



LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES

December 10, 2014

BOARD PRESENT: Amir, Brooks, Christman, Core, Lewis, Persaud, Ram, Rao, Reedy, Sabnis, Watts

STAFF PRESENT: B. Parker Hamilton, Director; Rita Gale, Public Services Administrator, Facilities and Strategic Planning; Tamar Sarnoff, Planning and Evaluation Coordinator

GUESTS: Ellen Berman, President, Friends of Library Montgomery County, Inc., Board of Trustees; Tanner Wray, Director of College Libraries and Information Services, Montgomery College

The Library Board meeting was convened by Chair Watts at 7:05 p.m.

INTRODUCTIONS:

Board Members, staff and guest were introduced.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES:

The minutes from the October 8, 2014 Board meeting were approved.

APPROVAL OF LAC APPLICATIONS:

The LAC applications were approved.

PRESENTATIONS:

The Jail that Reads! Andrea Castrogiovanni

- The purpose of the presentation is to give an overview of the world of Corrections, the relationship between MCPL and MCCF, and the level of library services offered.
- To begin, it's important to note the differences between jail and prison --- there is a difference.

- Everyone passes through jail...but not everyone is sent to prison.
- Why is this difference important to know?
 - *Raison d'etre* of facility guides the library's mission.
 - Understanding inmates' length-of-stay and educational/recreational goals refines the types of library services and collection offered.
- History of MCPL and the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR).
 - 1971: Informal partnership begins between MCPL and DOCR with weekly mobile services (Seven Locks).
 - 1977: MCPL establishes library at DOCR.
 - 1980: *Memo of Understanding* formalizes operation of library services for DOCR.
 - 1977-2003: Library services staffing levels developed at DOCR.
 - March, 2003: Library is opened at MCCF.
 - Joan Deacon, who retired as the manager of the MCCF Library, began "The Jail that Reads."
- Library Overview and Mission
 - Dual mission
 - To provide basic public library services within the correctional institution.
 - To ensure statutory access to legal resources.
 - Operates as a branch of MCPL; dually funded by MCPL and DOCR.
 - Serves approximately 900 inmates and Corrections staff.
- Physical Space and Collection
 - Floor plan = 2,000 square feet
 - Areas are well-lit.
 - Highly visible to Custody and Security staff; located at Northwest Corridor station.
 - Collection contains approximately 15,000 titles.
 - General reading and legal materials.
 - Several languages including Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese and Korean.
 - Collection has a "public library" section funded thru MCPL and a "law library" collection funded through MCCF. Public materials can be checked-out; legal section is reference only.
- Library Services
 - General Library
 - Bi-weekly housing unit sessions (30 minutes).
 - Privilege-based and security-compliant attendance.
 - Law Library
 - Bi-weekly group sessions (60 minutes) by written request.
 - Availability is first-come, first-served.
 - Services for MCDC (aka Seven Locks): available to Inmate-Workers via written requests for information and shipment of materials to facility 1-2x/month.
- Relationship/Importance of Inmates and Library Use
 - Incarcerated individuals have the same information needs as people "on the outside."
 - Greater number having low education skills.
 - Constructive use of time → avid community library user.
 - Inmate population is probably more diverse than a "regular" library's customer base, because there are no "economic" or "geographic" restrictions. Well-educated to low education, homeless to homes.
 - Access to legal information is mandated (*Bounds v. Smith*). We fulfill the legal requirement by making core printed resource materials available.

- *The only non-violent activity in a prison is reading, which, for the most part, is done in or through the prison library. There is violence on the playing fields, in the dining room, in the showers, and on the work details.* ~ Kathryn Thompson, veteran Maryland prison educator.
- How can the LAC help?
 - Challenge: how to reach the public on the importance of information access to inmates.
 - Challenge: demonstrate that library services may contribute to an inmate's successful re-entry into the community.
 - The inmates have a reentry card (good for 60 days) that they may use to get a library card once they have been released.
 - Things to keep in mind: security, security, security!
 - Developing programs that are security-compliant and of interest to inmates; getting in touch with speakers.
 - The LACs primary activity currently is conducting book drives.
- MCCF Library Staffing
 - Manager, part-time MCPL staff person and three trained inmates.
- Sometimes the MCCF library is the first and only exposure some inmates have to a library.
- Board members can email Ms. Castrogiovanni with questions or comments.
- Question: Do many inmates use the library?
 Answer: Yes, many inmates use the library; it is a privilege.
 Question: Is there any evidence that those inmates who use the library extensively are more successful when released?
 Answer: No, there is not. However, many do continue to use the services of the public libraries after they are released.
 Question: What types of magazines can be donated?
 Answer: MCCF Library had to stop accepting magazines in the spring due to security issues.
 Question: Are there inmates who cannot use the MCCF library?
 Answer: Yes, those who are classified as mentally ill and those who are under protective custody.
- Andrea Castrogiovanni began her career with MCPL as a page 21 years ago. She was at Olney before transferring to the MCCF library.
 - Director Hamilton stated that it takes a special person to want to provide the service and then provide it with humor and respect.
- Jill Lewis stated that it was an honor to be the liaison to the MCCF LAC and asked what the Board could do.
 - Any ideas about how to get the word out regarding the services the library provides to the inmates would be very helpful.
 - A small public tour could be arranged.
- The MCCF LAC members are community persons.
- It takes two weeks to rotate all the inmates through the library.
- Popular reading subjects are: psychology; religious devotionals (Christian, Muslim, Judaism, Hinduism); exercise, and anything related to the pop music industry.

Moving Forward with Joint Advocacy - Ellen Berman

- Preparation for the second Joint Meeting which is scheduled for January 2015.
 - Two major suggestions:
 - Broaden the circle of advocates to include more public persons.

- Evaluations from past years indicated more advocates were needed.
 - Model the first meeting like the State of the Montgomery County Public Schools System.
 - Come to share ideas from other organizations, county departments, etc.
- More strategic and focused when advocating to elected officials.
 - Identify the key priorities (especially those that have emerged since the November meeting).
 - Request the Director to provide an update at the January Joint Meeting.
 - Try to introduce a more disciplined approach when presenting to stakeholders.
 - In order to be more strategic, each group (LAC and FOL chapter) would identify a primary and an alternate advocacy representative.
 - These individuals would receive training and talking points.
 - The training would include staying on topic.
 - These will be volunteers who are willing to do the training.
 - The names of those identified will be sent to Ari Brooks and Regina Holyfield-Jewett.
 - There will be a pool from which to pull.
 - Hone in on the key asks.
- How to take all the suggestions from the first Joint Meeting and turn them into specifics.
 - Tom Thomson organized the suggestions from the November 5 meeting into three categories.
- Question: Is every LAC and FOL chapter going to have a primary and alternate advocacy representative?
Answer: It will be up to the LACs and FOL chapters to make this determination.
- The second Joint Meeting is scheduled for January 14 at Kensington Park Library. This will be in place of the regular Board meeting.
- It is important to know ahead of time what Director Hamilton wants to focus on as a system based on approved MCPL Strategic Plan.
- Ashutosh Rao can offer names of trainers in negotiations and conflict resolutions.
- The training and process for selecting the volunteers still need to be developed.
- More information will be given at the second Joint Meeting in January.
- Kim Persaud would like to begin scheduling the meetings with the Council members in January.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- There are two new Council members – Tom Hucker and Sidney Katz. As of today, there is no Council lead for Public Libraries.
- On December 4, the director for the Office of Budget and Management sent a memo to Council Staff Director Steve Farber regarding the budget for FY15 and FY16. Based on the current spending of all County agencies, a 3% savings plan is needed to balance the budget. There is a FY15 freeze on hiring and procurement. In the past, departments were allowed to ask for procurement and hiring exemptions.
 - This affects the Operating and Capital budgets.
 - This does include book purchases.

- The Kensington Park and Twinbrook refresh projects include operating money. An exemption would have to be requested and approved based on amount.
- Many budget decisions are made based on projections.
- County Executive Leggett believes new businesses will help with revenue.
- Upcoming Dates:
 - Open House – December 18, 10 AM – 5 PM
 - ALA – National Library Legislative Day – May 5 and 6, 2015
 - Library Lovers Month
 - Snapshot Day – February 18, 2015
 - Opening Event – Saturday, January 31 at 11 AM, Olney Branch; Featuring Diggity Dudes
 - County Executive’s Budget Forums
 - Monday, January 5 – 7 p.m. – FY16 Budget Forum, BlackRock Center for the Arts, 12901 Town Commons Drive, Germantown
 - Wednesday, January 14 – 7 p.m. – FY16 Budget Forum, Silver Spring Regional Services Center, One Veterans Place, Silver Spring
 - Tuesday, January 20 – 7 p.m. – FY16 Budget Forum, Eastern Montgomery Regional Services Center, 3300 Briggs Chaney Road, Silver Spring
 - Thursday, January 22 – 7 p.m. – FY16 Budget Forum, MidCounty Community Recreation Center, 2004 Queensguard Road, Silver Spring
 - Monday, January 26 – 7 p.m. – FY16 Budget Forum, Bethesda Chevy Chase Regional Services Center, 4805 Edgemoor Drive, Bethesda
- Building Projects
 - Silver Spring - Costello continues to work on finishing out the interior of the building. Current timetable still has a late spring 2015 opening. Management staff meets weekly to review the internal to-do list to make sure the branch opens on time.
 - Wheaton – The Department of General Services has not yet submitted the schematic design for the library to County Executive Leggett, who will make the final decision on the design.
 - Kensington Park and Twinbrook Refresh Projects - The Department of General Services, Division of Building Design and Construction, signed the contract with the architect for the projects at the beginning of November. The kickoff meeting to review the work that will be done for each project was held on November 20. Planning and review meetings will be held biweekly with a 30% submission due December 31, 2014 and a 90% submission due in March 2015. Head of Collection Management, Mary Louise Daneri, and PSA for Facilities and Strategic Planning, Rita Gale, visited the two branches in October to review collection arrangement and discuss preparations needed for the project with each branch manager. Rita Gale had two follow-up meetings in November and December with each branch manager to develop proposed layouts and shelving plans for the architect to review.
- County Retirements/Resignations
 - Chief Steve Lohr – Fire and Rescue Services
 - Steve Silverman – Director, Department of Economic Development
 - Art Holmes – Director, Department of Transportation
 - Rick Nelson – Director, Department of Housing and Community Affairs
 - Art Wallenstein - Director, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
 - Dan Beavin – Senior Librarian, Wheaton Branch

- Bus Signage – On 200 Ride On buses as of Sunday, December 7.
- Library Directors who are a part of the Urban Libraries Council are leading an effort to name Ferguson Public Library, Library of the Year.
- A tribute page and guest book have been created in memory of the late Diane Monnier who was a long time employee with MCPL. Please use the following link to view and sign the guest book <http://montgomerycountymd.libguides.com/dianemonnier>
- FY15 First Quarter MCPL Analysis and Dashboard gives a flavor of how the system is performing and helps to determine how to sustain and where we need improvement.
- The Boards, Committees and Commissions meeting with the County Executive will be one on one this year.

CHAIR'S REPORT

- Chair Watts thanked Paulette Dickerson, former Board member, for the report regarding the Thanksgiving Parade. The report will be shared via email.
- Chair Watts also thanked Anne Core for the idea to present a small token of thanks to Council members. The items were delivered and well received.
- Orientation will be scheduled for new Board members.
- All libraries have relationships with the Regional Services Centers. These locations can be used to market MCPL services and programs.

NEW BUSINESS:

A motion was made, seconded and passed to review and edit the generic LAC brochure via email. The current document will be sent to all Board members. Once it is edited and approved, it will be printed and distributed to the LACs.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.