

Minutes
Board of Library Trustees
Main Library
Friday, August 23, 2013

Board Members Present:

Brenda Simmons-Hutchins, Chair
Christina Stallings, Secretary
Jackie Perry
Guy Anderson
Ronnie King
Mark S. Wood
Gerald Reid
Jim Selzer
Sybil Ansbacher

Board Members Absent:

Erin Vance Skinner, Vice-Chair
Marc Hardesty
Bill Gulliford, Council President, Ex-officio
Greg Anderson, Councilmember, Ex-officio
Kimberly Davis, DCPS Representative, Ex-officio

Others Present:

Barbara A.B. Gubbin, Director
Carolyn Williams, Deputy Director
Mark Merritt, Deputy Director
Andi Hammond, Executive Assistant to the Director
Gretchen Mitchell, Assistant Director for Support Services
Kathy Lussier, Manager of Community Relations and Marketing
Richard Mott, Manager of Strategic Initiatives
Julie McNeil, Assistant Director for Public Services
Robbie Tiedeman, Facilities Manager

Laura Minnich, Manager for Youth Services and Community Outreach
Michael Sullivan, Southeast Region Manager
Bob Silkett, Pablo Creek Region Manager
Lisa Peterson, Technology Systems Administrator
Juliana Rowland, Office of General Counsel
Harry Reagan, Friends of the Jacksonville Public Library
Helene Kamps-Stewart, Friends of the Murray Hill Library
Kimberly Davis, DCPS
Sharon Coon, Central CME Church

Call to Order

Chair Brenda Simmons-Hutchins called the meeting to order at 11:05am; there was a quorum present. Trustee Perry arrived at 12:15pm.

Chair Simmons-Hutchins noted that the minutes from the August 8 meeting will not be approved until the regular September meeting. In an effort to ensure the minutes are as accurate as possible, and taking into consideration the complexity of the discussion at the last meeting, minutes will be sent out earlier than usual. She asked trustees to carefully review the minutes when they receive them and send any corrections to Andi Hammond, Executive Assistant to Director Gubbin.

Introduction of Guests

Chair Simmons-Hutchins welcomed Ms. Juliana Rowland, representative from the Office of General Counsel.

Ms. Sharon Coon with the Central CME Church addressed the Board and expressed her opposition to the proposal to close the Brentwood Branch Library should the library's FY14 budget be cut. She asked that no libraries in the Urban Core be closed.

Trustee Updates on Conversations with Councilmembers

Chair Simmons-Hutchins noted that all trustees had received a list of councilmembers to contact to speak with about the library's FY14 budget. She asked each trustee to provide an update on these contacts.

Chair Simmons-Hutchins

Dr. Simmons-Hutchins reported that she re-sent the documents to councilmembers which had previously been sent to them with an invitation to ask her any questions they may have. She has meetings scheduled with Councilmen Gaffney and Clark next Tuesday. She spoke with Councilwoman Lee who is a strong supporter of the libraries and is against the closure of any library. Dr. Simmons-Hutchins did not receive a reply from any of the other councilmembers whom she contacted.

Trustee Christina Stalling

Trustee Stallings reported that she had reached-out to councilmembers Jones, Lee, Carter, and Gulliford via a letter and phone call; she received no response from them.

Trustee Gerald Reid

Trustee Reid reported that he reached-out to Councilmembers Crescimbeni, Love, Yarborough and Daniels. He has not had a response from Councilmembers Love or Daniels, but Councilman Crescimbeni indicated he would have a phone conversation with Mr. Reid. Councilman Yarborough indicated that he did not have time to meet but said that he is a supporter of the library.

Trustee Mark Wood

Trustee Wood reported that he met with Councilman Joost and has a meeting scheduled with Councilman Yarborough this afternoon. He noted that Councilman Joost indicated that he thought the Board should go ahead and close libraries instead of just talking about it. Trustee Wood explained to the councilman that the Mayor must make a recommendation to close a library and City Council must pass legislation in order to close libraries and that the Board has no authority to close libraries. Trustee Wood also noted that he got the impression that the library's FY14 budget will not be cut as severely as presented in the Mayor's budget. Trustee Wood noted that he would be speaking with Councilman Carter but has had no contact with Councilmen Clark or Schellenberg.

Trustee Sybil Ansbacher

Trustee Ansbacher reported that she had attempted to contact Councilmen Clark, Redman and Gulliford both by phone and email but received no response. She sent a second, more comprehensive email to each; she did receive a response to the second email from Councilman Gulliford indicating that he is supportive of the library. She also emailed Councilman Love whom she knows personally and who indicated he is supportive of the library.

Trustee Ronnie King

Trustee King reported that he has a meeting scheduled with Councilman Love on Monday. Councilman Brown did not have time for a meeting but indicated that he would not vote to close libraries. Trustee King did not receive a response from Councilman Gaffney but he is expected to attend an event that Trustee King will also be attending; Trustee King will attempt to speak with him then.

Trustee Guy Anderson

Trustee Anderson reported that he met with Councilmembers Boyer and Anderson. He has a meeting scheduled with Councilman Lumb next week and has not been able to contact Councilman Holt.

Trustee Jim Selzer

Trustee Selzer reported that he had spoken on the phone with several councilmembers but had yet to meet with any. He has a meeting scheduled with Councilman Bishop on August 23; he has not received a response from Councilmen Gulliford or Anderson.

Chair Simmons-Hutchins reminded trustees to review the process of closing a library with councilmembers as they speak with them—the Mayor must recommend that a branch be closed, hold a public meeting and notice the intent to close, and then city council must pass legislation to close the library. Trustee Wood noted that he thinks councilmembers will be less likely to vote to close libraries when they understand it is ultimately their action to take; he also noted that just because they don't vote to close libraries doesn't mean they will provide full restoration of funds proposed to be cut from the FY14 library budget by the Mayor. He noted that trustees need to make it clear that in order to keep libraries open, funding must be restored.

Chair Simmons-Hutchins noted that trustees also need to emphasize in meetings with councilmembers the severe cuts that were made to the library's FY13 budget. Trustee Reid reported that, based on feedback at a recent community meeting at the Beaches Branch Library, the community doesn't understand that the Board doesn't control the entire library budget but just a portion of it. Director Gubbin reviewed a document that outlines the history of the library's budget since FY05 and how the controllable and non-controllable costs have changed.

Trustee King asked that the Board look at potential strategies for a situation in which the City Council Finance Committee decides they will not close libraries but also will not restore funding to the library. He noted that the Board had not shown how services would be reduced without the option of closing branches. Trustees discussed what those options may include; Director Gubbin noted that with the level of funding proposed to be cut, beyond the options already identified and presented (reducing the materials budget, eliminating Sunday hours, and reducing the hours at the Main Library to 40 hours a week) there are no other cost saving options except to close branches. Chair Simmons-Hutchins asked that any additional options be shared with Director Gubbin after the meeting.

Other Business

Chair Simmons-Hutchins reported that there is a task force in place to look at the structural implications/results of consolidation. This impacts the library in a significant way with centralized IT and Public Works that don't serve/recognize the library's needs. Director Gubbin suggested that it is important to have a trustee on this Taskforce. Trustee Guy Anderson indicated interest in becoming involved in this. Chair Simmons-Hutchins will send a memo to Council President Bill Gulliford asking that Mr. Anderson be appointed to the Task Force.

Confirmation of Future Meeting Dates

Chair Brenda Simmons-Hutchins reminded attendees that the next meetings will be held on September 12 and October 10 at the Main Library.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:23pm.



Brenda Simmons-Hutchins, Chair, Board of Library Trustees



Christina Stallings, Secretary, Board of Library Trustees

September 12, 2013

Date Approved by the Board of Library Trustees