

ST. CLAIR COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

TIME & PLACE: 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, February 1, 2005
210 McMorran Boulevard, Port Huron, St. Clair County Main Library

PRESENT: BOARD MEMBERS: Arnold Larson, Kathy Nicholl, Helen Praet and Peter Vernier. DIRECTOR: James Warwick.

ABSENT: Lynn Moran

ALSO PRESENT: County officials, public and staff (thirty-eight)

Pledge of the Allegiance

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE BY Chairperson Vernier at 6:32p.m. All members present except Vice-Chairperson Lynn Moran.

Chairperson Vernier explained the special meeting is for discussing the 2005 budget and hopefully adopting a revised 2005 budget, public comments will be accepted but needs to be along the lines of the budget.

II. CITIZENS' COMMENTS:

Joe Tallmadge a member of the Marysville Friends Group. Explained there are other alternatives to numerous cutbacks that have been proposed to rectify the 2005 financial shortfalls. Offered suggestions of increasing rent of fifty cent charge per video and a dollar charge per popular audio CD, this increase would still be more than reasonable for the community. Also devised an audio preservation plan for the Library completely funded by Federal Challenge Grants from the National Endowment for The Humanities and matching grants from local, state and national foundations.

Chairperson Vernier noted he wasn't sure what they could do or can't do because of the Library being a public identity; but surely thinks it's worth looking into.

Phyllis Arnold County employee in the Administrator/Controllers/Payable Office and Treasurer of Local #1089 Union. Distributed a spreadsheet combining 2004 and 2005 budgets actual/projected. Asked why the newsletter was still in the budget when they said it was going to be removed. Director Warwick noted only printing of one newsletter was eliminated because the Times Herald sent two invoices and were paid twice. Suggested that the public training for computers be done by staff. Director Warwick explained this was already included in his changes. Also asked why the disability insurance was so much higher then 2004. Director Warwick explained the County provides these formulas. Ms. Arnold explained the only thing she is trying to say to the board in doing this is that there are more ways to save money then to cut hours and to cut jobs from the people that are working there. Also explained she spoke to chairperson Vernier regarding to charge the public for programs and that she would like to see these charges.

Linda Thrawl community member who uses the talking books services. Asked the Library Board to find in the budget the funds to keep the services going because she/others cannot afford to be back into state custody and have these services. Please find it in the budget to keep the talking books services going we need it! Thanked the board for their time.

David Ellingwood patron of S.T.A.R. Explained when the Library goes digital books, this will take up less room and it will make it more economical. Also asked that the Library Board keep S.T.A.R. which includes large print and the close circuit television services going. It is a service that's being used and doesn't want to see these services going to the Library of Michigan; he wants to see it stay right here in St. Clair County.

Chairperson Vernier asked if there was anyone else that would like to speak, not seeing any, closed citizens' comments.

Director Warwick explained he sent to board members a revised budget along with the schedule of proposed hours. Explained that in the budget there are a number of areas noted in brown that reflect changes to the budget. Also included in these changes are coding changes made by the County such as office/operating supplies (an item might have been purchased at one time from an account but now purchased from another account). Changes have also been made to the income statement reflecting the removal of the single business tax; rent has been reduced and no county appropriation. Director Warwick explained further in the reports they received from him reflects three major categories to balance the budget – Spending from reserves \$140,000, Part-time hours cut all facilities \$81,300 and Operating budget reductions \$61,400 totaling \$282,700. Also noted that different line items were listed in his report that corresponds to the projected budget of what has been reduced in those line items. He examined figures most current from the County and determined some of these items such as the telephone and repair to be reduced, spoke with children's librarian regarding the Program promotion & Program awards, spoke to staff regarding training and we did cut the audio visual and library material. But there is a small increase in these line items though. It's going to be a very tight year. These are the changes we can identify right now, even today we found out invoices have not come in, so there are going to be some line items that in the year end are not going to be in balance as a result of some of this. Has always tried to operate with a very close line item budget and there may be other changes coming that we are not aware of but this is what we are recommending in terms of changes to the budget.

Member Praet asked why the retirement contribution is higher then 2004. Director Warwick explained we receive the calculations from the County, also questioned the newsletter cost. Director Warwick explained the detailed cost of the newsletter and why the savings of printing. Member Praet asked why there was an increase of about \$40,000 in Operating supplies? Director Warwick explained the only figure that was taken out of Operating supplies was \$1,563 and the remainder of the funds was due to coding changes through the County. Member Praet asked if there was a cheaper place to purchase cartridges? Director Warwick noted we receive some supplies through TLN (The Library Network) at a price that the County can't even match. Member Praet asked what were the \$1,550 charges under Administrative services for Cmed? Director Warwick noted it was the payment for January and February's computer training. Member Praet asked if we could have the County IT Department do the hardware maintenance to save on the maintenance agreement (contract) cost with Horizon? Director Warwick explained that this is proprietary equipment and if there is a problem they handle it. Is it possible because we pay the branch telephone bills that we contact municipalities and ask that they pay for the phone bills? Director Warwick explained yes that is always a possibility but didn't feel in the middle of their budget year we should be requesting money from them and the second item is we will be going for a mileage increase/district status and wants to maintain their friendship also since we made a commitment to do this he felt that we shouldn't drop this commitment. Member Praet noted she was concern that the training budget was reduced so much and asked if the Friends could be ask to help? Director Warwick noted if we made some mistakes in the budget he is willing to go to the Friends and also look at the budget in some other way to provide those things that are necessary. Director Warwick noted that the Friends Group at Main has always been willing and their willingness is not only to concentrate on the Main Library but also to support the entire system. Director Warwick noted he put the amount that the County recommended for the DTE expense in the budget. Director Warwick noted he is opposed in charging patrons for programs; this is going against the principals of librarianship to having a free public library. He would be willing to consider something on CD's in terms of principal that they are entertainment and not educational. Member Praet asked maybe we should have a staff poll on this. Member Larson noted its very important to all employees and other board members to recognize were taking \$140,000 from the fund reserve and \$81,300 reduction in hours in all the branches. This is not talking about shutting down but reducing the hours in our critical time. It doesn't affect all staff and there is no layoff of full-time staff, which was being considered previously.

We have \$61,400 in operating expenses in various areas where we thought we could make reductions without significantly impacting the operation of the Library. This amount covers our short fall of \$282,700 and it's important to understand if this is approved it is not going to be a significantly negative impact on the consumers nor staff. However it's important to understand next year we are still faced with the same dilemma and it's not going to go away. The County continues having the same financial problems that they are; we don't know exactly what they will do in the future. Also noted he appreciated the comments that were made tonight and that he thinks the recommendation proposed by Director Warwick is supportable. He thinks it does not decimate the Library nor does it significantly impact full-time employee, which was a very strong concern by members of the staff at the last meeting. Unfortunately it does cut back on some of the hours of part-time staff. That is the price we pay with limited revenue. It also sets the stage for us over the next year to look at rather we chose to go district status and what the implications will be on revenue sources as well as operating cost or in terms at looking at our request to the County Board of Commissioners to continue to increase their support for the Library. Member Nicholl asked what is the over all feeling of the Branch Librarians towards the cuts. Director Warwick noted it's workable! Member Praet asked if they knew what hours would be cut at the branches? Director Warwick noted they are working on that. They had three meetings with the Union and a letter is going out to staff tomorrow. We have a month to have it finalized. Director Warwick explained things that would be written in stone are hours, which are on version six and the effective date for the change of hours of February 28th. Member Praet questioned the Saturday hours that were included in the changes. Director Warwick explained they couldn't all have hours on Saturday from 9:00 to 1:00. We need to schedule some flexibility in order that we could use full-time staff who need to get their hours in within their zone, so that is why we can't have consistent hours on the weekends. This also offers the opportunity to staff in zone three that if they do need afternoon hours there is another library close by that they could work in the afternoon other than that we would not have the hours for the full-time staff. This is a consideration that had to be part of the program and also fits in that we have some hours available both morning and afternoon for patrons in each of those zones. The other thing that this does correct is the Wednesday closing with the Western branches. Member Praet, is there a reason why Capac is only affected one hour? Director Warwick it was the way the scheduling worked. Member Praet asked if this has to go before the Union? Director Warwick no, it is managements right to determine the hours to work.

Moved by Member Larson and supported by Member Nicholl to approve the Library Director's changes to the 2005 budget and to be effective February 28th, 2005. Three Board members in favor and one Board Member Nay. Motion carried three to one, motion passed.

- III. ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Member Larson to adjourn meeting. Motion unanimously carried. Adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Peter J. Vernier, Chairperson

James F. Warwick, Director/Secretary