

TIMBERLAND REGIONAL LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES WORK SESSION
Service Center, 415 Airdustrial Way SW, Olympia, WA 98501

May 10, 2003

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Art Blauvelt, President; Edna Fund; Peggy Meyer; Dick Nichols; Pat Shults; Gene Weaver

BOARD MEMBER EXCUSED: Janelle Williams

STAFF PRESENT: Susan Hanson; Thelma Kruse; Tina Roose; Art Wuerth

President Blauvelt called the work session to order at 9:10 a.m. He called for an Executive Session pursuant to RCW 42.30.110 for the purpose of conducting an exit interview with retiring Director Thelma Kruse. The Executive Session ended at 10:15 a.m.

The work session was called back to order at 10:20 a.m.

Ms. Roose presented a draft of the Capital Facilities Plan. The Services and Facilities Committee was provided an outline of the Plan that the committee reviewed. The purpose of the Plan is to serve as a historical document that details the history of the buildings and acquisitions by TRL, and to serve as a document to focus on the future, how TRL maintains its assets, how cities maintain their library assets, and how we plan for future needs. Each TRL library, probably through their local Library Board or Friends group, is being asked to provide us a history of library services for that community so that the document will provide a sketch of the history of library services in the communities.

In response to how the document would address the section covering now through 2013, Ms. Roose said some of this information would come from the Facilities Needs Assessment. It was suggested that there is a need in this capital priorities section for the Board to somehow articulate the formula for how we participate in cities' library projects. It would be useful to focus on the way decisions are made and create a formula process, so that anyone who looks at it will understand it and see equity. Currently there are people who do not see equity and the perception is that there is either not a process or that it is not a fair process. The Services and Facilities Committee has discussed how information should be included in the Capital Facilities Plan, whether it should be summarized and refer to another document, or summarized and included as an appendix. It was recommended that the finished product have the priorities put at the front of the document, with the supporting history at the end. Another suggestion was to have a shorthand version of the plan as an external document. Mr. Blauvelt requested Board members review the document and communicate with Ms. Roose their suggestions, which will be conveyed to the Services and Facilities Committee.

Mr. Nichols said he has been contacted by several people in Thurston County that he meet with them, and has already met with some people regarding their facility concerns. He will make sure that Mr. Weaver is included in these discussions. As this facilities plan unfolds, it will provide information they can share. He will report back to the full Board on these meetings. Ms. Shults said that when opportunities arise, such as happened in Yelm, we look at creative ways that are not part of the formula

to make it work. While having a formula we can share, we should not be opposed to innovative ideas that work.

Mr. Blauvelt announced that the Timberland Regional Library Foundation has entered into an agreement with Barnes and Noble for special purchase days at the Olympia Barnes and Noble, at which TRL will also launch its Summer Reading Program and provide story times. There are vouchers available that can be photocopied and provided to anyone. Anyone who makes a purchase during the time periods indicated on June 11 and June 14 can present the voucher and the Foundation will receive a percentage of the net sale. Mr. Blauvelt said the Foundation would explore with independent booksellers similar ways of raising revenue for the Foundation.

Mr. Blauvelt referred to the draft of the “Building Our Future: The campaign for Timberland Regional Libraries” brochure.

A discussion paper on Issues Management was presented. Mr. Nichols said he suggested this agenda item after his first TRL Board meeting in April when a guest in the audience asked questions about the USA Patriot Act. He used the USA Patriot Act as an example of an external issue that could emerge and unnecessarily become a larger issue. In issues management, the key is to identify those things that could likely become an issue and being proactive in dealing with the issue before it becomes a crisis. Ms. Shults suggested issues management should also address our role on this Board and who is responsible for answering questions. Ms. Fund agreed and cited an example of The Olympian editorial that talked about a levy lid lift within the next year. She has received questions about this from two people. This is an example of issue management that is important for the Board to be united on.

One of the goals in issues management is to increase the knowledge of the residents in the five counties TRL serves and to develop a greater recognition of TRL’s benefits. Ms. Hanson said there are a variety of opportunities in daily conversations and public meetings to get information out to people about the library. Ms. Shults suggested we also address community benefits as well as regional benefits. For example, in her area the community access is not as great as in larger cities, so benefits are different. There was further discussion on ways that TRL can get information out to people about the value of the library, what is happening in the library, the resources that are available in the library and how to access those resources, how people are using the library, and human interest stories. TRL can tackle the big issues through newspapers, radio and TV, and the Trustees can take opportunities to promote the library in their own communities.

A copy of the Communication Guidelines approved by the Policy Review Committee was also presented. Ms. Shults said this document is relevant to issues management. It sets out communication guidelines for the Board to follow with other government entities, community organizations, the public and with staff. It was agreed that this document would be on the TRL Board’s May 28 agenda for adoption.

There was further discussion on how the Board members represent TRL as Board members and as individuals. The following points were made. Board members should clarify in all instances if they are speaking on behalf of the Board or as an individual. If a Board member has a personal difference of opinion on a Board decision, the Board’s decision should be presented as positively as possible. Even if a Board decision is not unanimous, a Board member should not continue to fight it in the public arena. The tone of how Board members speak on issues is important. The Internet policy is an example. Rather than discussing how the vote went or Board members’ personal beliefs, the Board can discuss the implementation of the policy. Board members have a public trust and it is their duty to

make sure the implementation is working. When the Board begins to consider a levy lid lift, it is important that the Board come to a consensus because we will need support from all of the counties. The Board, as a policy maker, needs to focus on the big picture. The issue is not so much the levy lid lift as the service level and resource. How do we provide a level of service we can afford? The levy lid lift discussion will need to begin as the Board prepares the 2004 budget.

There was discussion on the effect that TRL's Internet policy will have on some taxpayers' willingness to vote for a levy lid lift. How do we counteract this issue? There are still dissatisfied patrons on the Internet issue, some of whom will no longer come to the library. The following suggestions were made. We need to construct a campaign around the value of this library system instead of focusing on the negative. We should create a marketing list every six months of what we have done to promote the library. Trustees have the role as advocates and we need the courage and fortitude to counter these negative perceptions about the library. Part of community building is finding out what people already know and giving them information at the same time. Staff encouraged Board members to let them know about community groups they can talk with.

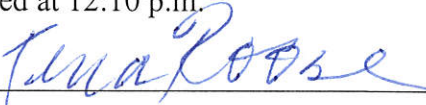
There was discussion about a new Long Range Plan. Should it be tied in with the Capital Facilities Plan? Mr. Weaver presented a copy of the comprehensive plan that the Rochester Water Association, of which he is president, is required to have. He asked if TRL should consider a similar document. Mr. Blauvelt said TRL is not required to have a comprehensive plan, whereas other organizations are mandated to have such plans. He agreed that TRL does need a new strategic plan. Several suggested a Long Range Plan would be a process for the new Director. Ms. Hanson and Ms. Roose related information they heard from election consultants of the importance of community building before an election campaign. Ms. Hanson said a Long Range Plan would enable TRL to set the stage and provide dialogue with the public, and suggested it be considered in next year's budget.

Mr. Blauvelt requested that by June the Board schedule another work session this fall.

There was no further discussion and the work session ended at 12:10 p.m.



President



Secretary