

LIBRARY BOARD MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 2008; 8:00 A.M.
BOARD ROOM, BENNETT MARTIN PUBLIC LIBRARY
136 S 14TH STREET, LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

LIBRARY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Lynda Anderson, Marlene Cupp, Fred Hoke, Jeff Kirkpatrick, Shirley Maly, Jim O’Hanlon. Absent: April Stevenson

OTHERS PRESENT: Carol Connor, Library Director; Greg Mickells, Assistant Library Director; Barbara Hansen, Administrative Aide; Paul Jones, Accountant; Jodene Glaesemann, Walt Branch Supervisor; Carol Swanson, Gere Branch Supervisor; Julee Hector, Eiseley Branch Supervisor; Pat Leach, Youth Services Supervisor; Suzan Connell, Library Resources Coordinator; Nicole Zink, Executive Director, Foundation for Lincoln City Libraries; Tonya Skinner, City Attorney’s Office; Don Taute, Director, City/County Personnel Department.

Marlene Cupp called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. and announced that a copy of the current Open Meetings Law of the State of Nebraska is available on the table along with copies of the agenda.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The Agenda/Meeting Notice was posted according to the Open Meetings Law of the State of Nebraska. Ms. Anderson moved to approve the agenda as posted. Second by Ms. Maly. Roll Call Vote: Anderson, Cupp, Hoke, Kirkpatrick, Maly, O’Hanlon – aye; Stevenson – aye. Motion carried 6-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS: None

DISCUSSION OF LIBRARY DIRECTOR HIRING PROCESS: Marlene Cupp provided a summary of activity regarding the hiring process for a Library Director. The Library Board officers (Marlene Cupp, Jim O’Hanlon, Jeff Kirkpatrick) met with Mayor Beutler, Tonya Skinner, City Attorney’s Office; Dan Taut, Director, City/County Personnel Department; and Denise Pearce, Mayor’s Aide on March 18, 2008. The meeting was at the Mayor’s request. At the meeting the Mayor proposed changes in the way the Director of Libraries is hired, mainly that he wanted an ordinance written to be presented to the City Council that would allow him to appoint the new Library Director but he wanted to act with the cooperation/collaboration of the Library Board.

Marlene Cupp, Jim O’Hanlon, and Jeff Kirkpatrick met with Carol Connor on March 20, 2008, to discuss the proposed changes. It was agreed that the Mayor’s proposal would be presented at this special Library Board meeting.

The Mayor’s proposed ordinance would move the Library Department from its current relationship with the City to a regular department of the City of Lincoln. The Library Board officers were told there would be no change in the power of the Library Board to oversee the Library as it does at the current time. The proposed ordinance makes the Library Director directly responsible to the Mayor and eliminates the buffer that the Board currently supplies to the Library Director. The Library now is more a division of the city government with the Board serving as the governing arm.

This is a major change to the role of the Library Director and subsequently to the role of the Library Board. Ms. Cupp stated that Mr. Kirkpatrick will be presenting proposed changes and discussion will take place. No action will be taken at this meeting as this is informational only. Further discussion and action are planned for the April 15 Library Board meeting.

Mr. Kirkpatrick presented the goals for and the Board's proposed changes to the City Code.

Goals:

1. To clarify current law regarding conflicting or unaddressed authority of Library Board and Mayor over Library Director.
2. Ensure accountability of Library Director to Mayor as with other Department Directors.

Proposed Changes to City Code:

1. Library Board have appointing authority for Library Director with Mayor's approval. This change will ensure that the Library Board which works the most intimately with the Library will organize and manage the search for a new director. Gaining the Mayor's approval ensures that the new Director begins the job having a relationship with and support of the Mayor. This also expands the candidate pool because candidates know that they will meet with and have the support of the Mayor before accepting the job.
2. Mayor has authority to dismiss the Library Director with the approval of a majority of the Library Board. This change clarifies the process of firing a Library Director. It gives the Mayor the authority to dismiss the Director as he or she can with other city directors. The check of needing the Board's approval is similar, although simpler, than the Director of the Health Department. It will be easier to attract candidates as this two step dismissal process ensures some stability and protection from whimsical or poorly thought out dismissal by Mayor.
3. Change the Library Director position to a non-classified position. This significant change would allow the dismissal of the Library Director without necessity of proving "cause" for termination.
4. Provide for annual evaluation of Library Director by Library Board. Preserves the Board's role in overseeing the Library system. Without the ability to evaluate the Director, the Library Board's influence and ability to direct the Library system is greatly hindered. The evaluation is performed by the body which most closely monitors performance of the Director and Library system.

Tonya Skinner, City Attorney's Office, reviewed the draft ordinance amending Title 2 of the Lincoln Municipal Code relating to departments of the City of Lincoln which creates a new Chapter 2.25, called Library Department. Discussion was held regarding the language and changes the Board recommends.

The Library Board Executive Committee will meet with Tonya Skinner to work out issues and languages of the ordinance with the goal to have the item appear on the April 15, 2008 Library Board meeting agenda.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 9:03 a.m.