

# Board of Library Commissioners

## September 23, 2003: MINUTES

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The meeting of the Springfield Library Board of Commissioners was called to order by Chairman Patrick Markey at 5:30 p.m.

Library Commissioners Present:

Helen Boyle  
Jennifer Dugan-Murphy  
Jerold Duquette  
Grisel Gonzalez  
Patrick Markey  
Bettye Webb

Staff Present:

Emily Bader, Library Director  
Lee Fogarty, Assistant Director

All of the Commissioners present introduced themselves, providing their home addresses.

Chairman Markey entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2003 meeting. **Motion carried.**

The next meeting date was set for October 7, 2003 at 5:30 at City Hall, Room 220. Chairman Markey requested items for the agenda by Friday, October 3. Chairman Markey and Commissioner Duquette will not be able to attend this meeting. Commissioner Dugan-Murphy will chair the meeting.

The Mission statement for the Springfield Board of Library Commissioners was presented and after some discussion by Commissioners and public comment, changes were made.

*"The mission of the Springfield Board of Library Commissioners is to develop policies and services of the Springfield Libraries as institutions for the education and enjoyment of all its citizens. We are committed to maintain the libraries as essential cultural resources for the diverse communities of Springfield and to work in partnership with the Library administrations to address library needs and public concerns."*

Chairman Markey entertained a motion to accept the amended mission statement. **Motion carried.** Chairman Markey entertained a motion to post the Mission statement on the Library website as well as in all Library locations.

Chairman Markey had received a request to use the Sixteen Acres Branch Library to film an ad for Charlie Ryan's political campaign for Mayor of Springfield. A discussion related to the use of the library as a back drop for a political ad for the Charlie Ryan campaign was held. After some discussion there was general consensus that the library is a public institution and should facilitate political and public speech. Discussion included legal and constitutional elements. There was some concern that the public could see this as an endorsement of a particular candidate. However, it was agreed that as long as this was available to all political candidates, then public perception would not see any paid political advertisement that was filmed in a Springfield library as an endorsement of a particular candidate. The Commissioners felt that the Springfield Libraries are public buildings and that libraries should be open and available for public discourse. It was suggested that the filming be done at a time when the Library is not open to the public so as not to inconvenience the public using the library. Filming would have to be scheduled by

appointment only. Chairman Markey entertained a motion to vote on this matter. It was decided that a vote was unnecessary, since approval had already been granted.

Chairman Markey had drafted by-laws for the Commissioners. He asked to have them posted on the Library website for public comment. Discussion and proposed amendments will be discussed at the next meeting.

Director Bader discussed the progress being made on staff recalls and hiring. Three Branch Managers have been called back. Reggie Wilson will manage Team I (Forest Park, Mason Square, and East Forest Park); Haydee Hodis will manage Team 2 (Brightwood, East Springfield and Liberty) and Norma Couture will manage Team 3 (Sixteen Acres, Pine Point and Indian Orchard). Branch Managers will be contacting volunteers to help prepare Liberty, East Springfield and Forest Park for re-opening. Several other recalls have been made and some staff will begin coming back the week of September 29. Approximately 17 new staff members will need to be hired. Applications close on September 26. Library administration will begin to review the applications on September 29th and schedule interviews. The hiring process will take two to three weeks since new applicants need to be interviewed and references need to be checked. Once a job offer is made, then a starting date will be negotiated. New staff will be scheduled for orientation and training. If enough staff is hired, then the Branches should re-open in late October.

There was some discussion about collections and services at Mason Square. Director Bader stated that Architect Stephen Jablonski had donated his time and developed a shelving plan for the Mason Square Library that would allow for approximately 15,000 items.

Director Bader discussed the Action Plan for FY2004. This plan must be submitted to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners by October 1, 2003. The plan will be posted on the Library website.

Due to the flash flooding in the Forest Park area today, Forest Park Branch's basement was flooded again with rainwater and sewerage back up. At least 6" of water was in the basement. Action Fire will begin work on the Branch immediately. DPW and Facilities management are looking into the situation to prevent further flooding.

Branch schedules were distributed to the Commissioners and to the public. The new schedule should begin by the end of October. Director Bader discussed several elements that had been instrumental in developing the suggested schedule. First and foremost, public comment related to Saturdays and Monday scheduling. As a result 6 of the nine branches will be open on Saturdays. While there were many requests not to open on Mondays, scheduling constraints did not allow for that to happen. However, Branches that are open on Mondays will only be open 4 hours. State regulations require 63 unique hours. The Central Library is required to be open a certain number of hours to meet Regional Reference standards.

Commissioners questioned the hours at Mason Square, since there were no evening or Saturday hours. The Mason Square hours were based on the hours that the Springfield Urban League building was open to the public. After some discussion, the Commissioners agreed that the proposed schedule should be changed to accommodate evening and Saturday hours, understanding that this would impact the Saturday schedule of either Forest Park or East Forest Park. Chairman Markey stated that he would contact Henry Thomas to discuss the feasibility of scheduling Library Hours during times that the Urban League is not open. During Public Comment a suggestion was made to review the hours suggested for Indian Orchard, since the proposed schedule had the Branch closed two weekdays in a row. It was also mentioned that Senior Citizens would benefit from morning hours.

The public and the Commissioners recognized Sheila McElwaine for her instrumental role in opening up the closed Branches and increasing hours at the other Branches.

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Approved as amended: October 7, 2003