

*The Mission of Lake Agassiz Regional Library
is to share resources
in order to provide access to quality library services
that meet lifelong learning needs,
and enrich the lives of those we serve.*

**LARL BOARD OF TRUSTEES
FULL BOARD MEETING
MINUTES**

A meeting of the Lake Agassiz Regional Library Board of Directors was held on Saturday, March 17, 2001 at the Moorhead Branch. President Bursik called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Board Members Present: Bursik, Conzemius, Dale, DuBord, Eid, Iverson, Jacobson, Melby, R. Olson, Perry, Rooney, Rowell, Simmons, Sprague, Waller, Welte, Winter.

Board Members Absent: Newland, Hartness, Kolke, Melby, W. Olson

Others Present: Fredette, Fredine, Slicer, Beckerman, Mommens

APPROVAL OF MINUTES/AGENDA

Bursik asked if LARL had a policy covering the Children's Internet Protection Act mentioned in the minutes. Fredette explained that the current LARL Internet Use Policy does not cover this issue. The State Library (LDS) does not recommend that libraries rush to put a policy in place. LDS indicated that we may have 1 year to put a policy in place due to the fact that the FCC needs to write rules related to the legislation and several lawsuits have been filed regarding this legislation.

(DuBord/Conzemius) moved to approve the Minutes of the January 20, 2001 Full Board meeting as presented. MCU.

WELCOME TO NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Bursik introduced new Board Member from the City of Moorhead, Linda Swanson.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Slicer reported on the expenditures and revenues through February 28, 2001. We are slightly high on revenue received. This is because revenue from the signatories has been

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received and those payments are made on a quarterly basis. As of February we are doing very well (16.67%). Personnel expenditures are a little low due to position vacancies. All of the expense categories are on target. The Special Programs are on target and we are expecting \$15,000 from the Dakota Medical Foundation Grant in May.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Library Advocacy

Fredette introduced Kay Beckerman, LARL's Public Information /Development Officer. Beckerman gave a presentation on Library Advocacy in order to prepare Board Members for Legislative Day and other opportunities to support LARL. Beckerman defined the term advocate – one who pleads in favor of a cause – and provided the following suggestions:

- be informed about current issues facing libraries today, i.e., the need for adequate funding, filtering the Internet, and censorship;
- write letters to your senators and representative if you cannot see them in person, keeping in mind that handwritten letters are best;
- tell your story, personal stories are what can capture interest and support, tell how the library has changed your life;
- speak up about what your library needs, contact your library staff and they will tell you exactly what they need you to support;
- be positive, concise, clear, informed, and polite.

Bursik commented that being a library advocate is one of the most important responsibilities of the Board of Trustees. The more we tell legislators about library needs, the more they will be able to help us when they are making funding commitments. Bursik urged every one to take on the library advocate role or strengthen the efforts already implemented. He stressed that if members were unable to attend Library Legislative Day they should write a letter using the information in the packet they will receive from LARL staff.

Bursik introduced Anne Fredine, Moorhead Library Manager, and welcomed her to the meeting.

Library Legislative Day

Fredette explained the contents of the advocacy packet and stated that the most urgent need to be expressed to legislators would be Regional Library Telecommunications Aid (RLTA). Receiving the aid is part of a grant application process that the legislators are

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familiar with, and our position should be that instead of having to apply for the aid each year we should have it funded on an ongoing basis. The second issue is an increase in basic system support from the State. The 12 regional public library systems have not received a significant increase in State Aid since 1991.

Strategic Planning Process

Fredette explained that the Strategic Plan was sent to staff members in February. The Coordinating Committee will meet in March to incorporate staff feedback into the plan. Review of the draft plan included in the board packets will give Board Members a good sense of those needs and goals identified by LARL staff.

Annual Report to LDS

The LDS Annual Report is filed electronically with an April 1 deadline. Highlights in the report will show a decrease in registered borrowers because we weeded patron library cards that have not been used in the past 3 years. The report numbers are based on cards actually being used. Library visitor numbers are higher; reference use numbers are higher; interlibrary loans have increased, both loaned and received. We have also noticed an increase in intra-library loans. Juvenile use is down, but adult library use rates are higher. Total weekly library hours vary because of the reduced mobile library hours. We are currently staffed at 1.67 fewer FTE's than last year. Fredette also noted that Federal grant money was 50% less than the previous year. Operating income is broken down by government entities, local capital comes from the cities that own the library buildings. A jump in expenditures for audio-visual was noted. Fredette explained that the report is a brief synopsis, gathered from the automation system, and from each of the signatories. Fredette requested approval from the Board to file the report with LDS. The report will appear on the LDS web page for public viewing.

(Rowell/Conzemius) moved to accept the 2000 LARL Annual Report to Library Development and Services as presented by the LARL Director. MCU

2000 AUDIT REPORT

Bursik introduced Barb Aasen from Eide Bailly. Aasen has conducted the LARL audit for the past 4 years. Aasen reviewed the audit document and the financial statements with the Board and entertained questions regarding the following:

Bursik questioned the prudence of having such a large cash balance with the response that it was needed to cover general spending. There were several questions regarding the Fargo-Moorhead Area Foundation money. This money was placed in the foundation in 1992, but we cannot show it as ours because the Foundation board has to approve the money being spent prior to its use. It is called an endowment fund but it is not a Lake

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Agassiz Regional Library Endowment Fund. Aasen suggested that we could designate money for our fund, but we couldn't transfer what is in the Fargo-Moorhead Area Foundation fund.

Fredette had questions about fixed asset value of equipment owned by LARL. The equipment from general fund keeps its purchase value from purchase date. No adjustments are made for depreciation, which makes it appear that LARL owns more valuable equipment than it actually does. Aasen explained that new standards will be out that will adjust the value of the equipment, which will incorporate depreciation values. At the present time equipment can be removed from the inventory, but while they are on the inventory they keep the purchase value. When the new regulations are approved they will be implemented in the LARL report.

Rowell excused himself from the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

Dale inquired about what we do with interest gained that we haven't spent and questioned whether we spend the interest next year? He would rather spend what we actually earn instead of putting it in reinvestment. Aasen indicated that the designated fund balance (page 9 of the report) could include unrecognized gain on investments instead of putting it in a reserve balance.

Iverson asked where the money comes from that we invest? Seven years ago a six-year bond ladder was set up and is being managed by Dan Rauscher, an investment broker. Wells Fargo has the trust fund we use for our reserve operating funds.

Waller had questions about the 2000 actual revenues being \$180,000 more than 2000 actual expenditures and wondered where that appeared in the report. Aasen reported that \$130,000 went to the unreserved designated fund (page 3) and \$50,000 was approved by the Board for spending in January.

Bursik complimented Eide Bailly on the content and presentation of report and thanked Aasen for her presentation.

REPORT OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

Fredette reported that the Finance Committee met last Saturday, March 10, 2001. Slicer had prepared a spreadsheet for the committee to review on weekly and monthly costs of mobile library operation. The committee discussed options to reduce services in the 4 counties who were experiencing shortfalls. The meeting was in preparation for meeting with County Commissioners from the 4 counties after the Board orientation that afternoon. The options finalized were:

Come up with the needed funding
Combination of reducing or discontinuing mobile library service

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Reducing branch library open hours
Closing branches in some locations

The end result is that Commissioners were going back to their counties to discuss options and then they will let us know what their county recommends. We are waiting for a response from all four counties and then the Finance Committee will calculate the effect of those recommendations on the remainder of the LARL branches and the mobile library.

The LARL Regional Office will mail a thank-you letter to signatories next week. A letter will also be sent to the 4 county signatories requesting a quick response on the county recommendations. The recommended changes, once approved, will not be implemented until the fall.

REPORT OF JOINT BOARD/STAFF AUTOMATION TECHNOLOGY AD HOC COMMITTEE

Dale reported that the committee met on Thursday, March 15, 2001. We have to finalize the Technology Plan for the final application as quickly as possible. The Plan consists of 14 sections such as equipment assessment, training, policies, and funding. Once the plan is in place, we will use it to see how our technology will assist us in delivering better services to our patrons. It is a 3-year plan divided into three steps, the first is strategic planning, second is funding and the third is to see how the technology discussed will help us. We are not at the point of creating a master technology plan, but in 3 years we will have all the information we need to do so. Solie and a staff committee are putting together the plan right now and the Board should expect to approve it at the May Board meeting.

LOCAL LIBRARY BOARD REPORTS

Clay County - None

Becker County (Winter) - The Becker County Board met last week and discussed changing mobile library stops. The County Board will continue to work on this issue and keep the LARL Board informed.

City of Breckenridge (Conzemius) - The adult reading program, *Hot Reads for Cold Nights*, went very well this year. The Board did not meet this past month but will meet Wednesday, March 21, 2001.

City of Crookston (Sprague) - The Crookston Board is still looking for a librarian. They did interview one applicant who subsequently withdrew her application. The Friends of the Library hired interior decorators to assist with redecorating the library. Some

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members of the local board were not happy with the anticipated results. Fredette reported that she, Fredine, and Solie had met with the Crookston staff and offered their help if needed on the redecorating project. There has been some preliminary exploration of partnership between the local schools and the public library in the Crookston area.

City of Detroit Lakes (Welte) - Welte phoned his report to Bursik. The adult reading program “Let It Snow” was very successful, reporting that 100 people have read 100 books during the course of the program. This is a record for Detroit Lakes Library. The main doors to the library have been updated with new metal frames making them easier to open. The story time program is very active with 100 kids attending this last week’s story time. The library just received a grant from a source that permits paying a storyteller for the library.

City of Mahanomen (Rooney) - The Mahanomen Library Club purchased a television and VCR for the library. They also met Thursday, March 14, 2001 with Joyce Pettinger, and donated \$250 to the library for children’s books. At the end of March they will have a science night, in April they will have 3 travelogues and will also include recognition of LARL’s 40th anniversary in their activities.

Mahanomen County (Eid) – The Mahanomen County Commissioners will not be able to get extra funding due to major cost overruns in the county. The Commissioners will probably have to reduce the mobile library and would like to see school stops cut only as a last resort.

City of Moorhead (Iverson) - The library hired 2 new people and added 2 new members on the local board. The library received a defibrillator from the Red Cross to have on hand for emergency use. The automatic checkout works. There are also changes in the shelving in the browsing area and a remodeled kitchen and meeting room. There are also 2 discussion groups meeting at the library on the equality commission.

Polk County (Ellingson) - Ellingson visited the McIntosh branch library and will visit the other libraries later in the month. Jacobson reported no additional funding would be forthcoming from Polk County. The general consensus was to look at the least painful cut, which was deemed to be the mobile library. They will look at the proposals submitted via the Finance Committee when they meet next, but Jacobson was 95% sure they will choose the mobile library cuts.

Conzemius questioned Jacobson and Eid on whether they felt that the requested money for this year would be put back into the library budget for next year and also asked how the mobile library cuts would affect the system as a whole. Fredette explained that to cut mobile library services in Polk County to meet their shortfall would ensure that it be totally discontinued in that county. Ellingson asked if funds from the budget overrun discussed earlier in the meeting could be used for those counties who didn’t meet their budget request. Conzemius and Bursik had concerns about how it would effect future budgets, if all shortfalls were paid for from the overrun fund. Fredette said that it was up to the Board to allow funds to be spent in that fashion. Fredette also expressed some concern that the request to spend overrun funds might become a yearly request and would hinder the opportunity to grow the System as a whole and/or not allow us to maintain at

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our current level of service. Sprague expressed concern that we shouldn't pay down reserves but keep them for a "rainy day". Winter suggested that the shortfall counties use promotional ideas to get the funding needed. DuBord expressed the concern that this would become a big issue for the whole Board. He thinks that the difficulty with the 4 counties was just a premonition of what is to come. Other smaller counties will have problems in the future and LARL needs to keep a big picture perspective for the future. Sprague made the point that Polk is a large area, population small, and might have to consider changes or closures in their further operations plan.

Wilkin County – None

Northern Lights Library Network (NLLN) (Ellingson) – Ellingson participated in a conference call on Monday, March 20, 2001. He was very impressed with the interview process used by Northern Lights. He also feels the leadership of the board is really keeping members informed on current issues. Swanson reported that the office, currently located at the technical college in Alexandria, will be moving by May 1, 2001. She also invited Board Members to their annual meeting on April 21 at the Northwest Technical College in Detroit Lakes. The guest speaker will be Sheldon Green. The meeting will be held at 10:00 followed by a luncheon.

PRESIDENTS REPORT

None

NEW BUSINESS

Fredette announced that the Personnel Committee meeting for next Saturday, March 24 has been cancelled and will be rescheduled. The Regional Office will let members know new meeting date, time and location.

Bursik encouraged Board members to try the Patron Self-Checkout machine at the Moorhead circulation desk.

OTHER

None

Meeting adjourned at 11:58 a.m.