

TIMBERLAND REGIONAL LIBRARY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
415 Airdustrial Way S.W., Olympia, WA 98501

September 9, 1985

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M I N U T E S

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jean Haakenson, Chair - Member-at-Large  
Carolyn Dobbs - Member-at-Large  
Doris Fourre - Thurston County  
Alice Harris - Mason County  
Larry Parsons - Lewis County  
Paul Polillo - Pacific County  
Dorothy Voegel - Grays Harbor County

STAFF PRESENT:

Lon R. Dickerson, Library Director  
Mary Ann Shaffer, Assistant Director, Public Services  
Sally Loken, Assistant Director, Central Services  
Michael Crose, Assistant Director, Management Services  
Vicky Campbell, Lacey Librarian  
Claire Christiansen, Olympia Librarian  
Dee DePoe, Community Library Asst. I, South Mason  
Becky Egen, Sr. Central Services Assistant  
Jerrie Ferrier, Community Library Associate, Montesano  
John Keplinger, Central Services Assistant II  
Dianne Loomis, Community Library Asst. II, Yelm  
Mike McNamara, Montesano Librarian  
Olive Nelson, Sr. Community Library Asst., South Mason  
Joyce Nichols, Sr. Community Library Assoc., Tumwater  
Myrna Pedersen, Central Services Assistant II  
Caitlin Robinson, Systems Librarian  
Rivkah Sass, Chehalis Librarian  
Kitty Schiltz, South Mason/North Mason Librarian  
Jay Windisch, Aberdeen Reference Librarian

Liane Bascou, Board Recording Secretary

GUEST PRESENT:

Winnifred L. Olsen, Olympia Library Board

Chair Jean Haakenson called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM  
NO.

1 Approval of Minutes of the August 28, 1985 Meeting

85-46 DORIS FOURRE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 28, 1985  
MEETING; PAUL POLILLO SECONDED THE MOTION.

Several Board members had not had an opportunity to read these  
minutes yet and they took a few minutes to do so.

1 MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

2 Approval of Vouchers

85-47 LARRY PARSONS MOVED THAT THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, MANAGEMENT SERVICES, REVIEW ALL OF THE VOUCHERS PREPARED IN SEPTEMBER AND ARRANGE FOR THE PREPARATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF WARRANTS ON SEPTEMBER 30, 1985, AND THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES REVIEW THESE VOUCHERS AT ITS MEETING IN OCTOBER; ALICE HARRIS SECONDED THE MOTION.

Mrs. Fourre asked what good it will do for the Board to review these vouchers in October if they have already been paid. Mrs. Haakenson said that the Board is giving the Library Director and Assistant Director, Management Services, the authority to pay these vouchers after their review. Mr. Dickerson added that if there is anything which is not routine, it will be held for the Board's approval at its October meeting.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

3 Reports

A. Library Director - Lon R. Dickerson

Mr. Dickerson reported that as part of the preparation for tonight's meeting, staff prepared several reports regarding the 1986 preliminary budget which were sent out this weekend to approximately 350 people including mayors, members of city councils, members of county commissions, county administrators, local library boards and local Friends groups officials. He said that the senior administrative staff met with all TRL staff this morning and reviewed with them the projected levels of service for 1986.

B. Assistant Director, Public Services - Mary Ann Shaffer

Ms. Shaffer had no report.

C. Assistant Director, Central Services - Sally Loken

Ms. Loken had no report.

D. Assistant Director, Management Services - Michael Crose

Mr. Crose had no report.

4 Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

5 Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

6 New Business

Before acting on new business, Mrs. Haakenson asked for comments from the audience.

6 Mike McNamara, Montesano librarian, said that he would like to report on the feelings of staff members, at least the staff members in the building he supervises and those that he has talked with briefly since the meetings with staff this morning. He said that staff is quite devastated by the cuts. As to the way this needs to be done, Mr. McNamara said he is not privy to that information, but he thinks the Board needs to know how staff feels about it. He said this is a great change for Timberland and it will mean a great change in staffs' jobs. For instance, he said there will be three staff positions eliminated at the Montesano library which means that the service in Montesano will be affected. He said that he thinks all staff has had some input in this procedure, but he personally would not feel good being at this meeting and not telling the Board how he feels.

Mrs. Harris asked Mr. McNamara if the feelings stem from seeing the change in the funding or if the feelings stem from the results of the funding and Mr. McNamara responded strictly from the results. He said that staff is sorry to have lost the funding, too, obviously, and it is probably the way things have to be, but he said he will have a difficult time explaining this to the people in Montesano. Mrs. Harris asked Mr. McNamara if he means he will have a difficult time explaining what has happened to the funding. He responded that he will have a difficult time explaining what has happened to the staff.

Mr. Parsons commented that he has worked in two schools that have gone through a reduction in force and he has been directly affected by it. He said when you are working with friends, it is devastating and difficult to tell them that they will not have a job. Mr. Parsons assured everyone that Board members are very aware of that.

Mrs. Harris personally thanked Mr. McNamara for what he has said. She said she speaks for herself, but expects everyone feels the same, and she appreciates what Mr. McNamara has said. She said it is a very difficult time for everyone. Mrs. Harris said they must not lose sight of why this is happening and it is not anything that anyone wishes to happen.

Mr. McNamara said that it will be quite difficult to run the Montesano library with only two staff members. In fact, he said he has difficulty seeing his own position still being there as a professional when there will just be two people in the building. Mrs. Foure asked Mr. McNamara if he thinks the people in Montesano will receive poorer library service. Mr. McNamara said they will receive less library service, and in his opinion if there will just be two people working there, he wonders why there should be a professional. He said he cannot see that reference is going to be done as well as it has been and in his opinion children will also suffer. He said he knows these are difficult choices and he does not know what his point is in bringing them up other than to let the Board know how staff really feels about it.

Rivkah Sass, Chehalis librarian, said that she appreciates what a difficult decision this has been and she appreciates the fairness in

6 the cuts. She said she applauds them despite the fact she shares Mr. McNamara's concerns that the people in these communities are used to a certain quality of service they will no longer be able to expect. She said she understands the Chehalis Library will have to refer people to the Centralia Library. She explained this can cause problems because she has already heard comments from Chehalis residents who do not want to have to go to the Centralia Library. She thinks these are the kinds of comments that will be heard in the medium sized buildings that have absorbed so many of these cuts.

Mrs. Fourre asked if staff thinks people will avail themselves of the toll-free number for reference. Mrs. Sass said that Chehalis residents have the advantage of being a few miles from a reference center, and she thinks people who live in the rural part of the county who have not been encouraged to use the toll-free number may feel it is more accessible to them whereas they did not always feel that way before.

Mrs. Sass said she is still a little shell-shocked after the meeting this morning. She said it came as a big shock. She said staff goes into a situation expecting major cuts, but when the cuts are major, she thinks staff is going through the feeling that the sky is falling and they have to dig through it and see what is left and take it from there. Mrs. Sass said that "devastated" is a good word because staff does not really know yet who is still left. She said that she knows that her position is "safe" and she has another full-time person in her building, but she won't know for awhile who that will be. Mrs. Sass said the good news is that the cards have been laid on the table and everyone knows what is going on.

Mrs. Haakenson said that they are beyond the talking stage and at the stage where it is beginning to affect people and that is the hardest part.

Myrna Pedersen, Service Center employee, said that it seems that Timberland is eliminating most of the range 3 positions and several staff who have been working for Timberland since 1977 are left out in the cold because of the geographic area that Timberland covers.

Mrs. Haakenson said that one of the main things the Board has tried to do through recommendations and in coming up with a program is to focus on reorganization rather than the RIF situation of two years ago when something had to be implemented quickly to solve a problem without looking at the whole. She said that she thinks with the reorganization there is a lot of good and a lot of bad to the extent that it is affecting people.

Ms. Shaffer added that she thinks it was staff's honest attempt to look at the Classification Plan which they knew was out of date and to analyze each position. They saw very few instances where there was actually a basic entry level position. She said that is why those range 3 positions in the public service outlets were upped to range 5 positions. In fact, Ms. Shaffer said everyone has an opportunity to apply for the open positions. To her, she said it erased a lot of problems TRL had in the Classification Plan and the problems that developed through TRL's growth. Mrs. Pedersen said

- 6 that range 3 staff who have been working for TRL since 1977 do not really have anywhere to go. Dianne Loomis, Yelm staff member, added that there are very few open positions in the district.

Jerrie Ferrier, Montesano staff, said she would like to know the rationale for taking away the range 10 positions. Ms. Shaffer said that it is obvious that TRL cannot afford to have the librarians out of the buildings as much as they have before. Therefore, she said there is no need for range 10 positions who are in charge of the building when the building supervisor is not there. She said other range 10 positions are in children's services where the responsibilities outside of the building have been reduced, and in outreach and bookmobile service which will be eliminated. Ms. Ferrier said that in her position as a range 10, she mostly handles reference work. Mrs. Haakenson said it is her understanding that reference will be concentrated in the three reference centers, and reference positions will not be needed as heavily in smaller and medium sized libraries. Mr. McNamara said that Ms. Ferrier has really stimulated a lot of reference inquiries in Montesano and patrons know she is good at what she does, but he understands that this is administration's decision to make.

Olive Nelson, South Mason staff, said that it appears to her that a lot of the range 7 positions were reduced in hours. Since these positions are still in place, but at lesser hours, these staff members do not have the option to bump a staff member who has been working for TRL less time. Therefore, she said these staff have to be happy with part-time. Ms. Shaffer said that this is a major flaw in the RIF policy and there is nothing that can be done to fix it at this time. She said part of this is in the RIF policy and part of it is in the union contract. Ms. Shaffer said that since building supervisors will not be out of the buildings as much, it has eliminated the need for as many hours to cover reference and circulation. She said it is difficult to ask staff who have been used to working a 40-hour week to accept a part-time position and in some cases without benefits, plus they will have no option to bump. Ms. Shaffer said this is a flaw which will need to be addressed. Mrs. Haakenson agreed that this is something that needs to be looked into. Mrs. Haakenson said she is not sure if this is something the Board can do anything about now or if it has to go through union negotiations.

Myrna Pedersen said that what bothers her the most is that so many of the staff in the lower ranges, 3 and 5, that have worked for Timberland for many years and some of them are getting close to retirement, are getting the rug pulled out from under them. She said she thinks she could accept this easier if she knew these people who have put so many years into Timberland were not affected, but it doesn't work that way. She said it is not that staff can't do these jobs, but because Timberland is such a large geographical area, staff do not wish to apply for jobs where they have to travel such a great distance.

Mrs. Voegel commented that these were very difficult decisions. She said that the Board cannot deal with personalities but they had to look at the total program and refocus on what is the library's task

6 and how it can best be done. She said it is devastating to Board members, too. She said the Board members are all library users and they know a lot of library employees. In fact, there are a couple she knows she is upset about, but this is true in any cutback situation like this.

Mrs. Voegel said that they have to look at the total program, what is the library's mission, how it can best be done and with how many employees. She said that through the years she has been on the Board, TRL has received what she calls fan letters from people who have come from other areas to the Timberland area and who say they are so impressed with the library service. Mrs. Voegel said TRL is not able to afford this service anymore. She said she agrees with Mike McNamara that some communities will not understand these cutbacks, but she thinks a lot of them will. For the past week, she said she has talked to two mayors in Grays Harbor County and they understand and have been expecting cuts to come. In the past few months, she has talked to another mayor in Grays Harbor County and a County Commissioner and they have given the same response and said they are having to cut, too. Mrs. Voegel said she hopes that the patrons will not be terribly affected. If hours will be shorter there will have to be some changes, but the Board is hoping that TRL will still be able to offer services that are on par with other library systems. She said she worked on the budget committee and all a person has to do is work with those numbers and realize that these cuts are necessary. She said it is fun to expand and add and TRL has done that, but now TRL is pulling back.

Becky Egen, Service Center employee, said that this is a horrendous thing for anyone to experience. She said very little is contained in the union contract regarding RIF and it is mainly a Personnel Policy issue. She said she would like to ask the Board to review its clause regarding seniority and she would like an interpretation of this clause. Mrs. Egen said if the Board is going to look at the RIF policy in general and pick out any inequities, it may as well review the seniority clause because there are two sides to the issue. She said some staff interpret it one way and some interpret it another way and she feels it is important to have a clear understanding of this issue. Mrs. Egen said the way it is written in the Personnel Policy and the contract can be interpreted in two ways. She said either a staff member is senior if hired at a date earlier than another staff member or a staff member is more senior if that staff member puts in more continuous service in Timberland.

Mrs. Egen said her point is that continuous service is a very important factor. As long as a staff member is on a leave without pay, that staff member will not accrue anything but the staff member will also not lose anything; everything accrued at the time of leaving will still be there when the staff member returns. However, those staff members who are on leave without pay continue to accrue seniority. Mrs. Egen said that the Personnel Policy and contract speak of "continuous employment" and she would like a clearer understanding of what this means.

Mr. Dickerson said that is something that needs to be looked at in negotiations. Historically, he said the library district has ignored

6 the leaves of absence and considered seniority from the date of hire. Ms. Loken said that staff on leave without pay are considered continuous because they have not quit.

A. Adoption of 1986 Preliminary Operating Budget

85-48

DORIS FOURRE MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 85-6 ADOPTING THE 1986 PRELIMINARY OPERATING BUDGET; DOROTHY VOEGE SECONDED THE MOTION.

Mr. Parsons said he would like to point out that in years past, the preliminary operating budget has been based on what TRL needs to provide library services. However, because of the times, this operating budget which the Board is adopting this evening is probably very close to what the library district can expect to receive in revenue. Mrs. Haakenson added that this is the first year that the Board will adopt a preliminary budget which reflects a realistic figure on what anticipated revenues might be. If things change, she said the preliminary budget can be revised. Ms. Dobbs said that since this is a time of pulling in and restructuring, it seemed fair to get the reality out on the table in September rather than December. Mrs. Fourre commented that in the past the Board did not always know what it could expect in timber taxes, but because of the legislature's change in timber taxes, TRL has a better idea of what it can expect. Mrs. Fourre read the resolution as follows:

"WHEREAS, The Timberland Regional Library Board of Trustees wishes to set a preliminary operating budget for 1986; and

"WHEREAS, Assessed valuations are not available at this time and, therefore, a uniform levy rate for the library district cannot be set by the Board; now, therefore, be it

"RESOLVED That the Timberland Regional Library Board of Trustees set the preliminary operating budget for 1986 at \$4,231,137, distributed to:

10 - Administration - \$115,088

21 - Public Service - \$1,090,271

22 - Organization of Materials - \$190,821

40 - Training - \$5,000

50 - Facilities - \$251,874

Debt Service - -0-

Personal Services - \$2,510,833

Transfer to CALS Equipment Replacement Fund - \$22,250

Transfer to Unemployment Compensation Fund - \$30,000

Retirement Cashouts - \$15,000



6A be it further

"RESOLVED That the Timberland Regional Library Board of Trustees adopt a budget to forward to the Commissioners, Assessors, Auditors, and Treasurers of Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, and Thurston Counties as soon as final assessed valuation figures are available and a uniform levy rate for the district can be set by the Board."


MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

B. Establish dates of closures of Cosmopolis, McCleary and North Beach Libraries

Mrs. Haakenson said that it has been recommended that the libraries in Cosmopolis, McCleary and North Beach be closed.

85-49 ALICE HARRIS MOVED THAT THE TIMBERLAND REGIONAL LIBRARIES AT COSMOPOLIS, MCCLEARY AND NORTH BEACH BE CLOSED ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 1985: CAROLYN DOBBS SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

  
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SECRETARY

  
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CHAIR