

Providence Community Library

Board of Directors Minutes

December 16, 2009

**(These minutes are subject to correction at the January 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board)**

The meeting was held in the community room of the South Providence Library, 441 Prairie Avenue in Providence, at 6:00 pm.

1. Welcome and Call to order

The meeting was called to order by PCL President Marcus Mitchell at 6:10 pm. Marcus welcomed all board members, staff and public to the meeting.

Secretary Linda Kushner took a roll call of the board members, noting that 17 trustees were present and there was a quorum.

Present: Christian Caldarone, Dale Gorton, Althea Graves, Alan Gunther, Owen Johnson, Peter Karczmar, Anne Keefe, Linda Kushner, Rochelle Lee, Mark McKenney, Marcus Mitchell, Alix Ogden, Patricia Raub, Maureen Romans, Ellen Schwartz, Sharon Simpson, Ken Wise.

Absent: Gilda Hernandez, Kara Neymyr.

Public present:

PCL staff: Lanham Bundy and Sandy Oliviera

From PPL Dale Thompson and her husband, William Simmons, and James N Nagle

2. Correction of minutes from 10/21/09

Maureen Romans noted that in the Friends report, the language should read **“Olneyville will try the Smith Hill Friends group model of reaching out to neighborhood organizations, as well as individuals, to build its membership.”** instead of “Olneyville will receive help from the Smith Hill Friends”. Marcus Mitchell moved to accept the minutes as corrected. Sharon Simpson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Executive Director’s Report

The last of the library meetings with Ann and Laura will be set up next month with Rochambeau, Knight Memorial and Fox Point staff.

Laura has set up training in Ocean State Library applications for our staff at Rochambeau Library beginning this Friday morning and continuing for the next 6 weeks.

Staff are now ordering materials using Title Source III, a Baker & Taylor product that allows each library to select books and create orders that are sent electronically to Technical Services for acquisition.

A staff meeting / holiday brunch was held at Mt. Pleasant last Friday.

Linda Kushner, Steve Kumins and Ann spoke at Laurelmead yesterday to an enthusiastic crowd. Steve, Laura and Ann attended the most recent Friends of the Rochambeau Library meeting to answer questions and to discuss our vision and mission.

Patricia and Anne met today with staff at Knight Memorial and consultants Risa Gilpin and Dorothy Bocian, who are spearheading a poetry project called *Raise Your Voice* that is funded by the R.I. Council for the Humanities. The project involves many partners and will end with a poetry book and readings at Knight Memorial Library, Pawtucket Public Library and the Central Falls Library. As part of this project, renowned poet Naomi Shihab Nye will deliver a keynote and poetry reading at Moses Brown on March 11.

Alan Gunther is now serving on the board of the Smith Hill CDC.

Ann, Laura and Dave Dvorchak met with Mr. Vincent Iglizzi and the staff at Silver Lake Reading Express Library to discuss outreach programs and computer instruction. Patricia, Ann and Laura met with Councilman Iglizzi the next day at City Hall. PCL will be sending deposit libraries to Silver Lake, Toni Garcia will be providing a bilingual story time every other week.

Patricia, Ann and Laura met with Teny Gross and Heather Gaydos, of the Institute for the Study and Practice of Non-Violence. We will continue to host student interns during the summer.

We will be meeting with Councilwoman Balbina Young at Roger Williams Day Care Center in early January. We're also setting up a meeting with Kimberly Luca, Supervisor of Humanities and Literacy for the Providence Public School Department.

The GTECH lab opening for Mt. Pleasant is scheduled for Thursday, December 17 at 3:30 p.m. All are invited to attend this exciting event as we plan for the next lab at Fox Point with an opening early next year.

Cynthia Reed from Technical Services has negotiated the donation of 5 additional book trucks for Technical Services from Salve Regina College.

#### Development Director's Report

Steve Kumins noted that we've either received or have been pledged \$160,000 thus far, which represents 25% of our fundraising goal.

We are in contact with the following foundations – the June Rockwell Levy Foundation, the Carter Family Charitable Trust, the Emma G. Harris Foundation and BankRI.

We are still applying for numbers of various grants.

Steve again stressed the importance of 100% Board participation in giving to PCL.

#### 4. Treasurer's Report

Ellen Schwartz distributed a 5 month financial report as of December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009. She noted that we've received 34% of our income and have spent 31% of our budget.

We've currently received all of our money, besides payroll, from the City of Providence. We will be receiving more money from the state in December.

Patricia Raub raised the question of whether the state money coming to PCL could potentially decrease, given the current budgetary situation. Mark McKenney thought that it should be unaffected but noted that we can't be 100% certain about that.

We need to open two new bank accounts, hopefully with BankRI and Merrill Lynch. In order to have all of our money be FDIC insured (limit of \$250,000 in one account) we need to distribute what we currently have in Citizens Bank to a few other accounts. Ellen notified the Board that we need a vote of approval in order to open these new bank accounts.

Althea Graves moved that PCL open two new bank accounts with BankRI and Merrill Lynch, Rochelle Lee seconded. The motion passed unanimously

#### 5. Facilities Report (Business Director)

Rochelle Lee notes that the Facilities Committee is exploring options for acquiring space to house administrative offices and Technical Services.

The Facilities Committee has agreed upon certain requirements for such potential spaces:

1. Location needs to be near a library and visible, on a main street
2. Minimum 5,000 square feet
3. Good condition
4. Ground floor access for tech service
5. Two entrances

We are also looking into realtors, lenders and brokers to work with. Should anyone have any recommendations, let the Facilities Committee know.

Repair assessments have been completed at Olneyville, Wanskuck and Smith by Eric Ahlborg of Ahlborg Construction. The Committee wishes to commend Mike Nickerson and Sue Gibbs for all of their help with this process.

It is important to note that the PPL has been unwilling to meet with the City regarding ownership of buildings, as of this date.

Mark McKenney asked if there has been any success in finding space owned by the City for library usage? We have met with Alan Sepe to discuss available properties but there are few. Most city-owned properties are either occupied or not suitable for our needs.

#### 6. Personnel Report

Patricia Raub reported that the Personnel Committee is close to being finished with a PCL Staff Handbook.

The Benefits Working Group has scheduled three meetings during the week of December 14<sup>th</sup> for staff to receive information and to ask questions of all benefit providers. Open enrollment will be from December 14<sup>th</sup> until December 21<sup>st</sup>. Only a few things will change regarding benefits – BCBSRI has a 2% rate increase and we will now offer dental through BCBSRI instead of Delta.

We are also offering a Health Reimbursement Account through the London Agency, a company paid life insurance benefit from Prudential and supplemental insurances through AFLAC.

In regards to the issue of performing background checks, Sue Gibbs and Maria Melvin were directed to inquire to a number of agencies, organizations and libraries in the state what they do with respect to BCI checks. Karen McAninch was asked to report the PCL staff's position.

Report by S. Gibbs: The state Office of Library and Information Services recommends performing background checks on employees but does not require them. Our insurance providers, AEGIS and Beacon Mutual, do not require them. Many area libraries such as Cranston, Pawtucket and Newport only require checks for new hires, not current employees.

Report by Karen McAninch, the Union rep: Karen would like to see all current PCL employees who made the transition from PPL excluded from having checks performed, if it is decided to go forward with them. Performing background checks on current staff, many of whom have worked in the same libraries for years now with spotless track records, could be potentially alienating. If checks will be required for new hires, there must be safeguards put into place to ensure that private information is handled correctly and confidentially. Guidelines must also be established as to what offenses could or could not potentially disqualify someone for employment.

Patricia stated that she has been, and still is, opposed to background checks on current employees.

As the main concern in performing background checks is to ensure child safety, Mark McKenney asked if there would ever be a situation where a staff member would be left alone unsupervised with a child. Alan Gunther, PCL staff representative, said that this situation never arises, and if it did happen to, our staff members are conscientious enough to correct the situation before anything happens. He also stated that, by and large, the staff are very familiar with each other at this point and would have recognized someone with ban intentions. Several staff members in attendance also affirmed Alan's statement and echoed the earlier sentiments of background checks possibly alienating or insulting staff.

Linda said that she was opposed to background checks for employees hired before Oct 1<sup>st</sup> and that from conversation with Lynette Labinger, one of our lawyers, and from the fact that all the libraries which had adopted BCI checks had done so prospectively, she believed retroactive background checks may be illegal. If PCL decides to have retroactive background checks she would ask Lynette Labinger to check the constitutionality of this issue before we infact asked for any BCI checks.

Pete Karczmar noted that while many staff are not "new" per se, this is a new organization and it would be wise to start with a "clean slate". Alix Ogden commented that the City uses background checks in hiring and that if used properly, they offer employers the chance to use a "scalpel" rather than a "club" to address any issues that may affect someone's employment status. Mark McKenney emphasized that the Board would only implement background checks because we are responsible for providing safe libraries for the staff and public.

Marcus Mitchell reiterated that background checks would be in no way meant to alienate or insult anyone. The Board values all of our employees and staff who have helped make the transition from PPL but we do have a great responsibility to employees, the community at large and partnering organizations to provide safe workplaces and libraries. He wishes to table the matter of background checks to allow further examination of all aspects r the issue.

Linda Kushner moved to table the discussion until the February Board meeting, Dale Gorton seconded. All present voted in favor: Christian Caldarone, Dale Gorton, Althea Graves, Alan

Gunther, Owen Johnson, Peter Karczmar, Linda Kushner, Rochelle Lee, Mark McKenney, Marcus Mitchell, Alix Ogden, Patricia Raub, Maureen Romans, Ellen Schwartz, Sharon Simpson, Ken Wise.

7. Friends Report

Washington Park will be holding an organizational meeting on January 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30, all are welcome to attend.

The Olneyville Friends will be meeting on December 17<sup>th</sup>, a report will follow at the January Board meeting.

8. New Business

**Marcus will be appointing an ad hoc Long Range Planning Committee which is required by OLIS.**

9. Public Comment

Sandy Oliveira, PCL employee at the Fox Point Library, wished to express her thanks to the Board for the condolence letter she received. She also wished to explain why she chose to designate the PCL to receive contributions in memory of her husband. Sandy has worked for the libraries in Providence for over 20 years and her co-workers have become like a second family to her. When her husband fell ill, and passed away, that was something that was beyond her control. But she chose to do something to support her work family, the PCL, something that she firmly believes in.

Marcus Mitchell thanked Sandy on behalf of the Board for her exemplary gesture and let her know that all of our thoughts and prayers go out to her.

A moment of silence was held for Roberta Smith, who passed away on December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Roberta was a long time employee of the Providence Public Library and former regional manager of the Mount Pleasant library cluster. She was well-known and much loved by many staff members.

10. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.

Respectfully submitted

Linda J. Kushner  
Secretary of the Board