

Muscogee County Library Board  
Thursday, April 22, 2010  
Columbus Public Library

Minutes

Members Attending

Frank Star	Clark Gillett, Jr.	Price Walker, Jr.
Barbara Mack	Mimi Childs	Jimmy Elder
Owen Ditchfield	Gary Griesheim	Bobsie Swift
M. A. Dowdell	Rick Covington	Lisa Goodwin

Members Excused

Barbara Kamensky	John Wells
Susan Andrews	Pat Hugley-Green

Others Attending

Claudya Muller, CVL Director  
Lyn Anderson, CVL Chief Financial Officer  
Robin Shader, CVL Deputy Director  
Linda Hyles, CVL Marketing Coordinator  
Debbie McGreggor, Administrative Assistant to the Director  
Alice Budge, President, Friends of Libraries

Chair Frank Star called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

The Chair asked if there were any corrections to the minutes of the March 25, 2010 meeting. He asked Debbie McGreggor if the document distributed at that meeting by Newt Aaron was available as it was noted in the minutes. Ms. McGreggor said she did not have a copy but would get one from Mr. Aaron and put with the minutes of record. M. A. Dowdell moved the minutes be approved as distributed. Jimmy Elder seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Chair recognized Alice Budge, President of the Muscogee County Friends of Libraries. Dr. Budge stated that in addition to the regular report that Gary Griesheim brings to the Board for the Friends, she had some things to tell the Board. She reported that the Friends has received a donation of \$10,000 over the course of two years. The Friends asked Claudya Muller what the most pressing needs were for the library. Ms. Muller consulted each of the branches asking each one what was needed the most. Items purchased as a result of this information were small tables for children's areas, book cats, replacement chairs in the e-commons and adjustable laptop carts.

The total for these items came to approximately \$6,000. The remaining \$4,000 was allocated to books.

Dr. Budge also reported that the Friends won the Volunteer Community Organization Award from the Tri-Community Directors of Volunteer Services. The award was given based on the recommendation of Jim Shehy, CVL Volunteer Coordinator.

During National Library Week, the Friends presented each of the branches with a plant thanking the staff for their work.

A program of "Tea and Music" will be coming up in May sponsored by the Friends. Every Friday afternoon at 3 p.m. in the CPL auditorium, Dr. Kristen Hansen of CSU will be playing and answering questions from the audience.

#### FRIENDS OF LIBRARIES

Gary Griesheim started his report by reminding the Board that the Friends contributions this year to the library for programming was approximately \$35,000 including the \$5,000 donation to the Big Read. This qualified the library for matching NEA grant funds. This year \$5,000 has been committed for the Civil War series to be presented next year. Also, the Friends have committed \$9,000 to volunteer services and staff.

The programming budget for the next fiscal year will be decided soon. Claudya Muller, Henry McCoy and Jim Shehy will be working on the cost of programming for next year and will present a budget for consideration to the Friends.

#### TREASURER'S REPORT

M. A. Dowdell asked Lyn Anderson to provide the Board with the Treasurer's Report. Mr. Anderson said that under revenue, the line item for Stewart County indicates the City of Lumpkin revenue has not been received and will probably not be received before the end of the fiscal year. Ms. Muller stated that the City of Lumpkin is refusing to pay until the Lumpkin Public Library reopens. Ms. Muller stated that the city officials have been told they are putting pressure on the wrong entity because it is the County Commission that must do the work needed to reopen the Lumpkin Public Library. Mr. Anderson then reviewed the expenses with the Board. He noted that line item Office Maintenance and Contracts shows \$49,674 spent in the period. He explained that this was the 3M project the Board approved last month. Mimi Childs moved the Treasurer's Report be accepted as presented. Jimmy Elder seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

#### DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Claudya Muller thanked Debbie McGreggor and Robin Shader for preparing the Director's Report in her absence.

Ms. Muller reported that Aflac has committed to 3 more years of supporting the Vacation Reading Program. She said she has sent Aflac a letter thanking them for the commitment and hopes to meet with them soon.

She reported that Brian Hulsey, a part-time employee and member of CVL Leads! has been invited to speak at the Southeastern Library Association Conference this Fall. He did a presentation at the recent Computers and Libraries Conference. Jimmy Elder asked where Mr. Hulsey is based. Ms. Muller said that he is part-time at the Columbus Public Library and fulltime at CSU.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – There was none.

## NEW BUSINESS

Facilities Committee – The Facilities Committee brought a recommendation to the Board to authorize the Library administration to get started with the planning of the NCPL Renovation project so that on July 1, 2010 (the new fiscal year) the work can begin. Rick Covington asked how much the project would cost. Ms. Muller stated it is \$400,000. Ms. Muller said the school board has approved the 3-year contract with Hecht Burdeshaw and Newton Aaron & Associates. **The recommendation passed unanimously.**

Operations Committee – The Operations Committee recommended a revision to Policy MNG4—Facilities Use. A copy of the revised policy was distributed to the Board prior to the meeting. **The recommendation passed unanimously.**

Finance Committee – The Finance Committee recommended the approval of payment in the amount not to exceed \$160,000 for the purchase of 112 replacement computers for the Columbus Public Library’s public service areas under the library’s 5-year computer replacement policy. **The recommendation passed unanimously.**

The Finance Committee recommended the approval to accept \$285,400 in grant funding from the Knight Foundation to purchase a fully operational technology bookmobile, with a high tech mobile library, to serve three rural counties in West Georgia. **The recommendation passed unanimously.**

Overdue Fines Increase – The topic of an increase in the fees for overdue fines was discussed at the Finance Committee. The committee felt it needed more discussion and was presented to the full Library Board for discussion. Claudya Muller said that it has been four years since the last time the Board discussed increasing fines. At that time, the Board voted not to increase fines. She reported that in libraries of the same size, 25 cents seems to be the going rate for an overdue. Currently, the library receives \$125,000 a year in fines. A study shows that fine money comes from the same individuals over and over again. The average length of time the repeat “overdue” keeps the material is 6 weeks. The fine is capped at \$5 per item and not the cost of the book.

Ms. Muller explained that when an individual reaches owing a total of \$25, they are turned over to Unique Management. They do collections for public libraries only. Ms. Muller stated the library has been with Unique Management for 5 years. They do recover a lot of material for the library. Mr. Ditchfield stated a concern that the letters from Unique Management should go to the parent of a child and not the minor child. Ms. Muller explained this could not be done with the current Horizon system. She stated that the new ILS system will be able to send the parent the letter and not the child.

Bobsie Swift moved to increase the overdue fine from 10 cents to 25 cents per day. Jimmy Elder seconded the motion.

Mr. Ditchfield asked if the fines were the same for non-book items. Ms. Muller stated the fines are higher for non-book items and no increase in fines on those items is being requested. Mr. Ditchfield stated he recalled in an article sent to the Board that some districts are doing away with fines completely.

Ms. Swift asked how customers will be notified of the fine increase. Ms. Muller stated that if the increase takes effect with the new fiscal year, that would give Linda Hyles, Marketing Coordinator, two months to develop and launch a campaign to inform customers of the increase.

Rick Covington voiced concern that the increase would be 150%. He stated he would prefer that the library did not turn people over to collection. Ms. Muller stated that the library was losing over \$600,000 worth of material a year. Mr. Covington clarified his remark by stating he would prefer the collection agency not be allowed to turn individuals over to the credit bureaus.

Chair Star stated that not returning a book is a choice the customer makes. If they return the material, there is no fine. People don't have to pay fines; all they have to do is return the materials. He stated that this increase will not affect 90 – 95% of the customers who borrow materials. So why is there so much concern about the people who don't follow the rules. All the people have to do to not pay fines is return the material on time.

Mimi Childs stated that since there are so many questions and scenarios, it might be a good idea to send this item back to committee. Bobsie Swift said she would withdraw her earlier motion. Bobsie Swift then moved that the Overdue Fines Increase be sent back to the Finance and Operations Committees for further review and those committees come back to the full Library Board with a recommendation. Jimmy Elder seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Non-resident Fees – Ms. Muller explained that one of the first actions of the Library Board when it was appointed in 2001 was to do away with non-resident fees. She said at that time there were approximately a half a dozen people who purchased the cards for \$45. Since then, about 15% of the customers are non-resident. She said she would like for the Board to reconsider the non-resident fee. Claudya Muller stated that there were several ways the fee could be initiated, i.e. discounts for military, volunteers could be

exempted, etc. She said there is a lot of discussion to be had on this topic. Jimmy Elder agreed that there needs to be more discussion on aspects that impact non-residents. Bobsie Swift moved to send the Non-resident Fees back to both the Finance and Operations Committees for further review and those committees present a formal plan to the Library Board at its next Board meeting. Jimmy Elder seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

## CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He said it was one of the best attended meetings in several months. He said the attendance by Board members is critical and crucial because of the input by each Board member on the topics discussed.

The Chair reminded the Board of discussions that have been held at the past several Board meetings about increasing the knowledge of the Library Board and the Library to the Muscogee County School Board. Discussion was held on setting up individuals meetings with various members of the School Board. The Chair passed around a signup sheet for Board members to select one or two School Board members who they feel they know and would feel comfortable meeting with one-on-one to discuss library activities. The Chair stated the one-on-one meetings will not take place until the Fall and talking points will be developed to be used in the meetings.

The Chair thanked Jimmy Elder for chairing the Library Board meeting in March.

The Chair stated that the discussion on fees and fines was very sobering. He said the Library Board is a unique board in that there is no financial requirement. He said on many volunteer boards, the members are expected to raise money, donate money or both. He stated that in light of the facts about the finances to keep such a fantastic library, Board members might consider a donation to the Library Foundation. He asked the Board Members to think about it.

## BOARD EDUCATION

Statistics—Robin Shader – Due to the lateness of the Board meeting, it was decided to ask Ms. Shader come back to make her statistics presentation at the May meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.