

TIMBERLAND REGIONAL LIBRARY
Board of Trustees Special Meeting
1006 Sleater-Kinney S.E.
Lacey, Washington

August 2, 1973

BOARD OF TRUSTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dr. Wm. H. Lawrence, Vice-Chairman - Lewis County
Ruth Schmidt, Trustee - Thurston County
Elmer Keiski, Trustee - Thurston County
Raeburn Hagen, Trustee - Grays Harbor County
Robert Baker, Trustee - Lewis County
Don Cox, Trustee - Pacific County

BOARD OF TRUSTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

Rita McArthur, Chairman - Mason County

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Louise E. Morrison, Director
Virginia Barton, Assistant Director, Western Area
Joy Ayres, Business Manager
Mike Sheafe, Community Relations Officer
Stella Steuby, Public Information Assistant
Yvonne Seidler, Reference Librarian
Irene Robbins, Central Requests Librarian
Mary Russell, Lacey Librarian
Elizabeth Gatlin, North Mason Community Librarian
Carol Nelson, Secretary Pro Tem

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mrs. Curtis Bell, Friends of the North Mason Library

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 p.m. by Vice-Chairman, Dr. William H. Lawrence.

Dr. Lawrence stated that this special meeting had been called for the purpose of considering library service in Mason County. He said that it was his feeling that service to the entire county should be discussed rather than any particular segment of it. He noted that there were two proposals before the board: the first was contained in a memorandum addressed to the Timberland board from Dr. L. Frank Maranville, Chairman of the Shelton Library Board, dated July 27, 1973 as follows:

"The Shelton Library Board proposes to request of the City Commission of the City of Shelton that it place before the voters of the city at the next general election, 6 November 1973, the proposition of whether or not to construct a public library building.

Conditioned upon voter approval and construction of the building, the Shelton Board offers to lease to Timberland Regional Library not more

than 25% of the space in said building at an annual rental of \$4.00 per square foot with the details of such lease to be developed to the satisfaction of the parties.

Dated this 27th day of July, 1973."

Dr. Lawrence said that the second proposition to be considered was an offer to Timberland to lease 2,000 square feet from Endicott Realty in a building to be constructed within the next several months at Kneeland Center, just north of the Shelton city limit.

He said that a third consideration was the board's long-standing commitment to the Friends of the North Mason Library in developing an improved physical unit in the Belfair area. He asked that the board come to some position in order that the chairman could then respond specifically to everyone involved.

Dr. Lawrence then summarized a communication from Mrs. Irene Davis regarding the progress of the North Mason Friends. Mrs. Davis said that the Friends were exploring the possibility of finding a builder who would be willing to construct a library on the land which the Friends have contracted to purchase. Problems she listed included zoning, lack of clear-title land ownership and the scarcity of builders and the group asked for practical suggestions on how to proceed.

Dr. Lawrence asked the director to state the staff's position on Mason County service and to summarize the possibilities.

Mrs. Morrison stated that Timberland has had more requests for bookmobile service in the area surrounding Shelton in the past few months than there had been in a number of years. She said that, as board members were aware, the Shelton Public Library had served county residents free of charge until about the first of the year. At that time the Shelton City Commission and the library board had felt that a non-resident fee must be imposed on county residents. An annual fee of \$7.00 (which was very close to Timberland's \$7.50 non-resident fee) was decided upon. She said that this had generated tremendous interest in additional bookmobile service in that area of the county. She said that new stops had been added but that there is not enough bookmobile time to be reallocated.

The director said that use of the library in Belfair has been growing steadily and over 12,000 books a year are borrowed there now. She said that in her opinion the board must feel a commitment not just in the Belfair area or the Shelton area, but to the county as a whole. She said that the staff feels that, if it is possible to program both outlets from a budgetary point of view, it would be wise for Timberland to do both. She said that she felt that it would be a matter of timing. She said that there is an excellent possibility of some federal L.S.C.A. funds in the offing for Washington State and that she hoped the board would consider grant requests as a possible means of assistance. She pointed out that less outlay will be required for building the book collection in Belfair because the library there already has a sizeable collection, and the library is open twenty hours a week and would require less new staff time. She felt that shelving and equipment would be the greatest expense.

The director said that a new outlet in the Shelton area would require outlay for books, staff and equipment as well as rental fees.

Dr. Lawrence noted that this requirement would be the same for entering into any kind of a contractual agreement in leasing space from the Shelton board. He asked the director if the present Shelton library building would be adequate to enter into any kind of a leasing arrangement with Shelton.

Mrs. Morrison said that she felt it would be impossible in the present building unless Shelton wished to contract on a full-service contract on the same basis that other cities have.

Dr. Lawrence said that it appeared that the proposition from Shelton would depend on whether or not the new library would be approved by the voters. He asked if the staff felt that the south Mason County problem was one which needed immediate attention.

The director replied that the staff felt that both the Shelton area and the Belfair area have need of attention as immediately as the board is able to do so. She said that, dependent upon timing, if the North Mason Friends are ready to go, an adequate building in that area would release bookmobile time to devote in the Shelton area. She said that a proper building in the Belfair area would allow better hours, programs and activities than were possible at present. On the other hand, it would be possible to improve service in the Shelton area with a building which could house services which a bookmobile cannot.

Dr. Lawrence asked if the staff had specific recommendations concerning the Shelton Library Board offer.

The director said that the staff felt the board would be well advised to thank the Shelton board and to reject the proposal. She said that in any case the building does not exist yet and Timberland's priorities are more immediate than the building would allow, when and if it were built.

Mr. Baker said that it looked improbable that there would be any space there before 1975 since it would be a November vote. He emphasized again the immediacy of the need to improve Timberland's service in the Shelton area. Board members agreed with his summation.

Mrs. Morrison pointed out that the new high school, the new Mason General Hospital and the new building housing the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services are all on the top of the hill north of Shelton. She said that the 101 freeway plan would by-pass Shelton on the west side and that there would be an off-ramp near the proposed Kneeland Center building. It would appear to be an ideal site for providing easy access to county borrowers. She said that Hoodsport and Union people should orient readily to that location as well as the growing area in the valley and around the lakes.

Dr. Lawrence directed the board's attention to the second proposal - that of Endicott Realty to lease 2,000 square feet to Timberland at \$3.60 per square foot per annum including air conditioning, heat and utilities. He asked for the staff recommendation.

Mrs. Morrison said that the staff felt it should be tied to the North Mason time frame. She said that it would appear that it would be the fall of 1974 before the North Mason project could reach fruition, and that the board would be reasonably safe if it wished to proceed in the south Mason County area.

Dr. Lawrence said that he understood the staff to say that their recommendation was that the board favorably consider the Endicott proposition as a solution to an immediate problem in south Mason County but that in no way should this lessen the board's commitment to a new building in the Belfair area. He suggested that the board suspend other consideration at that time in order to hear from the North Mason Friends.

Mrs. Morrison introduced Mrs. Curtis Bell and Mrs. Elizabeth Gatlin.

Mrs. Bell commented on the growth of the North Mason area in the five years that she had lived there. She said that she had watched the use of the Timberland North Mason Library increase and the improvement in service. She said that she would be surprised if anyone got a new book before she did and praised the mail service which Timberland gives.

Dr. Lawrence asked if she would consider it a compatible course of action if the board did decide to proceed in the south Mason County area and still honor the board's obligation in the Belfair area. He asked if this would distress her.

Mrs. Bell replied that she could not speak for the Friends but that she did not see that it would hinder their efforts in Belfair. She said that in her opinion they are getting good library service now in that area and would be pleased to have the southern part of the county get better service too. She said that they had been afraid that they would lose Timberland's service.

Dr. Lawrence thanked Mrs. Bell for her candid comments and again asked if she would feel comfortable if the board elected to proceed at Kneeland Center, with assurance of a continuing commitment to North Mason.

Mrs. Bell replied that she felt it would be no problem.

Mr. Keiski asked Mrs. Bell what she had meant in regard to their fear of losing Timberland's service. He asked if they were afraid that Timberland would put all its resources in Shelton.

Mrs. Bell confirmed that this was what the North Mason Friends had feared, but that she was reassured with the possibility of space at Kneeland Center.

Mr. Baker asked the director for possible changes in service patterns in Mason County if the district were to rent the space in Kneeland Center. He asked if this could serve as a base for bookmobile service in Mason County. He was concerned, he said, with the economics of the distance to the Olympia Library, which the staff had discussed with the board on previous occasions.

Some time was spent in discussing various possibilities, concentrations of population, staffing, space utilization and the effect on service of various alternatives.

Mr. Baker asked what the population is in the area immediately surrounding Shelton.

The director replied that the county as a whole has a population of about 21,000 or 22,000 people and that about 6,700 live in Shelton. She said that she would estimate, on the basis of population maps, that as many people live in the county around the city of Shelton as there are in the city itself.

Mr. Baker said that if these 6,000 people are there and many of them feel the need of improved library service, then Timberland must move to satisfy that need.

MR. COX MOVED THAT TIMBERLAND REJECT THE OFFER OF THE SHELTON LIBRARY BOARD AND TACTFULLY INFORM THEM. SECONDED BY MR. BAKER AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY ON AN INDIVIDUAL POLL OF THE BOARD.

Dr. Lawrence requested that the director prepare a letter for his signature informing the chairman of the Shelton Board of the board's action and stating the board's reason.

Mr. Baker said that no written offer had been received from Mr. Endicott on which the board could take firm action, and that, therefore, the board must endorse the principle and proceed to a conclusion. He moved THAT THE BOARD AUTHORIZE THE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE WITH MR. ENDICOTT FOR THE LEASING OF SPACE IN THEIR PROPOSED CENTER WITH DETAILS TO BE ARRANGED AND A FIRM OFFER TO BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING TO US CONFIRMING HIS VERBAL OFFER TO US. SECONDED BY MRS. HAGEN AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY ON AN INDIVIDUAL POLL OF THE BOARD.

Dr. Lawrence said that the chair might ask whether the board should put this burden on the director or whether he should appoint a study group of the board.

Mr. Keiski said that he had no objection to assigning the director this responsibility, but that due to the sensitivity of patron needs over there, that she ought to have a committee of the board to fall back on for reference. Dr. Lawrence appointed Elmer Keiski as Chairman Pro Tem of the board and designated Ruth Schmidt as a committee person to work with Mr. Keiski and the director in negotiating the Endicott-Kneeland contract.

Dr. Lawrence said that on the third proposition, the Belfair library unit, the chair was very much in favor of positive board action in this matter. The board feels that it is morally obligated to carry through with an earlier commitment to establish an improved facility in North Mason County in cooperation with the friends. The chair would entertain a strong motion reaffirming Timberland's position in support of North Mason County.

Mrs. SCHMIDT MOVED THAT THIS BOARD GO ON RECORD AS STANDING BY ITS PREVIOUS COMMITMENT TO THE FRIENDS OF NORTH MASON TO HELP THEM ESTABLISH AN ADEQUATE LIBRARY IN THEIR AREA. SECONDED BY MR. KEISKI AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Dr. Lawrence told Mrs. Bell that if she hears or senses any feeling in her community that the board has in any way abandoned its efforts to put in a unit up there, that the board would appreciate it if she would convey this to the board immediately so that steps could be taken to reassure North Mason area people.

There being no further business to come before the board the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.


Secretary


Chairman