

Library Board Meeting
Tuesday, May 4, 2010
7:45 PM
Board Conference Room

Present: Director Atkinson; Members Bellacosa, Henderson, Langlois, Parker, Sanborn, Toner, Doran, Hunt and Straczek.

Due to the fact that the Board invited a special guest, a formal agenda was not followed. There were no Treasurer's nor Director's reports and the minutes from two previous meetings were not approved.

Special Guest: Alan Burger of *Library Development Solutions*.

Chairman Sanborn called the meeting to order at 7:50 PM.

Chairman Sanborn introduced Mr. Burger who discussed matters regarding working with us in two areas: as a Search specialist in locating candidates for Director, as well as a consultant who specializes in Strategic Planning. He is currently working with Westport Library on strategic planning. This includes reaching out to the community in Westport in order to learn what it wants. Mr. Burger suggested that search and strategic planning go hand in hand. He opined that leadership and mission are interrelated. He and his business partner/wife have worked with over 1000 libraries on such issues as referenda, capital campaigns, etc. They have been eight years in search with approximately two searches per year. These have included Rye, Bronxville, and New Canaan most recently. He suggested that it is optimum to find the director before the strategic planning process begins. It is difficult to do both at the same time. Member Bellacosa discussed the relationship between the vision of the Board and the library's mission statement. In both cases, Mr. Burger said that leadership is the most important matter to be addressed as it applies to finding the right director to carry out both the mission and vision of the library. Mr. Burger described the fact that trends in our community must be investigated as well as defining short and long-term goals. He would help us in identifying all of these. Important matters regarding salary and time of hiring were discussed at length.

Bibliomation will be using an open source system and will be adding applications in the future. This is very exciting. This will take 3- 6 months duration.

Member Toner posed the question: What are the potholes we will likely face? Member Bellacosa asked about the sequence of events. Mr. Burger answered by saying that all of their searches have run very well. He said that the Board can cause problems with the search. The Board must maintain a consistent pattern of policy support and advocacy. Member Doran asked why would it be better to hire a search person? Why not do it ourselves? Mr. Burger maintained that a search firm is able to contact people who are not looking. They are often the best people.

After Mr. Burger's time with the Board, members discussed the possibility of using his firm or another one with similar expertise. In an informal vote, the Board voted unanimously in favor of using a search firm as opposed to doing the search without professional assistance. Each member discussed the particular reason for his or her decision. The discussion concluded after it was decided that Mr. Bellacosa would reach out to his library community for additional search firm support. In future meetings the Board will interview others in the field before coming to a decision.

After Mr. Burger's departure, Ms. Sanborn described a meeting that First Selectwoman Weinstein requested. They met on the morning of May 4th to discuss financial issues. The First Selectwoman has asked the Board to conduct a cost benefit study regarding becoming formally associated with Westport Library. She described that she had talked to Westport First Selectman Joseloff about the matter. This came up as a result of the announcement of Ms. Atkinson's decision to resign. The Board discussed the ramifications of such a change. Ms. Doran suggested that a small contingent of the Board meet with Westport Library Director Bleiweis as part of the Board's seeking after information. The sense of the

meeting was that such a meeting with Westport should not take place at this time. Ms. Sanborn suggested that the Board meet to discuss this further and it was decided that there be another meeting on May 11, 2010. At this meeting Board members are asked to be prepared to discuss quantitative as well as qualitative issues.

It is expected that the Board will be meeting again to continue discussing the Library's future the week of May 17th.

Brief announcements were made before the meeting was adjourned. They were:

Ms. Parker reported that Hilary Berger Programs are planned for June 3rd and June 10th. Ms. Berger has agreed to present one for people who are out of work looking for employment and the other for recent college graduates looking for their first jobs. Ms. Parker is coordinating these programs, which the Library Board co-sponsors with the Friends of the Library.

Mr. Toner suggested that he knows of a good place for computer equipment with a library discount.

Ms. Sanborn described her efforts to clarify an endowment that is pending for the library.

Mr. Bellacosa reported that he would be putting in the application for the "Treasures of Connecticut Libraries" program and that he would begin to work with the Historical Society on selecting and scanning the materials on Historic Society digitization.

Ms. Atkinson presented a proposal from a community member to deliver a program on lyme disease. This will be discussed at another meeting.

Ms. Doran moved to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Sanborn adjourned the meeting at 9:47 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Deirdre Doran
Secretary

