summer programming and art projects.

-Tess Bates, AmeriCorps Teen Literacy Coordinator at FFL has become a reader and facilitator for the Reading to End Racism program in the Burlington schools. She has also coordinated after school programs at Edmunds Middle School and the King Street Youth Center where she does computer gaming, homework help and book discussions. Her book discussion group after school at Hunt continues to be extremely popular.

-A new art display "Coat of Arms" from Hunt Middle School is up in the Teen Area of the library.

-Robert Resnik was a guest speaker for the VT Dept. of Libraries talk on disaster preparedness for libraries at the Town Officers Education Conference at the Hilton.

-Amber, Rebecca, Barbara, Elena, Tess and Mary Ellen Manoch attended a half day training for We All Belong on March 23, 2012 at the Miller Center. The focus was on facilitating discussions.

-Rebecca, Barbara and Amber submitted individual mid-year reports on the progress that had been made as part of We All Belong.

-The results of the City's audit for FY 2011 were released in March. The Library had general fund budget of \$1,249,602, spent \$1,232,725 and ended the year with a balance of \$15,877.

-Amber submitted a library statistical report to the Public Library Data Service that will be compared to other libraries of comparable demographics and published next spring for 2012.

-Steve Roy, an engineer from DPW working on the City's Capital budget confirmed that the Library's front doors and entry way will be replaced and the brick walkway removed, regraded and reinstalled during the summer to conform to ADA accessibility standards. The Carnegie building ceremonial entrance will be opened while the work is being done.

-On March 23rd Robert Coleburn attended a Department of Libraries sponsored workshop on Long Range Planning. The focus of the meeting was on the value of the strategic planning document as a tool to communicate to the public, justify library's budget, and focus library stakeholders on what the library is doing and not doing. Christine Friesse, Assistant State Librarian, supplied us with a list of library consultants who could potentially help us with our Long Range Plan.

-Robert Coleburn has been invited by the Vermont Department of Libraries to attend the Project Compass National Convening conference in Virginia on April 24th – 26th. The theme of the conference is about workforce development, digital literacy, and community engagement. Specifically, the conference is going to focus on the role of libraries supporting the development of 21st century skills. Robert has been selected to be a part of this small VT delegation because the Fletcher Free Library is a leader in the state in providing free computer learning opportunities. Travel expenses will be covered by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Staff Commissioner's Report:

Committee Reports:

-Diversity and Development committees met.

Friends of the Library Report:

-The Friends met on April 5, 2012.

-Craig reported on the door design project for the Children's Section. Liz Crawford is working with the kids in the Creative Tuesdays program to put up some temporary artwork until we have a permanent installation.

-Craig raised the possibility that the \$1400 (from the Valentine's Book Sale and originally intended for replacing damaged books from the flood) be used instead as seed money for a new design for the gateway to the Children's Section. (The City's insurance will pay for replacing the damaged books.)

-The friends will supply money for Elena to provide refreshments for two new cultural programs in French that will be held on March 31st and April 14th.

-The checkbook balance as of April 1, 2012 is \$29,242.10.

-Archiving: The Friends will begin accumulating documents such as minutes, treasurer's reports and other materials and store them in filing cabinets in the Law Library now that there is room.

-Craig reported on a grant from the Vermont Arts Council. The library is eligible to spend up to \$33,458. Half will be supplied by the VAC and the other half will come from the Fletcher's Campaign for the Future. It will go towards Audio Visual equipment in the Fletcher Room (70" TV display with sound system), Community Room (ceiling hung LCD projector and pull down screen), Circ. desk area (60" display to advertise library events).

-The Friends voted on a change to the Bylaws in the section regarding the Vice-President.

-The Friends discussed changing banks in order to support local institutions, get a better return and lower fees.

-Robin suggested that the chairs of Membership, Newsletter, Publicity, Booked for Lunch and other committees write a job description for future reference.

-The Friends are planning a Spring Book Sale for hardcover fiction and paperback books (end of May-June)

-The Friends discussed being involved in a gathering to honor Amber Collins and Judith Janone.

Actions to Be Taken:

-Eric will start an Ad Hoc committee to work on the political document for Miro. Peg, Eric, Emer, and Peter will be on this committee.

-The board will have an extra meeting on May 3, 2012 at 5:00 to vote on moving from the co-directorship to a directorship model. Eric will circulate a proposal beforehand as well as information about the co-directorship model.

Adjournment