

Berkeley Public Library  
Board of Library TrusteesRegular Meeting  
December 10, 2003Minutes  
7:03 p.m.West Branch  
1125 University Avenue**I. Call to Order**

The regular meeting of December 10, 2003 was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

Present: Trustees Anderson, Garcia, Kupfer, Powell, Shirek

Absent: None

Also Present: Director of Library Services Jackie Griffin, Deputy Director MaryLou Mull, Building Project Manager Elena Engel, Library Financial Manager Robert Derbin, Children's Services Manager Linda Perkins, Administrative Secretary Yvette Gan

**II. Public Comments: None****III. Approval of Agenda**

**R03-105 Moved by Trustee Shirek, seconded by Trustee Anderson, to approve the agenda as presented.** Motion carried unanimously.

**IV. Staff Report: Children's Services**

Children's Services Manager Linda Perkins reported that a new Children's Librarian was added to her staff this year. The staff have been working on the collection, adding videos and DVDs while continuing to select print and audio materials. They're also continuing to offer Readers Advisory and programs: read-alouds for families, storytimes for babies and toddlers, puppet shows, magic shows, the summer reading program, and one on etiquette. Some of these programs are funded by the Friends of the Library.

Children's staff also make presentations for class/group visits, they do tours and booktalks, go to visit classes in the schools, approach PTAs, visit daycare and HeadStart providers, instruct patrons on the use of the catalog and databases and work with student Friends. This year, for the first time, the staff held an open house for the students and teachers of Longfellow school which was very well received.

A project at the Berkeley High School called "Earphone English" involves a BPL librarian and a teacher holding discussions with students about books-on-tape. Senior Librarian Elizabeth Overmyer has developed a toolkit for middle-school kids which is available on the web. Staff also participated in the City's "Lights On After School" project at West branch, and told stories to the older children at the Guinness Book of World Records breastfeeding gala.

There is one children's librarian in each of the four branches. They work the children's public desk, make school visits, and also work halftime on the adult public desk. Director Griffin mentioned that separate public desks for children are maintained as many studies have shown that children will not approach a public desk for help if they perceive it as a service for adults.

Ms. Perkins also said that the library staff are working with other City staff and the community on a library project at the San Pablo Recreation Center. Unfortunately, with the current budget crisis in the City, there may be some delay before plans come to fruition.

Eric Nagourney from the New York Times called Ms. Perkins this morning and asked for a list of science books for children. Ms. Griffin added that Ms. Perkins is a nationally known and respected figure in the library world and that the Berkeley Public Library was exceptionally lucky to count her among its staff.

This past Spring, Ms. Perkins attended a workshop where the topic of "the resilient child" was discussed. The library is often mentioned by children, who are facing extraordinary difficulties, as a place where they found help. Libraries provide a connection to the community; one that is needed by both adults and children.

Trustee Anderson asked Ms. Perkins for her thoughts on school library projects. Ms. Perkins feels that elementary schools should have accredited school librarians. When children come into the public library, it's clear that they lack a lot of basic skills in using the library. Studies have shown that by the time they reach college, children who learn library skills young still have an advantage over those who did not. Public library staff spend much more time teaching children (and a whole generation of parents) how to acquire these skills. It leaves less time for much-needed programs that engage the children. The budget is also affected, as more public library funds are spent on supporting school curriculums.

The Board thanked Ms. Perkins for her report.

#### **V. Consent Calendar**

**R03-106 Moved by Trustee Powell, seconded by Trustee Kupfer, to approve the consent calendar.**  
Motion carried unanimously.

**R03-107 Minutes of Regular Meeting – November 12, 2003**

The minutes were approved with the following correction on Page 4, item IX., R03-104:  
Replace "Trustee Powell" with "Trustee Garcia".

**R03-108 Accepted resignation of Bounthanom Soukphaly, Office Specialist II, Administration**

**R03-109 Approved Sabbatical Request from Dawn Swanson, Librarian II, Claremont Branch, from August 3, 2004 – Feb. 3, 2005.**

#### **VI. Reports for Action/Discussion**

1. Building Projects Update

Project Manager Elena Engel showed a video of the West Branch renovation project that will be submitted with the rest of the application to the State Library for bond funds. The application itself will be over 200 pages long and is due on Jan. 16, 2004 in Sacramento.

The City Council, at its meeting on Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>, approved the Library's use of bond measure funding if the application is approved by the State Library.

2. Report on BPL Foundation

Ranko Yamada was introduced to the Trustees as the President for the Berkeley Public Library Foundation. Since the Foundation is now mostly run by volunteers, they have found that a regular presence is needed in the office. A half-time staff has been hired to work on the Authors Dinner event, to be held on Jan. 31<sup>st</sup> in the Central Library's Reading Room.

The Foundation's web-site, [www.bplf.org](http://www.bplf.org), has been revamped, and a pdf file showing the Authors Dinner forms is available at that website. Several authors at last year's event enjoyed

it so much that they asked to be invited to future Authors Dinners. There will be an on-line auction; it will be on the website for about 3 weeks, closing on the night of the Authors Dinner.

A mailing to 17,000 households was sent out 2 weeks ago, asking for donations of \$20.04 to be sent to the Foundation. The Foundation Board is putting together the operating budget, including the campaign for funding branch renovations.

Ms. Yamada thanked the Board, library staff and Friends of the library for all their help in getting the volunteer staff up to speed. Trustee Garcia expressed appreciation on behalf of the Trustees and staff for the hard work put in by the Foundation Board during the transition period.

3. Report on Patron Hearing of Dec. 4, 2004

Director Griffin reported that the hearing was not held as scheduled. The patron called the evening before the hearing and said he would not be able to attend. Director Griffin informed him that the ban would still be in place till a hearing is held. A new date, Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>, was selected, and another notice will be sent to the patron.

4. Approval of Contract Amendment of \$199,000 for Wulfsberg, Reese, Colvig & Firstman

Trustee Powell asked if there were sufficient funds for legal fees and was assured that there were funds laid aside for this. Ms. Engel reported that two days of depositions had taken place.

**R03-110 Moved by Trustee Garcia, seconded by Trustee Anderson, to approve an increase of \$199,000 to the contract for Wulfberg, Reese, Colvig and Firstman for legal services in relation to the Arntz Builders et al lawsuit. Motion carried unanimously.**

5. Report of 4 x 2 meeting of Dec. 5, 2004

Trustee Anderson noted that her report of the 4 x 2 meeting would be brief as some of it had been already addressed by Ms. Yamada earlier in this meeting. The Friends of the Library are doing very well. Their only problem seems to be that more and more donated books are turning out not to be saleable.

6. Quarterly Financial Statement – Sept. 30, 2003

Library Financial Manager Robert Derbin presented the financial statement for the first Quarter (July 1 – Sept. 30, 2003). There is a negative balance of \$2.1 million this quarter because the tax revenues will not be collected till the second Quarter. This year, the library tax rate was raised by 13.9 percent. State funds have dropped from \$94,000 to \$46,000. Fines and fees collected are usually lower in the summer months, but are expected to increase once fall begins.

The COLA increase in personnel salaries for next year (FY 2005) will be 4.8% but the fringe benefits are going up astronomically. Medical insurance will be raised by 20%, dental by 8% and workers' compensation by 10%. PERS (Public Employee Retirement Fund) employer contributions to staff retirement are expected to rise from 3.38% to 12.68%.

7. BPL 5-Year Plan

Director Griffin noted that staff had been mid-way through the process of crafting a 5-year plan earlier in the year when the budget crisis took precedence. However, the management team has now completed the process. Some organizational changes will take place in order to

achieve the stated goals. To that end, the Reference Manager will be moving into the position

of Branch Services Manager in January, and she has been charged to look at ways to better the services provided at all of the library locations.

Director Griffin stated that she would like to stabilize funding for the library, find a way for the library to provide services to the schools, and to purchase RFID-based technology for a check-out system. She will bring a summary of her goals to the next meeting.

Trustee Powell asked that the 5-year plan be on the agenda for the January 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## 8. Director's Report

### Budget

Library Financial Manager Robert Derbin handed out estimated budget sheets for FY 2005. There may be a tax revenue increase of 2.5% (\$330,000) next year. The library anticipates a \$1.2 million shortfall. A large part is due to an increase in PERS contributions. Health and dental insurances and Workers Compensation charges are also expected to rise. Salaries will increase by \$380,000. In FY 2006, there will be another shortfall of \$1.5 million.

Deputy Director Mull has been asked to look closely at the funds spent on library materials. However, Director Griffin has become increasingly convinced that cutting the book budget does not, in the long run, benefit the library because it will be impossible to make up the deficit later. Patrons will stop coming to the library if the materials they want and need are not available.

At the same time, Director Griffin was concerned that services which help the poorest sections of the community the most not be cut. Some departments, such as Maintenance and Information Technology, are already working with skeleton crews. There is not a lot of redundancy within the Library organization. An all-staff meeting will be held on Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> so that various budget savings can be discussed.

### Technology

Director Griffin noted that the Library's STEEP Committee has been looking closely at RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) systems for the past few months, and members have visited libraries currently using RFID technology. A spokesman for the Electronic Frontier Foundation was invited to a committee meeting to discuss privacy concerns. The Library is ready to issue an RFP (Request for Proposal) to RFID companies, and will need to finance the purchase.

Trustee Garcia asked how the public will be educated about this change. Director Griffin acknowledged it will be difficult, and added that the Library would have to close for about a week to install the system. Trustee Anderson asked if this system would result in savings. Director Griffin noted that the Library spent about \$1 million in direct costs for Workers Compensation claims for the past five years, mostly due to repetitive motion injuries. This technology should result in a significant decrease in injuries and associated costs. She has spoken to union representatives about this project.

### School Libraries

Board member John Selawsky of the Berkeley Unified School District and another Board member have indicated they are willing to meet with two Trustees to discuss the possibility of a school library project. Superintendent Michelle Lawrence will also be invited to the meeting.

## **VII. Reports for Information**

1. BPL Staff News, November 2003
2. BPL Calendar of Events, December 2003
3. BPL Press Releases/Flyers: *A Presentation on Project Gutenberg*
4. Newspaper articles:

- *Community Policing Models Divides Cities Chips (Berkeley Daily Planet, 11/14/03)*
- *Letter To The Editor: Parcel Tax (Berkeley Daily Planet, 11/14/03)*
- *Juvenile Hall Project Risks Losing Funds (Contra Costa Times, 11/18/03)*
- *Neighborhoods Oppose City Parcel Tax Measure (Berkeley Daily Planet, 11/18/03)*
- *Neighborhood Associations Say No To Tax Hike (Berkeley Daily Planet, 11/18/03)*
- *Juvenile Hall Firm Gets Boot By Board (Contra Costa Times, 11/19/03)*
- *Residents Condemn Tax Measure At City Council Meeting (Daily Californian, 11/20/03)*
- *Berkeley Parcel Tax Hike Opposed (Oakland Tribune, 11/20/03)*
- *Foes Attack Parcel Tax (Berkeley Daily Planet, 11/21/03)*
- *Public Demands Accountability For Tax Payments (Berkeley Daily Planet, 11/21/03)*
- *Editorial: Outcry Over Council's Proposed Parcel Tax Threatens City Budget (Berkeley Daily Planet, 11/21/03)*
- *Letter To The Editor: 13 Things (Berkeley Daily Planet, 11/21/03)*
- *Letter To The Editor: No New Taxes (Berkeley Daily Planet, 11/21/03)*
- *Commentary: Berkeley Public Schools Need A Fair Share Of Tax Dollars (Berkeley Daily Planet, 11/21/03)*
- *City Policies Reduce Revenues, Add To Homeowner Tax Bite (Berkeley Daily Planet, 11/21/03)*
- *Mayor Kills Parcel Tax Vote After Firefighters' Rejection (Berkeley Daily Planet, 11/25/03)*
- *Rasputin's Offers School Cash (Berkeley Daily Planet, 11/25/03)*
- *Breakdown In Logic Kills The Function (SF Chronicle, 11/27/03)*
- *Letter To The Editor: Balance Budget Fairly (Berkeley Voice, 11/28/03)*
- *Missing Memories Found (Berkeley Daily Planet, 12/2/03)*

#### **VIII. Agenda Building**

Next Regular Meeting: January 14, 2004, at the Central Library 2090 Kittredge Street

Agenda items: 5-Year Plan, RFP for check-out system, update on meeting with Board members of the Berkeley Unified School District, Building Projects Update.

#### **IX. Adjourn**

**R03-111 Moved by Trustee Powell, seconded by Trustee Anderson, to adjourn the meeting at 10:09 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.**