

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD**

**THURSDAY, March 15, 2007
Admiral Room, Blasco Memorial Library**

CALL TO ORDER:

SUSAN OTTAWAY called the meeting to order at 12:00 Noon.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Susan Ottaway, President, Sr. Kathleen Blair, Kathy DeSante, Helene Grande, Jeanine McCreary, Pete Ogden, Mary Theiss.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Amos Goodwine, Barbara Wingerter

OTHERS PRESENT:

Library: Mary Rennie, Interim Executive Director, Anthony Keck, District Consultant, Mary Rennie, Blasco Library Coordinator, Ann Randall-Dill, Technology Coordinator and Diane Chlebus
Erie County Council Liaison – Kyle Foust
Friends of the Library – Robert Gallivan

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

PETE OGDEN moved to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2007, meeting.

HELENE GRANDE seconded the motion.

APPROVED by unanimous vote.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY REPORT: (Robert Gallivan)

Bob reported that the next book collection is scheduled for Saturday, 3/31/07, from 10 am – 2 pm at the Blasco Library at the corner of Front and Holland Streets.

REVIEW OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT: (Mary Rennie)

The financial report reflects routine spending. Mary commented that after ten years, the soft seating at the Blasco Library has become quite worn and will be re-upholstered in sections over the next several years.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: (Mary Rennie)

ECPL Foundation Update

The ECPL Foundation received ten proposals for construction from architectural firms, and three were chosen to present their plans to the board. After references are checked, the Foundation Board will vote at their next meeting to award the project.

The development director, hired to conduct a fundraising campaign for branch construction, is presently negotiating to finalize a contract with the Foundation. Mary explained that in the state of Pennsylvania, fundraising contractors must be registered with the PA Bureau of Charitable Organizations in addition to obtaining a bond to conduct campaigns in Pennsylvania.

Mary Rennie briefly reviewed the Key Grant specifications, a grant program that provides funds through the State Library for construction and renovation of public library facilities. Applications are due 6/29/07 and if awarded, projects may not start until 2008. An additional requirement is that the property must be owned by a municipality and restrictions apply to historic locations. The Foundation Board agreed applying for these funds would not be appropriate.

Wireless Service

Wireless access will be available within the next several months at the Blasco Library, Iroquois Branch Library, and possibly one additional branch, as well as the Erie County Independent Libraries. Rules for accessibility as well as policies for use will be established before this connection is made available to library patrons.

Governor's Proposed Budget

Governor Rendell has proposed a .3% increase in state aid for libraries in his 2007-2008 budget. This increase may not allow Commonwealth Libraries to run the funding formula or keep pace with the inflation rate.

Summer Reading Program

Mary was proud to announce that Sue Miceli, Children's Services Manager, was asked to serve on a nationwide committee to develop a comprehensive 2008 Summer Reading Program.

Downloadable Media

Blasco Endowment funds for collection development allowed for the purchase of a two-year subscription for downloadable media, including EAudiobooks, eVideo, eMusic, and eBooks. Digitization of collections has become increasingly popular format for library materials. This service is free to patrons and available over their home PC. Unfortunately, the system is not compatible with Apple's I-Pods.

Homeless Patrons

ECPL's rules of conduct apply to all patrons and are clearly defined and enforced. Recently, numerous complaints have been received from patrons regarding one particular patron. ECPL has begun working with various social service organizations to take a more pro-active stance regarding homeless patrons. A 304 Form was completed with St. Vincent's which was then filed with a local attorney's office to obtain assistance for this patron, who was later admitted to the hospital for mental health care.

Clock Tower – Iroquois Branch Library

The clock is presently being manufactured and will be installed this summer.

Government Documents 110 Anniversary Celebration

ECPL, a Federal depository library for 110 years, plans to celebrate its anniversary at 1 p.m. today. All board members are invited to attend.

Digitization of Erie Newspapers

Last year, ECPL applied for a grant to begin the process of digitizing very old Erie newspapers but unfortunately, ECPL did not obtain this funding. This year, Mary is considering using a portion of the collection development money to digitize a section of the microfilmed newspapers and to make them available on-line, indexed and searchable, for genealogical and other research.

Mr. Foust responded that the availability of gaming money, an amount yet to be determined, will be available to the library for special projects.

Parking Situation

Discussion followed regarding the lack of visitor and staff parking at the Bayview Common and the many recent complaints received from library patrons. The complex is short by 200 parking spaces and the impact on library business has been significant. The Maritime Museum is concerned since the County does not own any property

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west of the building nearest to their space which would allow for overflow parking. Over the years, the Port Authority had promised the library would always have sufficient parking but because of the popularity of the bayfront and increased planned activities and festivals, the parking situation is deteriorating. A meeting has been scheduled with representatives from the Erie County, the Port Authority, and members of the Joint Operating Committee to address these concerns and consider options.

Kyle Foust questioned if the Blasco Library patron lot is used by visitors other than library patrons during these events. Mary responded that there is the occasional problem; however, ECPL is not able to determine how extensive the situation is or able to efficiently regulate the parking.

STATISTICAL AND OTHER REPORTS: (Mary Rennie)

Usage is slightly down but is aligned with 2005 figures. The severe weather may have affected the statistics. Mary will present a report of trends in usage at next month's meeting.

REPORT OF DISTRICT CONSULTANT (Anthony Keck):

The 2006-07 District Agreement allocates \$17,500 for a district marketing study. This study will be flexible enough to be used by the district, at the county level, and by the individual libraries. A committee composed of Tony Keck and four district librarians have finished the specifications for the bid packet.

The district, through the auspices of ECPL's Children's Department, hosted a Summer Reading Workshop. This yearly event has become very popular with district librarians, and Tony thanked the Children's Department for their informative workshops.

The District Library Center meeting in Harrisburg is scheduled next week with Tony and Mary attending.

The District Agreement negotiation process will begin soon. Faith Scott, former librarian for Springboro Library, passed away recently. The Legislative Breakfast is scheduled for Friday, 4/20/07. Tony encouraged board members to attend the event.

Susan Ottaway announced she would be attending the Trustees Institute in Mars, PA, on 4/27 and 4/28/07. This event, free to all library board members, is extremely worthwhile with many valuable lectures. If any board member wishes to attend, they may contact Susan.

ADJOURNMENT - Adjourned at 12:28 p.m.