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Library Trustees Minutes 09-18-2006

Robbins Library Board of Trustees
September 18, 2006

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:22 PM. Attending were trustees David Castiglioni, Patricia Deal, Katharine Fennelly, Barbara Muldoon, Frank Murphy and Susan Ruderman. Joyce Radochia was absent. Also attending were library director Maryellen Loud, assistant director Cynthia Diminture and Russell Fund coordinator Liza Halley.

Russell Fund Programming

Ms. Halley elaborated on her September 12th memo, written with Marianne Uttam, Head of Children's Services, which proposed to shift the \$2,400 that is usually spent each year on author programs in the schools to library programs that celebrate literature and promote library use. In addition to problems with the coordination of the author programs in the schools, Ms. Halley explained that the allocation of \$2,400 draws precious money away from potential library programs, thus reducing the library's visibility and the ability to celebrate literature and promote the library as effectively as might be possible. The children's services staff hopes to offer additional programs related to the theme of folk tales and stories from around the world, such as a favorite book activity, multicultural book festival, birthday party for favorite authors and book groups for a variety of age groups. The trustees asked many questions of the coordinator, expressing some concern that such a shift would reduce the program opportunities for some children who don't regularly visit the public library. In regard to children's participation in library book groups, Ms. Ruderman suggested coordination with the Boy and Girl Scouts organizations in satisfying merit badge requirements. Mr. Murphy suggested an evaluation of the schools' participation last year as well as information on this year's program, to see if a mixed approach might be feasible for next year. Ms. Fennelly made a motion; seconded by Ms. Deal, to allocate \$2,400 of the Russell Fund budget to in-house programming proposed by Liza Halley and Marianne Uttam. Passed unanimously. Ms. Muldoon amended the motion to include the submission of a mid-year progress report. Passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Communications

1. Gordon Russell and a friend toured the library. Mr. Russell also made an unrestricted gift to the library. 2. Joyce Radochia and Patricia Deal have been appointed by the Town Manager to a committee to study raising revenues to enable the Fox Branch Library to become self-supporting. Other members of the committee are: Maryellen Loud (Library Director), Kevin O'Brien (Planning Department), Jack Hurd (Selectman), Allison deSeife (Branch Librarian), Patsy Kraemer (Robbins House and Town Hall facilities manager) and Hillary Rappaport (community representative/ Fox Library user).

Update on the Establishment of a Foundation

Ms. Ruderman reported on her consultation with the state Ethics Commission regarding the question of foundation trustees. The attorney with whom she spoke confirmed that the entire Board of Trustees of the library should not constitute the foundation board. However, application can be made to the commission to allow some trustees to also serve as foundation trustees. Documentation such as town by-laws and information on the creation of the foundation will need to be submitted. The Ethics

Commission would render an opinion regarding a potential conflict of interest. Based on this opinion, the Board will consider further action. Ms. Deal made a motion; seconded by Mr. Murphy, to assemble the necessary paperwork to go forward with a request for a ruling. Passed unanimously. The letter of application will be copied to Arlington Town Counsel. Ms. Ruderman will report to the Board once she receives a response.

Fundraising

Ms. Ruderman discussed the possibility of a merged Friends and donors database for the upcoming solicitation. She is concerned about competing fundraising campaigns such as that of the town's Bicentennial committee. It was decided that donors of more than \$150 will automatically be made life members of the Friends of the Library. Corporate donors have not been solicited in eighteen months and Ms. Ruderman believes that the timing of this solicitation should be brought in line with that of the campaign to individuals. The solicitation will take place in November. Richard Duffy sent a memo regarding the proceeds of the sale of his new book, "Arlington Then and Now" at the library. The local history room of the library will receive \$1570 (with royalties to follow) from the sale proceeds.

Scheduling Trustee Meetings

From now through April, Board meetings will take place on the second Wednesday of each month. The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, October 11th at 7:15 PM.

Margaret Spengler Lecture Series

Ms. Radochia is unable to work on this project for approximately one month. Ms. Ruderman proposed that the Board of Trustees offer to co-sponsor an Arlington Historical Society lecture that has been scheduled for May on the role of women in government. This could serve as the first memorial lecture for Mrs. Spengler, if there is acceptance by the Historical Society. Ms. Ruderman will contact them for permission and to assist with coordination. She will also consult with Ms. Radochia and the members of the Memorial Lecture Series Committee regarding this idea.

Community Read

Ms. Loud reported on her efforts to secure a speaker from Partners in Health for a program related to the Community Read of the book "Mountains Beyond Mountains" by Tracy Kidder. Dr. Serena Koenig agreed to speak this fall. The Board will offer an honorarium of \$500.

Trustee Goals and Objectives

Mr. Murphy re-wrote the existing goals and objectives using a baseline of critical levels of library services. Trustees were asked to study these for discussion and possible revision at the next meeting.

Schedule of Holiday Closings

Ms. Loud distributed the proposed schedule for calendar year 2007. Ms. Deal made a motion; seconded by Ms. Muldoon, to accept the schedule. Approved unanimously.

Policy Revision

Ms. Loud brought up the subject of a policy revision regarding study room/tutor usage. After much discussion, it was decided that Ms. Loud would discuss this again with Jennifer DeRemer, Head of Adult Services.

Preliminary Discussion of Next Year's Budget Preparation

Ms. Loud reported that she has no new information to report, but will keep the Board apprised of the status of the budget process.

Author Programs

Ms. Deal noted that Gail Caldwell been confirmed as the speaker for a program to be held on Sunday, November 5th at 3 PM.

Director's Report

The trustees reviewed the written report of the director. Questions were asked about the "greeter" project, exterior lighting and plant maintenance.

Update on Friends of the Library

Ms. Diminture reported on the activities of the Friends of the Library. Amy McElroy, the new Friends' administrative coordinator, is off to a great start. She arranged the volunteer corps for the recent Town Day book sale as well as working at the sale herself. The book sale was a success, netting more than \$5,000. Margarida Mappletoft has agreed to coordinate the ongoing book sale and has been working with the former coordinator, Susanne Blair, during the transition. A fundraiser, an Antiques Appraisal evening, will take place on Thursday, November 2nd at Town Hall. On April 26th, the Friends will once again partner with the Arlington Friends of the Drama to present a benefit performance of Carousel, with a wine/cheese reception. The Friends now have over 400 members and the Board of Directors is committed to trying to increase membership.

Other

Ms. Loud distributed a flyer about a Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners program on the subject of conducting an annual fundraising appeal. Mr. Murphy told the Board that he has been selected to serve on an MBLC committee to study the issue of state aid allocations.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM on a motion by Mr. Murphy. The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, October 11th at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Diminture

