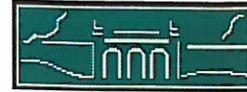




South Pasadena Public Library
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES
April 16, 2014



CONVENE:

Board President Brendan Durrett called the special meeting of the Library Board of Trustees of the South Pasadena Public Library to order in the Library Community Room on April 16, 2014 at 7:07 p.m.

ATTENDANCE:

Trustees Present

Brendan Durrett, President
Ed Pearson, Vice President
Constance Lue, Secretary
Ann Penn, Trustee
Andy Lippman, Trustee

Also Present

Hilary Straus, Assistant City Manager
Joan Frye Williams, Library Planning
Consultant (via telephone)
Richard D. Schneider, MD, Councilmember
Steve Fjeldsted, City Librarian
Sean Faye, Administrative Secretary

DISCUSSION ITEM:

1. Presentation of Discussion Draft of Library Operational Study by Joan Frye Williams –

The preliminary draft of the Library Operational Study was distributed to the Board of Trustees at the start of the meeting. Assistant City Manager Hilary Straus warned it could contain errors or omissions since it hadn't been review yet. He further explained that the Library Planning Consultant Joan Frye Williams would clarify her findings, how she reached recommendations, and would make herself available for a Q&A after her discussion. Hilary emphasized that the time for public and staff to submit their comments would be from now until 5/2/14, and those comments would be sent directly to the Library Operational Study's email address on the City website. Then Joan would review them and determine which comments merit further consideration. The preliminary report will be e-blasted to the public with a link to the website. The revised final draft, which will highlight changes from the initial report, will be issued on 5/8/14. After that, the Board will have another Q&A with Joan on 5/19/14, deliberate their findings and decide how they will advise the City Council as to what should be enacted. At that, Hilary turned the meeting over to Joan Frye Williams (via telephone).

Joan stated that her preliminary report is an opening presentation and she fully expects it to develop and be strengthened with input from the others. She continued that this study sought to meet several criteria – aligning the community's vision, honoring the City's commitment to good government, meeting new demands and maintaining excellence with existing resources. Joan's process involved reviewing documents and data analysis in comparison to other libraries, and in comparison to statewide data provided from the California Public Library Survey, as well as unpublished sources. Key documents included the Library's Strategic Plan, 2011-2015, the Library's website, Library budgets, and service statistics provided by the California State Library. The other libraries used for comparisons are the Alhambra Civic Center Library, Altadena Library District, Arcadia Public Library, Glendora Public Library, Monrovia Public Library, Monterey Park Bruggemeyer Library, the Crowell Public Library of San Marino and the Sierra Madre Public Library. Additionally, three of the largest libraries that neighbor South Pasadena: the Burbank Public Library, the Glendale Public Library and

the Pasadena Public Library were investigated in terms of resources. This was all done to provide a context for this Library's performance in relation to other cities for people that don't have intimate knowledge of our operations.

Based on the five strategic goals outlined in the South Pasadena Public Library Strategic Plan, 2011 to 2015, the following assessments were made:

Strategic Goal 1: Technology – The SPPL audio collection is far ahead of our neighbors in terms of downloadable audio materials. However, while we have a modest presence on social media, we have half the number of Internet Workstations of other libraries while the demand remains quite high, which is also true in regards to the growth of our e-book collection.

Strategic Goal 2: Facilities – SPPL square footage is excellent and there is no need to for the space to be enlarged to meet future demands. The SPPL exceeds the statewide mean in terms of size, but further study would be required regarding any modifications to the space.

Strategic Goal 3: Materials – Joan's research showed a drop off in new books, which she considered to be a red flag since South Pasadena residents have shown themselves to be an avid reading population and the interest in print books remains very much in demand.

Strategic Goal 4: Youth Services – In terms of children's borrowing and children's programs, SPPL leads the field with more than five times the statewide mean. It has the highest program attendance for children's programs in the region.

Strategic Goal 5: Finance – SPPL has performed well in this area, securing 6.3% of its operating income from sources other than local government, which places it well ahead of most of its neighboring libraries and on par with the statewide mean. Operating expenditures are also average for the region. Additionally, in terms of self-service technology, particularly technology that has been available for many years like self-checkout stations, the SPPL has fallen behind its neighbors. However, a serious red flag is that 86% of the SPPL total expenditures go towards staffing, which is far higher than our neighbors and reduces our opportunity to spend our funds on elements that need attention.

Opportunities and Recommendations – Based on the collected data, the following recommendations have been made with the purpose of recouping resources without compromising service to the community. These suggestions are not cosmetic, but intended to assist the SPPL in fundamentally rethinking how certain practices should be done.

1. **Improve Ease of Use** – SPPL can help the public become more self-directed by providing cheat-sheets and tutorials for some library services and by anticipating and pre-packaging responses to frequently asked questions.
2. **Make Customer Service More Seamless** – Have a roving support staff of employees rather than having staff members stationed at desks waiting for requests from the patrons. This support staff would be cross-trained as "first responders" to move through the library and provide assistance with common requests. This will also help free up librarians so they can focus on more important tasks. The use of iPads or other electronic communication devices connected to the library's Wi-Fi would be ideal.

3. **Adopt Service Techniques That Can Be Scaled Up Without Adding Staff** – In order to find ways of accommodating the growing demands from the public without adding staff, an increase in online and group services should be utilized. One way would be to restructure the library's website into a full-service e-branch, in which library services could be offered via the Internet at any time, day or night. This would not be to replace the brick and mortar presence of the library, but to reinforce its practices. Another service technique would be Drop-In Programs, which are less structured to time than formally scheduled programs and have proven to be quite cost-effective. Programs for the community could be offered during a range of hours or on a weekly or monthly basis online, and staff members could accommodate more people without sacrificing the quality of service.
4. **Restructure Management** – To reduce redundancy, management responsibilities at SPPL could be restructured around the skills required to perform certain kinds of work, as opposed to the traditional age group model. This would be a significant departure from the current organization at SPPL, but could still satisfy the needs of the community that are not being met by the existing structure. Having two division heads, rather than the three we currently have, could position us better to tackle other initiatives. One division head would be in charge of developing programs, collections, marketing, while the other division head would be responsible for managing information services, the flow of materials, customer service and maintaining facilities. With workload divided this way, a third division head could concentrate on innovation and new initiatives, focusing on technology, project management, service evaluation and procurement.
5. **Use Data to Drive Service Management** – Traditionally, libraries have excellent information about their collections, attendance of programs, staff workloads and budgetary expenditures. SPPL could benefit from performance comparisons in terms of calculating what percentage of the population is benefiting from specific services and connecting patrons over the life cycle of their relationship with the library. The results from this analysis could reveal the true cost and benefit of each library service and indicate areas that need improvement.

Cost Effective Does Not Mean Impersonal – Nothing in the Library Operational Study is intended to make the practices at SPPL robotic or eliminate current services, but rather an attempt to keep up with the public's demand for services and for South Pasadena residents to succeed at their own level and on their own terms. This draft of the report will be an opportunity for more people to engage with the Library via the website. Joan remarked that none of the recommendations mentioned are insurmountable obstacles and she hopes everyone will participate with their feedback.

Hilary thanked Joan and reminded the Board that between now and 5/2/14 will be the time when the public can submit their input regarding the draft report. On 5/8/14 there will be a Board review and discussion of the updated draft, and then the Board will incorporate that input into their consideration of the final report on 5/19/14. On 6/4/14 the City Council will review the report. Joan stressed that she will only be looking at those suggestions that are related to the allocation of resources, not staff reviews.

Questions

- Ed Pearson remembered that in the Budget Review that 73% of the Library's Budget goes towards personnel and asked Joan where she got her figure of 86%. Joan replied that she got her information from the State Library Report, which includes all staff expenses into one data point. Brendan Durrett followed up this question by asking if that included part-time and substitute librarian salaries. Joan confirmed that all were included.
- Andy Lippman asked how many of the other libraries we were compared to have Children's Librarians. Joan replied that they all do, but not all had the same results.
- Brendan asked if the Community Room had been factored into analyzing the size of our facility. Joan said she used the same data that was provided for the State Report, and the Community Room's dimensions would have been included in that. She added that we're still in a very comfortable size range, even without the Community Room.
- Dr. Schneider asked if there was comparison data available for other libraries since there are more Library cardholders than South Pasadena residents. Joan said that she does have cardholder data for South Pasadena and other libraries and they all have larger numbers of cardholders as patrons often belong to more than one library regardless of where they live. It is a phenomenon of the Southern California lifestyle and she was not surprised by this result.
- Steve asked if both the Power Point presentation Joan provided for the Board that summarized her findings and the full report could both be posted to the website. Joan said she would do so.
- Steve asked if the comments and questions submitted would be posted to the website. Joan replied that this will not be an open forum discussion and that she would be the only person to see the comments and questions and would address only the comments that she felt were relevant. Hilary added that this will be done to maintain the confidentiality of those submitting comments.
- Andy asked if the Board could have access to the comments at the final discussion of the report to see where the community stands. Hilary replied that perhaps an arrangement could be worked out with Joan, but underscored his intention to maintain confidentiality.
- Steve asked what Joan used for the definition of youth? Joan stated that ages 0-14 years old are considered youth and is aware of the demand for teen programs and their need for inclusion in the division of management.
- Steve has suggestions for operations not covered in the study, such as changes in operating hours, different service points, and checking out items such as laptops. Joan said she wouldn't screen out such suggestions as they are all opportunities to improve, but she is focused on resource allocation. Hilary said that comments will not be discouraged. Joan agreed and asked that people don't edit themselves and that some

very good ideas may be generated for broader allocation issues. The primary mission is to make sure that money is spent on the right things.

- Ed Pearson asked for the State data and Joan's findings to be presented to the Board. Hilary gave his assurance that he will provide all information to Board members.

ADJOURNMENT:

The special meeting of April 16, 2014 was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Minutes approved _____ as written.

Minutes approved _____ as corrected.

 - Administrative Secretary

President