

**Latah County Library District  
Meeting Minutes  
August 23, 2005  
Moscow Library**

Attendance: Board – Steve Fischer, Sylva Staab, John Hasko, Jennifer O’Laughlin; Staff –Betsy Bybell, Chris Sokol, Cathy Ensley, Anne Cheadle, Carol Kampenhout; Director – Janice McPherson; Visitors – Gail Biggers (Deary), Sue & Bill Mitchell (Deary), Patty McDonald (Deary), Wayne Schmidt (Deary), Frank Jacobson (Juliaetta), Sandy & Jennie Dalton (Deary), Marilyn Stein (Troy).

President Fischer called the meeting to order at 5:32p.m.

Public comment was received, some of the issues raised were:

- The Board has not yet clearly articulated the role of the branch supervisors;
- The Friends policy needs to be expanded;
- Questions regarding weeding process;
- Are withdrawn materials divided up among the communities;
- There is very little public awareness of a budget problem;
- Having a Walk-a-Thon for the District was suggested as a fundraising idea.

It was noted that Wayne Schmidt attended the July meeting but was not listed. **Staab moved that the amended July 19 minutes be approved as submitted. Hasko seconded the motion. Motion unanimously carried.**

**Treasurer’s Report**

Hasko focused his report on what appears to be substantial money remaining in Library Operations. McPherson noted that given Depreciation Expense was not included in this year’s budget we need to ensure that we hold back some money for this expense. **Staab moved that any remaining operations money after holding back an amount to cover depreciation expense be spent on materials. Hasko seconded the motion. Motion unanimously carried.**

McPherson reported that the low cash point reached just prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> property tax check was \$200,607.77

**Director’s Report**

McPherson read the Potlatch report that had not been included in her report. She also noted that there will be a regional 2020 Vision meeting on Sept. 15 in Lewiston and encouraged people to attend.

**Staff Report**

Chris Sokol, Adult Services Manager, reported on what her job entails. She is responsible for selecting all the adult materials in the District collection, with the exception of the mass market paperbacks that the branch supervisors select. The District will soon make available electronic access to “World Book,” “Auto Repair,” which would replace the print “Chilton’s Manuals,” and possibly “Learn a Test” which would replace many of the test preparation manuals for example the Postal Service test. Sokol would like to see the overdue process tightened up and suggested that she needs about \$3,000 a month for new materials in order to fulfill patron requests as well as purchasing best sellers.

**Unfinished Business**

**Budget Discussion**

McPherson began her budget presentation explaining how the current strategic plan was developed; planning committee, focus groups, and annual updates. During the focus groups and since, with comments from patrons, more hours, more staff, more books, more videos, and more programs are what patrons ask for. To attempt to capture what people desire the plan is “visionary.” As a visionary document it does not provide much help in determining where cuts should take place. However, all the budget elements are certainly justified by the plan.

A revised budget overview sheet was distributed. This revised report included both grant revenue and expense (T-1 line to Juliaetta & Migration grants) which was not integrated into the budget previously. With these now in the budget the bottom line was \$103,234 higher which changed the element

percentages. All the changes were highlighted so people could easily compare this report to the report that was distributed with the board packets and see that the dollar amounts in the other elements did not change.

Impacts of this budget are:

- All branches, with the exception of Potlatch, will operate with no assistant hours beginning October 1, 2005.
- Erosion of service will result. The erosion won't be noticed at the public service desks because all LCLD staff takes seriously the high service ethic. The erosion will take place behind the scenes – shelving materials, pulling holds, alerting people that holds are available, and following-up on problems. The personal touch that the District has prided itself on is what is going to begin to erode. The old adage "We need to do more with less" is fantasy. This may have been possible but is no longer possible. Staffing levels are stretched so thin that with less staff we do less. With staff this thin McPherson emphasized the need to attend to stress levels; staff already feels like they can't afford to take sick leave when they are ill. She also noted that while there may be branch supervisors who are willing to work 30 hours a week for 20 hours pay, illegality aside, it sets an unrealistic standard. When a new person is hired this person may not be willing to give extra hours for no pay; so this person will likely be judged a slacker because they don't get done what their predecessor was able to accomplish.
- Dental & disability insurance for staff will be dropped effective October 1, 2005.
- Custodial services have been dropped or reduced at all libraries (a trade in some other expenses so that custodial can be retained in Potlatch was worked out).
- Reduction in the business office and technical services staffing will be necessary so as to provide essential desk coverage in Moscow. McPherson explained that a library is much like restaurant service in that it takes a great deal of work behind the scenes to support good food and service. Any reduction in the behind the scenes work will ultimately be seen in the service we can provide. All cuts in the District will have a ripple effect, this cannot be avoided.
- Reduction in outreach services will also be necessary.

### **Gains**

The gains made in this budget are:

- The District is getting closer to having a healthy materials budget. It was raised from 7% to 8.59% (with grant rev/exp included) or 9.6% (without grant rev/exp). National, state, and regional averages would indicate that the very minimum that should be spent on library materials is 10%.
- Mandated expense for depreciation is in the budget.
- Previously unfunded sick leave and unemployment insurance expense is now in the budget.

### **Conclusion**

- All the budget elements are grounded in the Strategic Plan.
- Disagreement on how much should be spent on any one element will always exist.
- Fundraising will be necessary if we are to avoid further cuts even if we get communities to take on all/some of the utilities expense.
- If there are major changes to the tax structure all bets are off. McPherson encouraged everyone in attendance to think long and hard about how these changes might affect library service and to be involved in the political process.
  - o It was suggested that we have links to our legislators on the District website. McPherson will follow-up on this suggestion.

The board members asked for clarification on salary increases. Both COLA's and step increases are in the budget. These increases are both addressed in current policy.

There was discussion about sale of the van and contracting out the courier service. McPherson said she planned to hold off on this until after the District is up on the new system. Until we see what impact being a member of VALNet has on the system we will not be able to make an informed decision on this issue.

**O'Laughlin moved that the budget be approved as presented. Staab seconded the motion. Motion unanimously carried.**

**New Business**

There was no new business.

More public comment followed. A statement from staff member John Pool was read in which he indicated is disappointment with the budget's lack of sustainability since that is what was a stated goal at the beginning of the process.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00p.m.

Next meeting – September20, 2005 at the Genesee Library