

SHAKER HEIGHTS PUBLIC LIBRARY
Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting
June 19, 2017

Attendance

Members Present: Mr. Bertsch, Mr. Cicarella, Ms. Garrett, Mr. Gleisser, Ms. Katz,
Mr. Meinhard, Ms. Williams

Staff Present: Ms. Beaver, Ms. Brodar, Ms. Switzer, Implementation Team

Others: Mr. Anderson, Ms. Becker, Ms. Boone, Ms. Dahms, Ms. Fischer, Ms. Gall,
Mr. Greene, Mr. Hannan, Ms. Hannan, Ms. Hickman (League of Women
Voters), Ms. O'Connor, Ms. Paley

Mr. Gleisser called the regular meeting of the Shaker Heights Public Library Board of Trustees to order at 6:32 p.m. in the Bertram Woods Branch Dietz Community Room.

Roll Call: Mr. Bertsch, Mr. Cicarella, Ms. Garrett, Mr. Gleisser, Ms. Katz, Ms. Williams

Approval of Minutes

2017-39 Ms. Garrett moved and Ms. Katz seconded the motion to approve the May 22, 2017 regular and June 1, 2017 special board meeting minutes.

Roll Call: Ayes: Mr. Bertsch, Mr. Cicarella, Ms. Garrett, Mr. Gleisser, Ms. Katz,
Ms. Williams

Nays: None. Motion carried.

Mr. Meinhard arrived at 6:34 p.m.

Community Comments

Eleven community members expressed their concern with the suggestion of inclusion in the Cuyahoga County Public Library.

Joyce Becker said, "Once the genie is out of bottle, you can't put it back." She expressed concern about giving away Shaker Library's assets to the County Library. She loves CLEVNET and believes County has fewer resources available. She appreciates Shaker Library's excellent customer service and sees more benefits to remaining independent.

Susan Gall said that moving to CCPL would give all decisions to an administrative office in Parma. She said Shaker Library is a competent and powerful part of the community and the community can lose a lot if decisions about Shaker Heights are given to Parma.

Beverly Dahms noted that there has been no explanation of what CCPL would do with our libraries. She asked about the Main Library, saying, "Would it be taken down? I guarantee they won't maintain it. What would happen to our assets? Would the property at Woods be given away?"

David Greene said, "I thought we addressed this years ago. I don't know why we would give away our assets. It would just diminish our brand in Shaker." He noted that the Shaker Heights brand is used by realtors as a selling point for the community.

Nancy O'Connor said she did an informal survey of the issue and people are surprised this is on the table again. She said "Our library was founded by and supported by residents. It is uniquely Shaker and ours. There is no way people want the County to touch our libraries. The library is a tiny piece of the tax base. Giving away something we support and are so proud of is a forever thing. It's a black mark on Shaker to give it up. The library is so valuable and serves every level of residents. To give it away is appalling."

Nancy Fischer urged the library not to pursue inclusion with County. She uses both locations at least twice a week. She noted her support of Shaker Library even if it means higher taxes. She said that if the library pursues inclusion with County, there is a possibility they may decide Shaker Heights doesn't need a branch. She said there are great programs such as Play & Learn and said she appreciates the friendly, welcoming, helpful, and well-educated staff.

Rochelle Paley said she is a big fan of both Shaker libraries and feels strongly about keeping Shaker Library independent. Although she thinks the County system is fine, she feels strongly about the Shaker brand. There isn't really a significant cost savings and she thinks residents are willing to support the independent Shaker Library.

Kathleen Hannan noted that she loves the Bertram Woods Branch. She said it would be a detriment to the neighborhood to lose the branch. She emphasizes she really wants to see Woods stay open.

Monica Boone said she wanted to express the importance of the library. It's the center of Shaker Heights and she feels it is friendlier and more connected to our community than County. She noted that her 12-year-old niece prefers Shaker Library to County.

Dick Hannan said he loves the library. He also attended the Mayor's State of the City meeting and noted there are lots of relevant financial concerns for Shaker Heights. He wants to understand the options for the future and wants to understand what we need to do to make this library a part of the future.

Chad Anderson said that although he recently completed many years of service on the library board, he came to speak as a citizen. He uses the library's resources daily during his one and a half hour commute. CLEVNET helps him always get what he wants and library service is a daily reminder of the value of his tax dollar. He said his family appreciates the walkable libraries in the community and the convenient location of the Bertram Woods Branch helps when he is using the library with his children. He appreciates that the library is under local control because Shaker can decide what library services are most appropriate for the community. He strongly urged the board to consider the needs of the community as a whole, not just a small fraction of the thousands who use the library regularly.

Presentation by Mayor Leiken

Mayor Earl Leiken noted that it was very helpful to hear from residents and said he is understanding and respectful of their points of view. However, he said, "I am a person who thinks the Library Board should seriously consider the possibility of joining County." He emphasized that this opinion has "nothing to do with my respect for Shaker Library. It's been an important part of the community for many years. My own children were raised in the library and my grandchildren benefit now." He said he respects "those leading the library now" and that the library has "high quality administration and Board members." Mayor Leiken shared a PowerPoint presentation that outlined his concerns about the

tax burden, future needs of the city, and why he thinks the library should pursue inclusion with CCPL. He noted that Sari Feldman, Executive Director of CCPL, assured him that County would retain the “Moreland location.”

Mr. Cicarella said, “I assume you mean the location not the building. It’s astounding to think of County keeping that building.” He asked if the Mayor had calculated the impact to the city of County turning the Moreland building back over to the city.

Mayor Leiken replied, “If they wanted to build a new state-of-the art building there that would be fine as long as they stay in the current location.”

He also said that Ms. Feldman assured him that CCPL isn’t going on the ballot.

Mr. Bertsch noted that the property tax and PLF funding issues are the same for County as for Shaker Library. He said he has been reading CCPL Board minutes for several months and hasn’t seen any announcement that new taxes are not being planned. Mayor Leiken said Ms. Feldman made the statement at a recent meeting with the mayors of Cuyahoga County.

Ms. Katz asked what studies have been done of other inner-ring suburbs about what’s keeping them from dying. She asked, “Are we studying beyond just the tax burden and looking at the Shaker brand as a whole? New residents know taxes are high but are coming for specific reasons – the brand of Shaker, good schools, and a sense of community. Has your office looked at how to maintain appeal of the city beyond just taxes? My fear is that in the fever to cut spending we will lose the things that make people want to live here. What consideration is being given to intangible factors?”

Mayor Leiken said Shaker is creating a vibrant commercial real estate district, revitalizing neighborhoods (especially Moreland), building new housing, and investing heavily in further economic development. He said, “We’re doing better than anyone else in greater Cleveland but we don’t take success for granted.”

At the conclusion of his presentation he said, “The decision is yours.” Regarding the citizens who wrote the letter he said, “This is a group of citizens acting on their own. As far as the city is concerned, nothing will affect our working relationship with the library. Our relationship will be strong and positive, as if the library will be there forever.” He said although he won’t hide his personal views, there will be no effect on the city’s relationship with the library.

Mayor Leiken departed the meeting after his presentation, as did several community members.

President’s Report

A. Memorial Day Parade

Mr. Gleisser thanked the staff and board members who represented the library in the Memorial Day Parade and said the return of the book cart brigade was greeted with enthusiasm from the community.

B. Letter from Residents

Mr. Gleisser said he and Mr. Bertsch met last week with four members of a group of residents who want the Library Board to further examine the idea of inclusion and to work with CCPL to get answers to the library’s questions. Mr. Gleisser said, “This Board went through an extensive analysis and evaluation last year. The Board came to the unanimous conclusion that we should remain independent

and move forward with identifying improvements to the library and maintain sustainability.” He noted that identifying improvements to the library will lead to a ballot issue and community discussion.

Mr. Gleisser continued, “When there is a ballot issue, the first question some voters will ask is have we looked at all options and talked to County about what they would propose. When we attempted to get answers from County we sent a detailed letter with questions about future operations. There was no written response from County Library.”

Mr. Gleisser said he asked Ms. Switzer to again reach out to CCPL to see if we can get answers to basic questions about how they would provide library service to Shaker Heights. He noted that they may not be willing to answer questions without a letter of intent for inclusion. He said there is no intent for inclusion now and we would need further information to decide if there is actually intent for inclusion. He said that while staff reach out to CCPL the library will continue on the path the Board voted on to identify operational and facility needs. The earliest the library would be on the ballot is May 2018. Mr. Gleisser said, “We have accepted this letter, as with any communication from our community, and will take it under consideration.”

Mr. Bertsch said, “Having read the letter carefully, I think some things are exaggerated or written in a way to get a certain point across. People were honest and sincere when we met in their desire to have us explore further what the County option is or would be. I agree with Brian that we need as many answers as possible to answer questions from the electorate. We did an extensive analysis and we are in a position to draw strong inferences from the way County’s model has worked throughout the area. We are able to make some statements, particularly in a void. What we’ve done in the way of analysis does give an idea of what the alternative would be.”

Ms. Williams stated, “Trustees take our responsibilities seriously. We researched extensively all of the options on the table, including inclusion. We reached out to County with a list of questions that we felt it was our duty to answer as people entrusted with running a library with eight decades of investment by the community. We weren’t able to get hard facts. It’s not responsible to give away an asset without hard facts about how service would be provided. In essence, the Shaker Heights Public Library would be no more. There would be no ability to provide input. We didn’t take it lightly – we don’t have enough information to vote confidently but every effort was made to find out information. We will follow up to see if we can get additional information.”

Mr. Cicarella said, “I know and have a high regard for many of the signatories. I really take this seriously. There are two sentences I believe are absolutely wrong. I’ve looked through the statute. Under §3375.21, once we have a resolution for inclusion, the party is over. The County has to take our assets and we have no choice. Whatever they do with the assets, they have absolute control. I don’t know of any statutory formal request that’s not a resolution. Once we adopt a resolution we have no leverage. I don’t think they have the ability to talk with us – they have to do due diligence. I’m on board with fully exploring the idea of inclusion. We’ve done a lot, but we ought to do more. I think under the statute they can’t give us a commitment to anything. It’s misinformation to say ‘pass a resolution and we’ll work it out with them.’ That’s not how the statute works.”

Mr. Bertsch replied, “We’re agreed on that. East Cleveland Library did a comprehensive study without a resolution. That was a preliminary evaluation to explore four different options, only one of which was inclusion. ‘Shall’ is the strongest language possible. It’s not reversible.”

Mr. Meinhard asked, “How is this conversation with County going to be any different from the previous conversation? We got a response – it was a verbal response. We did not get a formal written commitment. They said they can’t commit future County Library Boards. I’m not sure how it will be different. I’m all for conversation and exploration. At the heart of it is confusion over the process.

When I read that letter, there are some points that are factually incorrect. I called the author of the Baldwin Wallace study to understand it. He acknowledged they had an error in the report. They didn't dig into the statutory process. It was very gracious of County to engage at that depth for the study for East Cleveland because of the challenges East Cleveland faced. We can't get answers before we vote but we can't vote without answers. We vote, they do very administrative things like check for clear titles to property and that there is no fraud in our accounting books. Then the School Board votes. It's incorrect to say we could explore and have conversations. If we vote for inclusion there is no more information for us to gather. We have all of the informal information we are going to get. How does that push us forward? At the heart of this is a lack of common understanding of the process. It will benefit every conversation to have information about exactly what the process is."

Ms. Garrett said, "There appears to be some pressure to not allow the citizens to have a voice. Residents of Shaker can vote yes or no on an operating levy. It bothers me that we are spending so much time not talking about the value to the community and what will happen if we don't pursue inclusion. If we don't get the levy passed, then the citizens have spoken and we go back to the drawing board. I find it curious that we are not being allowed to explore the idea. As a board member, I recognize that we have to do our due diligence in bringing the best options to bear. As a resident I'm frustrated that it appears we aren't fiscally responsible if we don't pursue inclusion."

Mr. Gleisser said he agreed.

Ms. Katz said, "I know many people who signed the letter. Were some of the factual errors in the letter addressed in the meeting? Is there a plan to write a formal response?"

Mr. Gleisser replied that Martin Kolb, Linda Lalley, Judy Stenta, and Trent Meyerhoefer attended the meeting. He said David Goldberg was out of the country and could not attend. Brian said he has a high regard for all of them. He said, "Mike and I pointed out a number of issues. They are convinced that a letter of intent of inclusion is non-binding. Binding or not, the message is alarming. When we start down that path we may not be able to turn back. I asked Amy to check with OLC for legal guidance. In terms of timing to be on the ballot, we can't wait 2-3 years to figure it out." He said a formal response to the group will be drafted.

Ms. Katz said, "There's a view that voters don't have a voice. The Library Board of Trustees is comprised of unpaid volunteers. We are not trying to protect our fiefdom. We have no financial interest. The community has a voice through the Board."

Mr. Gleisser said, "We are going down a path to let our community make a decision. Inclusion short-circuits the community process. I have great faith in our community and would like to hear what they say. Conversation is healthy and interesting. I believe in democracy. Let the community have a voice."

Mr. Bertsch said, "This letter was given to us at the conclusion of the meeting. We had dialogue during the meeting. They came in good faith to bring their concerns to our attention. After I went home and read it I took umbrage with the statement that the Board is not giving full, fair consideration. We spent hours as a Board fully, fairly, and honestly giving consideration to ideas. That is not a fair assessment."

Mr. Cicarella said, "One of the best arguments for not going down the path of inclusion is one of the Mayor's slides. The one that shows how much it costs. Compare the amount for the library compared to the school and the city. I'm not one for taxes. I hate the idea of it but we are talking about peanuts for the library."

Mr. Gleisser said, "If this library system went to the County, Shaker Heights would still be one of the highest taxed communities but with one smaller library. How does that improve Shaker Heights quality

to attract residents? And we give up control. The schools and the city control their own destiny. The library should control its own destiny. The library has reduced costs. We will continue to adapt and change and make improvements. We are committed to full discussion with the community and letting the community vote. For the community to make a decision it's helpful to know what the County position would be. The County has said they have not asked for this."

Fiscal Officer's Report

A. Financial Statements

Ms. Beaver presented the May 31, 2017 financial statements for review and approval.

2017-40 Mr. Meinhard moved and Mr. Cicarella seconded the motion to accept the May 31, 2017 financial statements as submitted.

Roll Call: Ayes: Mr. Bertsch, Mr. Cicarella, Ms. Garrett, Mr. Gleisser, Ms. Katz, Mr. Meinhard, Ms. Williams

Nays: None. Motion carried.

Director's Report

A. Written Report

Ms. Switzer shared her written report. She noted that a Community Reads event is in the planning stages for early 2018. Matthew Desmond, author of *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, which won the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction, will speak on March 15, 2018. Representatives from the nine library systems in Cuyahoga County as well as the City Club of Cleveland and Playhouse Square met June 6 to begin planning community programming in anticipation of his visit.

B. Public Library Fund Update

Ms. Switzer provided an update about Public Library Fund (PLF) distributions through June 2017. State PLF revenue is 5.3% below projections through June, however, Shaker Library's actual revenue received is 0.84% more than last year through June. She reported that the Senate's FY 2017-2018 budget minimizes the reduction of the Public Library Fund by temporarily setting the PLF at 1.68% of the state's General Revenue Fund (GRF).

C. Collection Development Policy

Ms. Brodar presented the Collection Development Policy for review. She noted that sections which are comprised of long lists describing items in the collection and procedures have been eliminated while retaining statements of the purpose and scope of each collection.

2017-41 Mr. Cicarella moved and Ms. Williams seconded the motion to approve the Collection Development Policy as presented.

Roll Call: Ayes: Mr. Bertsch, Mr. Cicarella, Ms. Garrett, Mr. Gleisser, Ms. Katz, Mr. Meinhard, Ms. Williams

Nays: None. Motion carried.

D. Circulation of Library Material Policy

Ms. Brodar presented the Circulation of Library Material Policy for review. The policy was modified to include the addition of the Three for Teen Card, and the elimination of the three-item limit on no-hold movies. Based on the Board's questions and suggestions, language was clarified about juvenile and Three for Me cards.

2017-42 Mr. Cicarella moved and Ms. Garrett seconded the motion to approve the Circulation of Library Material Policy as presented.

Roll Call: Ayes: Mr. Bertsch, Mr. Cicarella, Ms. Garrett, Mr. Gleisser, Ms. Katz, Mr. Meinhard, Ms. Williams

Nays: None. Motion carried.

E. Community Engagement Report

Ms. Switzer presented the written Community Engagement Report. Mr. Gleisser noted how much he appreciates seeing the Shaker Reads lawn signs in the community. Ms. Switzer said they are paid for by Friends of Shaker Library and are a promotion for the Summer Reading Program.

New Business

A. Gifts to be accepted and appropriated to the designated funds

Marilyn Kammer Memorial Fund (209-6510)

In memory of Karen Knoverek

Association of Jewish Aging Services	\$50.00
Barbara Benevento	\$75.00
Roy Cohn	\$100.00
Anne and Charles Joseph	\$50.00
Victoria Kennedy	\$18.00
David Korsh	\$100.00
Joyce Kramzer	\$100.00
Paula Madvid	\$15.00
Laura Rosenbaum	\$25.00
Marjorie and Jacob Rosenbaum and Family	\$35.00
Miriam Weisberg	\$100.00

2017-43 Ms. Williams moved and Ms. Garrett seconded the motion to accept and appropriate the above gifts.

Roll Call: Ayes: Mr. Bertsch, Mr. Cicarella, Ms. Garrett, Mr. Gleisser, Ms. Katz, Mr. Meinhard, Ms. Williams

Nays: None. Motion carried.

B. Personnel Action

Alonia Dozier, Library Assistant- Computer Center, Level 106, half-time, hired effective May 15, 2017

Sandra Summers, Adult Services Associate, Level 109, half-time, end of employment effective
May 15, 2017

Announcements

None

Adjournment

Since there was no further business to discuss, Ms. Williams moved and Ms. Katz seconded the motion to adjourn the regular board meeting at 8:28 p.m. and trustees unanimously agreed. The next regular meeting of the Shaker Heights Public Library Board of Trustees will be Monday July 24, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. in Main Library Room B.

Brian Gleisser, President

Susan Beaver, Fiscal Officer

Troy Meinhard, Secretary