

**GREAT NECK LIBRARY
MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Tuesday, March 28, 1995
Parkville Branch**

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Great Neck Library was held on Tuesday, March 28, 1995, at the Parkville Branch Library, 10 Campbell Street, New Hyde Park, N.Y. 11040

The following Trustees were present constituting a quorum:

Ralene Adler
Elayne Bernstein
Jo Ann Farley
Muriel Kane
Arthur Lerner
Dolly Relkin
Renée Zarin

Also present: Ken Weil, Library Director
Arlene Nevens, Assistant Director
Joseph Latini, Assistant Director
Attendance Sheet attached

CALL TO ORDER

President, Renée Zarin called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. at the Main Library, Bayview Avenue, Great Neck, N.Y. 11024. Upon motion made by Arthur Lerner, seconded by Elayne Bernstein, the Board went into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters.

The public meeting was reconvened at 8:15 p.m. at the Parkville Branch Library. President, Renée Zarin introduced the Branch Librarian, Jayne Alexander and welcomed all present.

MINUTES

Dolly Relkin, Secretary, stated that the March 14th minutes will be late since she had just received the notes. Ralene Adler asked to amend the February 28th minutes, as did Renée Zarin, Jo Ann Farley and Dolly Relkin. Ms. Zarin suggested that they be amended and redistributed at the next meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

- a. Great Neck Committee for Society Jewry to Bd. of Trustees 2/16 -Annual Walk-A-Thon
- b. Marianna Wohlgemuth to Renée Zarin 2/10 - Bd.Minutes of 8/25/92
- c. Mr. & Mrs. Ambron to Bd. of Trustees 2/20 - More space for Lakeville Branch
- d. Marianna Wohlgemuth to Renée Zarin 3/6/95-AARP Defensive Driving

Marianne Wohlgemuth commented that she had just received the Library's response on March 28th and would like to comment at the next board meeting. She did receive a letter dated February 22nd which never said "yes" or "no" in response to the AARP Defensive Driving Course. The response given was that the Library has had only one request and at the present time we are not offering the program. The Library's policy is not to have duplication of programs offered elsewhere in the community.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Muriel Kane, Treasurer, presented a summary of the Board's policy concerning investments. After review and discussion, and upon motion made by Arthur Lerner, seconded by Elayne Bernstein, and carried unanimously, it was,

RESOLVED, that the Board acknowledge receipt of the February 28, 1995 Financial Statements and adopt the payroll changes for the same period.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Ken Weil reported on the following:

1. Circulation was up 4.7% system-wide for February in comparison to the same period last year. Main had a 3.4% increase; Station 13.6% and Parkville 8.8%, Lakeville experienced a modest decrease in circulation.
2. The mortgage on the main building was paid off in March. The loan was \$1,200,000 for 25 years with the Franklin National Bank. Renée Zarin stated that we are grateful to those Board Members who were involved in the planning and development of the Main Library, and mentioned several who are still living in the community.
3. Ken Weil stated that just two years ago we had card catalogs - then came automation. We have now added 2 components; the Internet and CD-ROM. The CD-ROM network will provide access at the Main Library and the Branch Libraries to a variety of reference tools such as: Newsday; American Business; Encyclopedia Americana; Street Atlas; and Phone Disk

Finder are just a few added tools. Many of the CD-ROMS will be available on a dial-in basis from home for those Great Neck Library residents who have computers hooked up to a modem. Weil stated that our Library is using cutting edge technology to provide our patrons with a vast array of information resources. Both Arlene Nevens and Joe Latini were thanked for putting in hundreds of hours above their routine responsibilities to make these systems work. A demonstration of the Phone Disk Finder and Street Atlas followed. Training sessions are planned in the near future for adults.

4. A staff recognition breakfast was held on March 22nd. Special recognition was given to staff members who have worked 10, 15, 20, 25, 35 and 50 years of service. Board members Zarin, Adler, Relkin and Farley also attended.

5. Lisa Paulo has been selected to fill the position of Supervisor of Children's Services. Congratulations to Lisa and we wish her much success in her new position.

OLD BUSINESS

a. 1996 Preliminary Proposed Budget - Copies of the Proposed budget were distributed to all present. It was announced that the Public Budget Hearing was scheduled for April 25th. Ken Weil stated that the present proposed budget calls for an estimated tax rate, in 1996, of \$2.26 which is a 6 cents increase over 1995.

Mr. Weil resumed from the meeting of March 14th the review of the proposed budget starting with the Retirement category of Employee Benefits. The Director explained that the Library had no control over the N.Y. State Retirement System - that several years ago the State had fiscal problems and started reducing the bill for retirement contributions. For 1996, \$100,000 has been budgeted. Mr. Weil believes that in the next several years very large bills will be coming from the State.

Dolly Relkin pointed out that the 1994 Unallocated Fund Balance contains \$144,433 from the N.Y. State Retirement budget line. She recommended that amount be put in a restricted reserve account earmarked for the 1997 retirement bill. She stated that for the last five years the budget line was \$100,000 or more and does not agree with putting in numbers like this year after year especially since the State bills are in the \$5,000-6,000 range. In past years we did not know what the State bill would be, but since we now know it is time to put in more accurate numbers. There was discussion about what would be a reasonable amount to budget on an annual basis, and what amount would be reasonable to put in a

restricted reserve for the anticipated large bills from the State. Jo Ann Farley agreed there's more than enough money to put in a restricted account, Ralene Adler also agreed, and further expressed the view - only take money from the taxpayers if needed. Arthur Lerner concurred.

Ken Weil cautioned against a roller coaster effect on future budgets. He explained that the accumulated surplus helped cover our automation with its ongoing expenses. Dolly Relkin stated an operating budget should plan for automation so the taxpayer knows what he/she is paying for. Ms. Relkin replied we cannot propose a yearly budget which is collecting money for unknown future services over 20 years - the contingency factor is too high and should be reduced. A budget can not contain huge surpluses in order that the Library decide how the money is to be spent. The Director was asked to address the issue and put monies into a reserve fund for the N.Y. State Retirement System, and propose a more accurate figure in the proposed 1996 operating budget.

Ms. Relkin called attention to the 1994 Unallocated surplus of \$686,229 stating it was outrageous! She asked the Board to address this now, recommending money be returned to the taxpayer and reduce the tax rate for 1996. Ms. Relkin stated every budget must have contingency funds but this amount is too high. We should limit our contingency to \$250,000-\$300,000 a year. There was some discussion about whether a dollar amount or a percentage of budget should be agreed to with regard to an annual contingency. Ms. Relkin also recommended that some of the \$686,229 be considered for repair and maintenance of the main library. She stated the Director has been asked to provide a list of proposed projects for the main library, especially safety and security items. Arthur Lerner stated some conditions at Main need attention such as replacing the carpet, but to do this with an expansion in mind is foolish. Jo Ann Farley stated it is the Board's responsibility to fix and repair the main building for safety reasons and priorities should be set to do certain areas at a time. It was Ralene Adler's belief that this proposed budget is not an accountable budget - that we do not have to over tax; that the budget is too big and too cumbersome.

The Director indicated that while some things have been done at the main library, there were many other areas that have not been attended to for many years because of possible plans for expansion. Elayne Bernstein stated the Director has not allowed the building to run down; that nothing was done because of plans for expansion of the main building, and money has been set aside for the expansion.

Regarding the proposed building expansion program Ms. Relkin stated that at the February 28th Board meeting the Building Committee, said there were no viable plans and had no information regarding funding, protecting the environment, plans for community input, preliminary drawings or design, priorities for allocation of space, square footage, etc. On March 14th the Board President asked if the Board felt comfortable in having the Building Committee continue. Mrs. Relkin stated that in response to the President's question her answer was an emphatic no! That, after the Board has spent 5 years exploring the possibility of expansion, and after \$97,000 has been spent and there are still no viable plans, this has to stop. Ms. Relkin asked that not another nickel of taxpayer money go toward this program, and that the Building Committee be discharged. Dolly Relkin stated she is opposed to disturbing the wetlands and requested the Board reaffirm its long-standing commitment to protecting the environment of Udall's Pond and the "wetlands". Jo Ann Farley expressed her agreement and once again stated her concerns with environmental protection, funding, community involvement, etc.

Renée Zarin explained that for the last five years the Board (with the exception of Ralene Adler) has voted to put aside amounts of money for the main building expansion; that the process was slowed down due to the economy; that a Citizens Building Advisory Committee was appointed in January 1994 and reported back in August 1994; that the Board's committee is still working on plans which the staff is reviewing and that nobody is happy with the plans.

b. Report from Nominating Committee - Elayne Bernstein reported that due to the resignation of Dick Fuhrman the Nominating Committee has submitted two names to the Board. These candidates will be interviewed at the April 4th meeting in executive session.

c. Building Committee Report - Muriel Kane reported that the Building Committee met on March 17th to review concerns expressed by the Board on February 28 and March 14, and will meet again on April 6th. Revised plans and a model of the proposed building expansion and retrofitting have been received from the architect and are being reviewed by the staff. If the staff determines that they are workable, the Building Committee will proceed to examine them with regard to cost, environmental requirements, aesthetic considerations, traffic projections and the extent to which they conform to the Building Needs Assessment Program.

Dolly Relkin asked: how does the Committee plan to involve the public?; have public hearings?, hear their input? How do you anticipate funding? How will environmental requirements be met? We want specific information in writing.

For the public record, Ralene Adler requested a written report by the Building Committee listing all authorizations, expenditures, unpaid bills and any written or verbal commitments made by the Building Committee and/or the Great Neck Library Board President with architecture, any persons, any public bodies, the Town of North Hempstead and the Sewer District/Water Pollution Control District from September 1993 up to and including March 1995. This information is to be available by the next Board of Trustees Meeting. Dolly Relkin and Jo Ann Farley also stated they wanted the report.

President, Renée Zarin, objected and stated clearly that she has not made promises to anyone, that it was a personal attack on her and objected to this being noted in the minutes. Ms. Relkin insisted issues should appear in the minutes with both sides of an issue being stated. Ms. Adler stated that she is only requesting information - this is not an attack on anyone.

d. Branch Committee Report - Chairperson, Jo Ann Farley, stated that her Committee is not in charge of the Parkville Lease. She was happy to see so many people and asked the Board for authorization to form community groups to help in the evaluation in updating the Branches. Upon motion made by Muriel Kane, seconded by Elayne Bernstein, and carried unanimously, it was,

RESOLVED, that the Board approve the formation of Branch Advisory Committees to give input to the Board Committees for evaluating and updating the Branches.

Ralene Adler stated she is looking forward to meeting with the patrons of the Parkville Branch. Her hope is that this Advisory Committee will be a valuable tool in addressing different components of the community. Marianna Wohlgemuth questioned the procedure for choosing members; and Marietta Di Camillo suggested a sign-up sheet in the Branches.

e. Personnel & Salary Committee - Dolly Relkin reported that an evaluation of the Library Director has not been done in a while. The process the Committee is recommending will also define and evaluate the success of the library itself. She stated that by doing this evaluation annually it will help the Director and the Board work more harmoniously toward accomplishing mutual goals and having a procedure that assures accountability. The Committee has set the process in motion and will have a resolution for the next Board meeting. A packet was provided to all Board members requesting their input on the proposed evaluation form and timetable by April 12. The Committee also recommended there be an evaluation of the Board of Trustees, as well.

Arthur Lerner reported the Personnel Committee has been working on the proposed salaries for the Assistant Directors. The Committee is very much aware of the economic situation nation-wide and locally and recognize the Assistant Directors have done exceptionally good work, and therefore we are recommending their salaries be increased by 3% (to include the step-in-grade increase), that the present top of scale be adhered to, and that all steps be eliminated in the next contract. Upon motion by Dolly Relkin, seconded by Ralene Adler, it was,

RESOLVED, that the Board accept the recommendations of the Board/Personnel Committee that the 1995 salaries for the two Assistant Directors be adjusted by a 3% increase to include step-in-grade; that the top of the present scale be adhered to for the future; and that steps be eliminated in the next contract.

5 in favor, 1 abstaining

f. By-Laws/Policy Committee - Dolly Relkin read the report and recommendations of the Committee (Relkin, Farley, Lerner) on the proposed new policy on Budget, Section D, Financial Operations of the Board Policy Manual. Being just distributed, Renée Zarin asked that this be tabled until the May Board meeting.

g. Parkville Bathroom Construction Work - The cost of this project was more than planned. Ken Weil will obtain more details from the School Board.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Community Room Application - The application of the Great Neck Horizon House was held off pending information. If it falls into the Rules and Regulations of the Use of Meetings Rooms the Board approves its use without bringing it back to another board meeting.

OPEN TIME

Questions were received and responded to regarding the following:
Susan Molazan spoke of the need for the AARP Defensive Driving Course.

Mayor Samansky, Village of Saddle Rock: was told by the Library his village would be involved in any expansion plans, and up to the present has not heard from the Library; that the Pond belongs to the Village of Saddle Rock; that the Town of North Hempstead knows nothing about Library expansion, yet they are listed as the lead agency on a document. Requested his village and the Town of North Hempstead be invited into the process. He has also just been advised that Nassau County is planning to close the Bayview Avenue bridge for repairs from May - September and would like Library input at a meeting of April 6th.

Patron: - statement made that the budget process is an annual operating budget for 1 year, and saving money from that is illegal.

Robert Bernstein - Deputy Mayor of Lake Success, and Chairperson of VOA Environmental Committee: Showed President Zarin a site plan dated January 26, 1995, prepared by Michael Spector for the Great Neck Library where 35 trees are to be knocked down between the Library and the Sewer District, and land would be filled in with gravel. The same site is discussed in a request for a building permit by the JAC Environmental organization, where it was stated the Town of No. Hempstead is the lead agency and the Council member of North Hempstead knows nothing about it. Bernstein also showed Library plans dated 10/19/92 which included the same site with development plans to cut down trees affecting the "wetlands", an environmentally protected area. Mrs. Zarin stated none of these plans were discussed with the Board, and were not documents the Board has voted on. Mayor Samansky asked when discussions on the Building Expansion were held. Mrs. Zarin stated in Executive Session, dealing with possible purchase of real estate. The Mayor said that was illegal. Mrs.

Relkin pointed to the rules concerning executive session which clearly states the only real estate issues that can be discussed there are those that would have an impact on the sale price of the property.

Mr. Bernstein asked the Library to send a representative to the VOA Environmental Committee. Mrs. Zarin asked Muriel Kane to be the representative.

Patron: - Please do not do expansion at north end of peninsula, bring it down south and improve the branches.

Shannon Gessner - In the Parkville area there is no place for young people to hang out. Many young people want to go to Levels but are unable to because bus service is not good to the main library. Asked Board to consider having a pilot project, 6 months trial, of a form of Levels program at the Parkville Library.

Marietta DiCamillo - Asked to see the second set of plans which the Building Committee received in November 1994. She was told they have not been reviewed by the Board, therefore they are not available.

Marianna Wohlgemuth - Did the members of the Board Building Committee review the plans? The plans are in-house since November and no one has looked at them? And the Library paid \$35,000 for these plans. How can you issue a report - The Interim Report of the Board Building Committee - if the plans were not reviewed?

Ronnie Greenstein - Asked questions concerning needs of Parkville, e.g. they are asking for a small room in the rear, improved bathroom facilities, with changing demographics and Kindergarten classes at Parkville School will need more children's services, more computers, etc. With a surplus of \$686,000 can't more be done at the branches? There was discussion about the lease negotiation with the School Board.

Mayor Samansky - There was a controversy years ago about a Supt. of Schools who allowed buildings to run down. Don't let that happen at the Library. Do an alteration at main - stop the building program - fix the branches. The surrounding communities do not want an expansion at main.

Zarin and Bernstein talked about 1989 Building Needs Assessment Program and reviewed the 6 year process.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Arthur Lerner, seconded by Muriel Kane the meeting adjourned at 11:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dolly Relkin
Secretary