

ST. CLAIR COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

TIME & PLACE: 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, February 15, 2005  
210 McMorran Boulevard, Port Huron, St. Clair County Main Library

PRESENT: BOARD MEMBERS: Arnold Larson, Lynn Moran, Helen Praet and Peter Vernier. DIRECTOR: James Warwick.

ABSENT: Kathy Nicholl

ALSO PRESENT: Administrative Services Secretary, Kimberley Radatz; Assistant Library Director, Stanley Arnett II; Adult Services Coordinator, Allison Arnold; Assistant Branch Librarian, Anita Jackson; Branch Librarian, Linda Aguinaga; Branch Librarian, Lois Kaufman; Children Services Coordinator, Janet Rose; Clerk, Susan Bowen; Library Assistant I, Barb Adent; Library Assistant I, Kathleen Wheelihan; Technical Services Assistant/President of AFSCME Local #1089 Jerilyn Brown; County Commissioner Denny Kearns, Brenda Arnold and Gretchen Krug.

- I. CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE BY Chairperson Vernier at 6:33 p.m. All members present except Member Nicholl.

Pledge of the Allegiance

- II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Moved by Member Larson and supported by Vice-Chairperson Moran to approve the Agenda. Motion unanimously carried.

III. CITIZENS' COMMENTS:

Dale Kittendorf a resident of Port Huron, has been an employee of St. Clair County Library for 5 ½ years. Explained 2 years ago he circulated a petition among the staff to have Jim Warwick removed from his position as Library Director, but first spoke to library board members on St. Patrick's Day of 2003 (met with four out of five board members individually) to express his concern over the poor job that Jim was doing managing the library. So sufficiently encouraged he destroyed the forty signatures he gathered. But now after the recent turmoil with the budget and the branch situation, wondering now if that was such a good idea? In 2003 the board suggested that a communication committee be set up to increase communications and to alleviate this information to the staff. There is no communication committee today and if there ever was it was very short lived. Now communications between staff and administration is worst than ever. Noted however they decide to take the rest of the message he asked that they consider this, the only staff members that Jim discusses significant issues with are in positions that are filled with At Will employees and most are positions that he created. Staff members that could speak their minds with the protection of the Union are left in the dark. Also noted for them to take a look at the employee value survey the County administered last spring, Jim received the lowest score of any department head in the County. He asked the board to talk to the staff and to ask them if they would fear losing their job or some other form of retribution. At a recent ad hoc meeting Jim was approached of the possibility of using the upcoming President's Day holiday to have a meeting with the entire staff since we're closed that day. Jim said no because he needed a three day weekend to go to Green Bay to take care of family business (respects the fact that family matters are very important), he passed up a great opportunity to communicate with staff and has not bothered to suggest another date, once again he shown us his unwillingness to communicate with staff. People's ideas have been shot down frequently enough and harshly enough that most don't even bother to share. The library staff is a bundle of potential even with reduced funding but not in the hands of Jim Warwick, he urged board members to listen to the staff.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Moved by Member Larson and supported by Vice-Chairperson Moran to approve the January 18, 2005 Regular Meeting Minutes. Motion unanimously carried.  
Moved by Member Praet and supported by Vice-Chairperson Moran to approve the February 1, 2005 Special Meeting Minutes. Motion unanimously carried.

V. FINANCIAL REPORT:

- a) Approval and Ratification of Bills.  
Director Warwick noted there was one expense over \$10,000 and it's explained in the director's report. Moved by Member Larson and supported by Vice-Chairperson Moran to approve the Regular invoices for January 2005, totaling \$7,476.51 and Millage invoices for January 2005, totaling \$71,169.59. Motion unanimously carried.
- b) Acceptance of Financial Report.  
Director Warwick explained the expenditures look high in the report and the County is already working on reversing 2004 expenses from these reports so the expenses are not as great as what the \$71,000 suggest. Moved by Member Praet and supported by Vice-Chairperson Moran to accept the January 2005 Financial Reports as information only. Motion unanimously carried.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS:

- a) Library Director's Report.  
Director Warwick noted he removed the Long-Range Plan from the agenda. Jeff Johnson notified him saying he has other commitments but asked for referrals from Mr. Johnson. Once he receives another bid it'll be placed back on the agenda. Detailed discussion took place discussing Long Range Plan options. Options: Maybe do an inside study, use a local person for strategy planning, offer \$10,000 and see what they can do with this and look at past Long-Range Plan questions. Director Warwick will forward copies of past Long-Range Plan to board members. Library Assistant Barb Adent asked why don't they use what we're already paying for such as the Newsletter, we can put surveys in it? Chairperson Vernier said it is possible but what it comes down to is what type of questions do we want to ask the public? Vice-Chairperson Moran noted the Plan should be use for District Status. Director Warwick explained in the process of reduction of hours we had several meetings with Terry Pettee and he said it's the responsibility of the County to administer the contract and not the Library. Director Warwick explained he was under the impression at one of the first meetings we were going to get a schedule and then that schedule would be presented and this would be the way of reduction of hours and in different people taking a reduction of hours. At a subsequent meeting it was found this was not satisfactory and that seniority had to rule. A list of people with seniority was made then a number of average hours they worked was prepared and at the branch a number of hours that each branch needed to work was established then a bidding process. President of AFSCME Local #1089, Jerilyn Brown explained at no point did she think anyone sitting at that table thought they were going to be able to make a schedule and people sitting down and fairly distribute those hours. Thinks early in the process that was the question! Terry Pettee at that point questioned how they were going to assure that everyone was going to be treated fairly, this question was asked several times and no one came up with an answer. Terry Pettee advised them what the contract stated and told us what the process had to be (first meeting). The Union cannot dictate to you how it is done, that's a managerial decision, they can only advise you on what the contract said. Director Warwick noted that the process was the bidding. Ms. Brown noted that seniority still takes presence and also stated there was chaos but feels that everyone involved in that process was trying to do the right thing and they felt to right the wrong they did, and to do this they had to bring it back to a level playing field (start at where the first mistake was made). The process is going forward as corrected, each individual will be notified. Branch Librarian Linda Aguinaga noted that the people who are complaining about this mistake are not making rash judgment. Director Warwick commended Ms. Brown and others who were in that process.

Vice-Chairperson Moran asked if this was the time to ask to establish a communication committee. Director Warwick said he made a note to get back to that point and there will be a regular monthly communication meeting and will probably recommend closing the library for either a half or full day to have an in-service training/communication day (we would need County Commissioners support on this). Library Assistant Kathleen Wheelihan noted she thinks the staff would like to see board members involved with this committee. Chairperson Vernier explained the only problem he sees with this is that this board's responsibility is a priority for policy making and judgment also the communication committee would be more day-to-day operations. Vice-Chairperson Moran recommended a liaison person for this committee. Director Warwick noted board members could attend these meetings. Ms. Brown asked why they would take the Directors word when he cannot take responsibility? Chairperson Vernier explained their responsibility as board members are directly to the Director and not the day-to-day responsibility (this is the Directors responsibility). Also the responsibility of the Union contract is not the boards this is the responsibility of the Director and the County. Their responsibilities are to set policies and pay the bills and to over see the Director and to direct him. Vice-Chairperson Moran would like to see a committee formed to change the process on how everyone interacts because people feel left out. Also noted the communication committee ended up being a personnel policy committee because they thought they could fix things though this process, but its not addressing this issue. Member Larson recommended to the board to have an ad hoc committee of two board members, would gather information and meet with staff to begin to address what are the issues, this is not a union issue but staff and director issue. This committee of two would be an information gathering and there could be time set a side for those two people to meet with selected members or open meetings to discuss issues of communications and hope they would come up with some resolution. Also noted this is not making a decision but hearing information. Moved by Member Larson and supported by Vice-Chairperson Moran (the original personnel committee) to schedule meetings to meet with staff to discuss issues relevant to communications. Motion unanimously carried. Director Warwick volunteered to coordinate dates and send emails out for the ad hoc committee once member Moran was back from vacation.

- b) Department and/or Committees.
- c) Thank you notices  
Outreach Center SONS – Tyrone C. Burrell

VII. OLD BUSINESS:

- a) Detroit Edison Company Tax Assessment Appeal Letter.  
Director Warwick explained there was an article in the Times Herald dated January 24th (copy included in their packet) explaining the Michigan State Tax Tribunal has set a September 12<sup>th</sup> trial date in Lansing regarding the taxable value of DTE Energy's St. Clair and Belle River power plants.
- b) Forming District Library Committee.  
Director Warwick didn't think they were at a point to form an official committee, because he is working on issues and we need cost before we can go any further. Director Warwick will forward copies of questions from the ad hoc meeting to board members and staff regarding going district including as well as other issues as questions that employees would like addressed. Member Larson said referring to the ad hoc meeting that this is a beginning of some discussion that affect employees directly. He will send a preliminary report of district information no later than April to the board regarding operational cost and how these services will be provided etc.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS:

Member Praet mentioned that almost every branch on the circulation report was negative. Director Warwick noted there was no indication why after reading through the reports except we were closed for New Years, and Martin Luther King's holiday, this could have had an affect? Purchasing DVD instead of VHS would not have an affect on this. Branch Librarian Lois Kaufman explained this was discussed at systems and it baffled everyone because videos are going out. She is thinking we should probably accept this type of thing. It's the same as how the stock market goes up and down for no reason and also because we have had such rises for a number of years and it stands to reason it will start to level off. Vice-Chairperson Moran also noted people have been sick. Assistant Branch Librarian Anita Jackson also noted there are services out there that offer videos with just a click (very convenient). Chairperson Vernier noted they might have to analyze after a few months then decide on a different approach, right now not to worry about one month, to early to make a decision.

a) Board Member Reports.

Member Praet – Spoke with Assistant Branch Librarian Veronica Ruck at G. Lynn Campbell. Their children's programming is picking up and tomorrow they are having a surprise project for the children. In March she has everything already turned in (very impressive). Marysville their email computer classes for tomorrow are full. Children's programs are full. Staff member had a question on mileage; if a person who works in Marysville and has to go to G. Lynn do they receive mileage? Director Warwick replied yes if it's in the same day and they have to go there, they receive it. Branch Librarian Julie Alef at St. Clair has to do a lot of routine things because they're missing one of their employees (not able to do normal things). Also had to cancel or put on hold a few programs because of being short staffed. She is also very concern with the children's programmer and the children's person because their job description/classification are the same and feels they should be separate. Also Branch Managers have all the responsibilities but no authority is also a concern to her. St. Clair Friends are sponsoring a program with Dr. Susan Burke on acupuncture Thursday March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Staff is worried about what's going to happen with everyone's hours.

Member Larson – Welcomed Commissioner Denny Kearns. Also noted he is retiring in a week and a half and will be out of town due to a prior commitment but will be in contact with the board and Director. Will be back in May for the board meeting.

Vice-Chairperson Moran – Circulation is up at Memphis. Staff at the branches are concern regarding the up coming changes in hours. Vice-Chairperson Moran are looking forward in working with Helen and everyone, also noted the board is not here to micro manage the Director. There is a system that can be worked out and feels confident that we all can be team players and assures that's what Jim wants. Will also be out of town for a couple of weeks.

Chairperson Vernier – Welcomed Commissioner Denny Kearns and noted he has spoken with staff at his local branch and everyone is worried about the hours also. And also explained they are trying to retain people as much as possible, hopefully this will work out.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING DATE. Tuesday, March 15, 2005 at 6:30 p.m., located in the Gilbert Wilcox Meeting Room at the Main Library, 210 McMorran Boulevard, Port Huron.

IX. ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Member Larson to adjourn meeting. Motion unanimously carried. Adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Peter J. Vernier, Chairperson

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James F. Warwick, Director/Secretary