

Board of Library Commissioners

October 21, 2003: MINUTES

Chairman Patrick Markey called the meeting of the Springfield Library Board of Commissioners to order at 5:40 p.m.

Library Commissioners Present:

Helen Boyle
Jennifer Dugan-Murphy
Jerrold Duquette
Patrick Markey
Bettye Webb
Absent: Grisel Gonzalez

Library Staff Present:

Emily Bader, Library Director
Lee Fogarty, Assistant Library Director

All Commissioners present introduced themselves.

Chairman Markey entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the October 7, 2003 meeting. It was noted that on page 2 of the minutes the word "laid off" needed to be changed to "laid off". Commissioner Murphy motioned to approve the minutes as amended, Commissioner Webb seconded and the Minutes were approved as amended.

The next meeting of the Commissioners was scheduled for November 4, 2003, which is Election Day. The meeting date was changed to Monday, November 3, 2003 at 5:30 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Community Room of the Central Library at 220 State St.

Director Bader reported on the status of Library Staff hires. Director Bader stated that as of 10/21, staff has interviewed 40 individuals, 16 former employees have been called back, 17 job offers have been made, two individuals have declined and 6 positions remain unfilled.

The City Personnel Department requires that new hires start at the first step of the salary scale. Director Bader discussed the difficulty this presents for recruiting professional librarians since the entry-level salaries for the Springfield Library are very low and not competitive. Two individuals declined job offers because the salary was too low. The City Personnel Department agreed to waive that policy for professional positions requiring a Masters Degree in Library Science and for the Volunteer Coordinator position.

Director Bader reported that all positions were budgeted at the top salary level, which allows for some negotiation as well as cost savings when positions are offered at the first step. Chairman Markey commended Director Bader on good fiscal planning.

Commissioner Webb inquired where the jobs had been advertised and posted. Director Bader stated that in addition to the ad in the Sunday Republican, the jobs were posted on several Library Jobline websites and were sent to over 30 agencies by City Personnel. Commissioner Webb also asked whether existing staff could supplement in branches where all new positions have not been filled. Director Bader stated the there is not enough current staff to do that and new Branch schedules will be phased in beginning the week of October 27.

Chairman Markey discussed a meeting he attended at the McKnight Neighborhood Council. Residents attending the meeting were concerned about the Annie Curran Endowment and the status of the Mason Square Branch. Residents did not want to use the Principal of the trust for operations and hours but would rather see a portion of it used to help fund a new facility. Residents were pleased that 4 additional hours were added to the Mason Square schedule due to the Annie Curran Fund earned income. Residents also requested a change in the Mason Square schedule by closing on Mondays and opening on Tuesdays. Chairman Markey entertained a motion not to change the schedule since the schedule had been voted on at the October 7th meeting and to change the Mason Square schedule would require changing two other Branch schedules. It was agreed that changes to the schedule would be made when funds become available. Commissioner Murphy motioned to keep the Mason Square schedule as is, Commissioner Webb seconded, and the **MOTION CARRIED**.

A comment was made that since the Read/Write/Now Adult Literacy Program has moved to Pine Point, attendance has dropped by approximately 25%. The Read/Write/Now Program is a department of the Springfield Library and is grant funded. Director Bader suggested that the Literacy program director could come to a future Commission meeting to discuss the program. Chairman Markey agreed that this would be very useful. Assistant Director Fogarty reported that there are still approximately 200 individuals on the waiting list for the program and that the drop in attendance is due to less funding which has resulted in less teachers and less classes.

Chairman Markey discussed an article in the Springfield Republican about the Locked Central Library Book Drop. Director Bader explained that the Book Drop had been locked after it was moved to the State Street parking lot from the Edwards Street parking lot by the SLMA administration. The Book Drop is now unlocked and is being emptied by Springfield Library Maintenance staff on weekdays. Negotiations are in progress to assign this responsibility to SLMA custodial staff that are being paid by the Springfield Library. There was some discussion about relocating the Book Drop to Merrick Park behind Christ Church Cathedral. Director Bader stated that she would discuss this option with Park Superintendent Patrick Sullivan. Other suggestions included relocating the Book Drop on the Quadrangle behind the library. Chairman Markey will set up a meeting with Joe Carvalho to discuss this matter.

Chairman Markey reported on a membership renewal letter he had received from SLMA. The new letterhead included the Springfield Library and it was confusing and implied that donations would also help fund the Springfield Library. Commissioner Markey contacted SLMA Vice-President for Development, Sue Davison to voice his concerns. Chairman Markey suggested that he and Ms. Davison co-author a letter to the editor to clarify this confusing letter. She has agreed to remove the Springfield Library from the letterhead, but has not, at this point, agreed to co-author the letter.

Chairman Markey and Director Bader addressed the issue of Handicap accessible parking. According to the Architectural Access Board regulations, the current designated Handicapped parking at the State Street Parking lot does not meet code. Director Bader discussed a proposal submitted by SLMA to provide handicapped parking on the lawn in front of the Central Library on State Street at a substantial cost to the City. The Department of Public Works will not approve this plan due to safety issues. Director Bader stated the original renovation plans approved by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners included handicapped parking behind the Library on the Quadrangle. However, SLMA has placed large granite bollards behind the library on the granite, which does not allow for accessible parking. Parking on the Quadrangle would also be a problem due to the Fence that has been installed around the perimeter of the Quadrangle. A meeting will be scheduled with AL Chwalek and SLMA Trustee Chair , Mike Wallace to discuss this issue. Chairman Markey stated that he and Director Bader would also attend this meeting.

Several individuals attending the meeting stated that there is much concern by residents near the Quadrangle and by the Armory Quadrangle Civic Association St. about the Fence that has been constructed around the Quadrangle. A meeting has been requested by these individuals with SLMA trustees to discuss their concerns regarding accessibility and safety issues.

Director Bader reported that the City Law Department has drafted a contract with the Park Department, which will allow Springfield Library employees to become contractual employees of the Park Department until the City Personnel Policy Board votes to transfer the employees to the City. This cannot happen until January or February because a City ordinance states that no new positions can be created in the last three months of an election year. Chairman Markey entertained a motion to approve the contract with the Springfield Park and Recreation Department. Commissioner Duquette motioned to approve the contract, Commissioner Boyle seconded. **MOTION CARRIED**.

Chairman Markey asked for comments on the Draft Bylaws of the Springfield Library Commission. He stated that the official term of office is five years. However, since this is a new Commission, the length of the terms vary for the current Commissioners to ensure that there will always be experienced Commissioners. Commissioner Webb had several comments regarding changes to the Draft Bylaws. She recommended to change the word Trustees to Commissioners (Article 2). Commissioner Webb asked for clarification on the official number of Commissioners. Chairman Markey stated that the Commission would be comprised of seven members. Commissioner Webb recommended that a change be made to Article III, Section 2 (Duties of the Chairperson), from "to call special meetings of the Springfield Library Commission" to "to call meetings as needed". Commissioner Webb clarified that the Director and staff are responsible for Selection of Materials but that the Commission would review and approve a Collection Development Policy. Article V, Section I was amended to eliminate the Art Committee. The program committee will be primarily responsible for approving the Program Policy. Director Bader stated that it would be important to establish a Development Committee to establish a Library Endowment and to engage in fundraising activities. Article VII; section 4 "policy" was changed to "policies". Article VII, section 7, "attend meetings with the City Council" was changed to "attend meetings with City Council as needed". Chairman Markey reported that he attended the City Council meeting on October 20, to support an amendment to the City Residence Ordinance which would waive the residency requirement for the existing staff including the Director and Assistant Director. All future Directors and Assistant Directors will be required to live in Springfield. Chairman Markey requested that any other suggestions be e-mailed to him. A second draft will be presented at the next meeting for discussion and for a vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Approved: November 3, 2003