

Minutes of the Volusia County Library Advisory Board Meeting

December 4th, 2009

Daytona Beach Regional Library

Members:

Claudia Hutchins, At- Large
Vacant, District I
Neil Harrington, District II
Robert Clinton, District III
Chris Hartley, District IV
Sue Lombardi, District V
Rev. Donald Needham, At- Large

Staff:

Lucinda Colee, Library Services Director
Chelsea Harrison, Recorder
Anne Powers, Network Librarian
Brook White, Daytona Beach Regional Librarian
Dave Byron, Community Services Director

Chair, Sue Lombardi called the meeting to order at 1:03pm.

All board members were present except Claudia Hutchins, At-Large.

Budget:

Dave Byron, Community Services Director, thanked the public for coming and the CLAB board for their support and advocacy. He expressed that today's economy is unprecedented. The County Council has made gradual cuts for 4 years now in anticipation of this; however, with revenues falling and costs increasing, difficult decisions need to be made. The tax base has dropped 17%, taking 25 million dollars away from the budget.

Dave Byron, Community Services Director, explained that through attrition and a hiring freeze 150 positions have been left vacant. Libraries are a snapshot of a much larger financial picture. Dave Byron went over the library fund 3 year forecast and discussed the possibility of using reserve money for the debt.

Lucinda Colee, Library Director, discussed the different types of library users. The busiest branch is virtual, with many patrons using the online databases or browsing online and never venturing further than the circulation desk.

Lucinda Colee, Library Director, explained that the library system was defined into regions in 1994. She discussed library locations and the types of branches: Regional, Medium, and Small.

Lucinda Colee, Library Director, went over the library system use patterns, then she presented the Budget powerpoint that is attached.

Lucinda Colee, Library Director, turned the meeting back over to Sue Lombardi, Chair.

Public Participation:

Sue Lombardi, Chair, explained that each speaker would receive 3 minutes to express themselves.

Dave Byron – Community Services Director, explained that library closures would help fund the entire system.

Rolland Via – Mayor of Holly Hill – informed the board that Mr. Roger Heely, has gathered petitions with over 300 names. He feels that closing the library will only hurt the economy by taking away community centers. Rolland Via, expressed that Holly Hill will do whatever is possible to keep the library open, including possibly setting aside CRA money to help fund the library.

Rose Schumacher, Executive Director of Holly Hill’s Chamber of Commerce, wanted to know how the \$200,000.00 is spent to keep the Holly Hill Library running. She asked board to break down the numbers.

Fred Gruner – Holly Hill Supporter – suggested proportional cuts. He maintains that it is irresponsible to cut an entire facility. He feels 3.5 miles is too far for those who do not drive.

Gerry Lombardi – President of the Debarry Library Association – supports closing S. Cornelia Young for health issues. He also feels that there should be even cuts across the board.

Pat Crooner – Represents all libraries – feels that all libraries should be kept open as they form a sense of community.

Pattie Page – Represents Holly Hill – stated that computers are needed in Holly Hill. She recommends cuts across the board, like they did during World War II.

Alco Blankenship – Ormond Beach Resident – prefers the Holly Hill Library. They suggested closing all of the other libraries to make up the cost.

Susan Torrent – Library Volunteer - adamantly supports closing S. Cornelia Young. She is against eliminating positions in the library, including student workers. Branches are understaffed and there are lines. She feels there should be a charge for reservations.

Sue Lombardi, Chair, clarified that they have not made a recommendation as a whole yet. Staff came up with the proposal, not CLAB.

Cindy Carson – Represents Holly Hill – stated that Holly Hill is the only branch she attends. The bike rack is always full and it gives her a sense of community. 2 years ago she collected over 600 signatures to keep the Holly Hill Library open, because it is a safe place. She recommends that the bigger branches have their hours cut.

Bill Mangler – Represents S. Cornelia Young – feels that at a different time of year with more notice, more supporters would have shown up. He was concerned about the building reverting to the heirs if it is not a library. He also suggested CRA funding, as well as tiff financing. The building is on the national register of historic places. He feels that ECHO financing might be an option.

Neil Harrington, District II, stated that the building is not in the CRA. There was some miscommunication and the City of Daytona is having the building painted today.

Clarice McKey – Executive Director of Family Renew Community – uses a converted hotel as a shelter for homeless children. There are 14 families with children and 80 percent do not have cars. As they do not have cable, they use the library for DVDs, books, and the computers at Holly Hill. She wants the library to remain open.

Alice Halderman recommends accepting the recommendation. She feels that closures are just the beginning. She has spent years working with Lucinda Colee, Library Director, trying to find places to cut. These are creative recommendations and the library is a business.

Sheila McKayFaun – City Commissioner of Daytona – stated that she did not know about the condition of S. Cornelia Young. She said that she was going to fix it immediately. She was perplexed about the cost and maintenance of the building. She feels that there is a disconnect between the county and the cities and that they need to meet together. Daytona Beach is willing to work with the County. She requested a copy of the whole budget be published in the news paper. Keeping the communities walkable is green, while cars are not. The support services are necessary.

Arnold Arfolia stated that the Port Orange Regional Library was not open on Sundays, and it cost a million dollars to open them. He feels that the libraries should be closed on Sundays and that there should be charges for different services.

Kate Wallace – Orange City Support and Friend of the Library – She would like to keep the Holly Hill Library open. She is against transferring a library assistant to the Deltona Regional Library. She feels that the smaller libraries need to be staffed so that they can function as they are the community social life.

Dave Rowe – President of the Historical society – supports keeping Holly Hill open. He would like to know where the figures for the new facilities are coming from and see a break down of the budget.

Douglas Riley – volunteer at S. Cornelia Young – would like to keep the S. Cornelia Young Library open as it is the only beachside library. He feels there should be a partnership between county and the city of Daytona Beach. It would be a great loss if it were to close, because many are unable to cross the bridge. Instead he would like the library to close for two days a week.

Roger Heely – represents Holly Hill – is on the oversight board for county schools – he requested that Dave Byron, Community Services Director, take a copy of the petitions to take to the County Council as they all vote. The library is an intricate part of the success in educating children and it should kept open.

Victoria feels the Deltona Regional Library is now the mother lode of Volusia County. She feels that the Deltona expansion needs to be defended. She also feels that there should be a partnership between the County and Daytona Beach regarding S. Cornelia Young. She pointed out that IB students need volunteer hours. She is an Ormond Beach patron who is defending S. Cornelia Young and Holly Hill. She feels that if the Dickerson Library and the Orange City Library remain open that Holly Hill and S. Cornelia Young should as well. There is a lack of communication between Daytona Beach and Volusia County. She feels that there should not be a charge placed on services as that is what taxes are for.

Joy McMann – Represents S. Cornelia Young – feels that S. Cornelia Young is still utilized continually. She is going to request that the neighborhood help raise money to keep the branch open, as it is up for a historical district.

Isabelle Perez – Deltona patron, on behalf of daughter Brenda – an Orange City volunteer – is against reducing library hours. She also commented on the County Council meeting being scheduled for 9:00 am, as many people have to work at that time and are unable to attend. She questioned the economic implications between S. Cornelia Young and Holly Hill. She is also against closing the Bookmobile, due to the children.

John Leery – Representing S. Cornelia Young and Holly Hill – stated that Holly Hill is closed on Monday which is the highest volume day, this skews the figures. He also wanted to know why the branch is closed at lunchtime, as this turns away patrons. The quality of life is a function of the government, especially in a poor community. The lease is a dollar a year; he wants to know where the costs are coming from.

John Penny – City Commissioner of Holly Hill – pointed out that there were 4 or 5 libraries lower on the scale than Holly Hill. He recommends reducing larger libraries and increasing the millage rate. He also would charge user fees for services. He would like to know the cost per user, to deliver the user services. He feels that the Delton Library is problematic with staff being transferred to it and that children need the library.

Leith Lego – Represents Holly Hill– DSC student – is an accounting student and he doesn't understand the spreadsheets. He feels that closing libraries is a drastic measure when it is only going to save \$600,000.00 in the big picture. He would rather close for a few hours at the other branches before eliminating libraries all together.

Betty Cane – Represents Holly Hill and S. Cornelia Young – feels that children need the libraries to be able to learn to read. She stated that not everyone has a car and that other factors need to be looked at.

Tom McGurn – Daytona Beach – feels that it is too dangerous to send children out on bikes alone. There is also a lack of communication between Daytona Beach and Volusia County in regards to the upkeep on the S. Cornelia Young building. He does not understand how it can cost \$1800.00 a month to keep Holly Hill running.

Dave Byron, Community Services Director, stated that these are complicated and difficult decisions. He appreciates all of the comments that were made and announced that the presentation is online. This is a system wide budget, with many costs.

Dave Byron, Community Services Director, addressed the Deltona Regional Library. The building was for extreme public safety. The County saved for multiple years to build it, so that it could meet the needs of the single largest population center in Volusia County. When the economy took a turn, it was too late to turn back and the money had already been saved. Taxes were not raised in order to accomplish this.

Sue Lombardi, Chair, concluded the Public Participation section of the meeting. Sue announced that no public participation would be entertained after this point.

Board Discussion:

Lucinda Colee, Library Director, recommended that the Board look at the proposal line by line and not as a whole package.

Sue Lombardi, Chair, asked for a consensus from the Board regarding item #1 – Closing the S. Cornelia Young Library.

All board members recommended the closing of the S. Cornelia Young Library.

Donald Needham, at- Large, moved that the S. Cornelia Young library be closed.

Robert Clinton, District III, Seconded the motion.

Roll call was vote unanimous.

Item Number 2 – Closing the Holly Hill Library.

Donald Needham, At-Large – recommended closing Holly Hill – however, he met with the mayor to suggest that they get together and make a presentation to Council concerning the fate of the library.

Chris Hartley, District IV – recommended closing Holly Hill– it is a luxury rather than a necessity and he votes with regret.

Robert Clinton, District III – recommends keeping Holly Hill open – he feels that staff can work with city to come up with the funds.

Neil Harrington, District II – recommends keeping Holly Hill open.
Sue Lombardi, Chair – recommends keeping Holly Hill open because the mayor came forward to work with the County.

Neil Harrington, District II moves to keep HHL open.
Robert Clinton, District III seconded the motion.
Roll call vote – Donald Needham and Christ Hartley vote no.
Robert Clinton, Sue Lombardi, and Neil Harrington vote yes.

Item #3 – Closing the Bookmobile
Chris Hartley moved to close the Bookmobile.
Donald Needham seconded the motion.

The roll call vote was unanimous in favor of closing the Bookmobile.

Item #4 – Reducing the hours at Dickerson Memorial Library
Donald Needham moved to reduce hours.
Chris Hartley seconded the motion.

The roll call vote was unanimous to reduce the hours at the Dickerson Memorial Library.

Neil Harrington, District II, questioned why the library was remodeled 7 years ago.

Lucinda Colee, Library Director, answered that the library was never a high use facility, but a neighborhood branch.

Neil Harrington replied that it is a catch 22 situation and that the next neighborhood libraries should be in shopping malls so less money is invested into the buildings.

Dave Byron, Community Services Director, stated that the property appraisal tax base has dropped over 30 percent in two years. Due to this we cannot sustain the level of service that has been provided in years past.

Lucinda Colee, Library Director, stated that it is the only true neighborhood library that is a safe place for children.

Robert Clinton, District III, questioned why hours were not reduced across the week.

Item #5 – Reducing the hours at the Orange City Library.

Donald Needham made the motion to reduce hours.
Neil Harrington seconded the motion.

The roll call vote passed however was not unanimous. Sue Lombardi, Chair, voted against reducing the hours at the Orange City Library.

Sue Lombardi, Chair, asked if there were other possible ideas that had been presented to the board. She also asked if there were any other recommendations that they would like made.

Chris Hartley, District IV, would like to look at closing hours at all of the branches. He would like to take ten hours from the Regionals.

Donald Needham, At-Large, also wanted to close hours at all of the branches. The same situation is going to exist for next year, so he would like to look at cutting now to deal with next year's budget.

Sue Lombardi, Chair, wanted to know when these recommended cuts were going to be implemented.

Dave Byron, Community Services Director, answered that they would be effective immediately.

Robert Clinton, District III, wants to cut down hours and stagger them.

Neil Harrington, District II, feels that this is a nationwide problem with libraries. He looked at ALA.org to see how other counties are dealing with the economic times. His ideas were:

To have shorter hours at all branches and be closed on Sundays

Cut the materials budget

Cut the bookmobile

Cut the webmaster

Outsource IT

Outsource processing

Have the Friends of the Library do major fundraising

Privatize the library system

Close branches

Cut salaries

Raise the non-resident card rate

Launch a save the library program to raise money

Question the cost of providing DVDs

Next Meeting/Future Agenda Items:

The next meeting will be on January 8th, 2010 at the Dickerson Memorial Library starting at 2:00pm.

Adjournment:

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 4:23pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chelsea Harrison