

CHATTANOOGA PUBLIC LIBRARY
1001 BROAD STREET
CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE

MINUTES
BOARD MEETING-SEPTEMBER 5, 2014
10:00 A.M.

The Board of Directors of the Chattanooga Public Library met on September 5, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. for a special meeting with Board Chair, James Kennedy, presiding.

The following members were present:

- Lilian Bruce
- Herb Cohn
- Tom Griscom
- Mai Bell Hurley
- James Kennedy
- Theresa Liedtka
- Karen McMahan
- Chrystal Partridge
- Tiffanie Robinson

Also present: Corinne Hill, Executive Director; Nate Hill, Assistant Director; Meg Backus, Systems Administrator; Valerie Malueg, City Attorney; Brent Goldberg, Chief Operating Officer; William Sundquist, Chair, Friends of the Chattanooga Public Library; Kate Sheets, Service Employees International Union; Karen Brown, Administrative Manager; Nel Reid, Administrative Assistant and members of the local media.

Mr. James Kennedy, Board Chair, called the meeting to order.

Mr. Kennedy stated, "We've been called to a special meeting today to discuss, review, and begin the process of taking appropriate action to address issues raised by the audit report recently sent to the Chattanooga Public Library by the City Auditor. Today we will be hearing from Corinne Hill, Library Director, about the report. Following that, the Board will have an open discussion concerning the report and comments by Corinne. It is my hope that to set a framework for addressing the deficiencies mentioned in the audit report and that we will set an aggressive but realistic schedule hopefully today or at least in the very near future to have a vast majority of the issues resolved by year's end and that we can move forward with the great work that this library does. I think I can speak for this Board when I say that we recognize that

we have a great responsibility to the citizens of Chattanooga to operate this fine institution with complete integrity and the highest of standards. We know that this report has some things that have not lived up to that standard, but we are here today to begin the process to correct that. I think we all feel that it is our responsibility to resolve the outstanding issues including governance, compliance and accountability. It is imperative that we do this to keep Chattanooga proud of the great work that goes on here. I have one procedural issue to bring up. The Board will have its meeting now. Those guests who would like to ask questions, I'd ask you to please wait until we finish our business. Before we adjourn we will open the floor to those who would like to make a comment or ask a question. We will limit that to three (3) minutes per person. We will need a motion."

Mr. Tom Griscom made a motion to open the floor to guests who have questions or comments after the Board has discussed its business. Ms. Theresa Liedtka seconded the motion. The motion was approved and carried.

Ms. Corinne Hill read from her prepared statement.

"Thank you Jim. I would like to thank the Library Board for their hard work and support. I am here today to provide you and the public with an overview of the audit report and to answer any questions you may have in this regard. Before I do that, I want you to know that as the Executive Director of this Library, I take full responsibility for what has happened, and please know that I will do whatever I have to do to fix it.

Actually, as I worked through this document, it became obvious to me that we have been given a roadmap for the next phase of this Library's transformation. We will absolutely continue to make this a dynamic library, but what I have learned is that we will be smarter doing it. I am here today to tell you that I am fully prepared and more than ready to lead the staff as we work through this.

Now, please allow me to walk you through an overview of the audit report.

1. The Library Board has not adopted Bylaws

The Board has been working on this since May 2012. We have encountered a number of issues and a number of events have occurred that has slowed down the process.

But here is where we are right now. A committee has been formed made up of two Board members, Ms. Karen McMahan, Ms. Lilian Bruce, and myself. We have examples of bylaws

from public libraries across the country that have a governing board. We plan to meet week after next, to begin drafting Bylaws.

2. Chattanooga Public Library does not appear to have ... comprehensive operational policies and procedures in place

Policies implement by the Board include:

January 2013: Revised Circulation Policy (Direct public impact)

October 2013: Communications Policy

October 2013: 4th Floor Use Policy

November 2013: Workplace Sleeping and Failure to Remain Alert

February 2014: City's Travel Policy

March 2014: City's Ethics Policy

July 2014: Revisions to Circulation Policy (Improve service delivery to public and includes providing services to Hamilton County students)

Other operational initiatives include significant adjustments to the procedures for reporting sick and vacation leave. The Library now uses City forms for reporting. Additionally, we have strict adherence to advising staff regarding their FMLA benefit.

We have seen a significant reduction in the use of sick leave and a consistent implementation of vacation leave since these forms came into play in January 2014.

With that said, we also recognize that more needs to be done to bring us more in line with the city.

3. Issues with leave accrual balances and how they are maintained and general disorganization of record keeping by the Personnel Officer.

The library will automate its leave information using the City's Oracle system. The Library has discontinued its use of the little black vacation book.

4. Discrepancies and inconsistencies were identified with vacation policies.

Any leave not properly reported or not properly recorded has been adjusted and the records are now accurate.

In January 2014, the library adopted the city's procedure of reporting leave using the city's leave form resulting in improved accuracy and correcting inconsistencies.

Again, we recognize that more needs to be done. Every employee, myself included, must record leave in a similar manner.

5. Employees performed paid consulting/speaking engagements while being paid by the Library

Vacation should have been requested and used for this purpose, and the records have been adjusted accordingly. The Library has implemented the City's Ethics Policy. Going forward, a new employee orientation and an employee manual that outlines things of this nature will be necessary.

6. Proper reviews and segregation of duties should be in place for the Personnel Officer

The Library recommends that we undertake a review of our organizational structure, especially in the areas of HR and budget, to ensure that checks and balances are in place.

7. The Library lacked any substantive travel policies and procedures

The Board adopted the city's travel policy in February 2014. I was made aware of this audit in late December 2013. This policy was adopted while this audit was underway.

8. Overpayments for travel

These overpayments were errors and the city has been reimbursed \$1,734.16. In hindsight, I should have done this immediately and I should have insisted that Mr. Hill do so as well.

9. Travel reimbursement policy not consistently applied to all travelers

With the implementation of the city's travel policy, the Library now consistently applies reimbursement to all travelers

10. Next 2013 Conference dates were June 17th and 18th all three attendees extended their travel for personal reasons.

If this conference were in the US, then yes, it would be a two day conference. When you are travelling overseas, you have to build in additional travel time, in this case from Chattanooga to Aarhus, Denmark. There were three days of travel on each end of this trip. Having seen this, I do believe that moving forward we have to make sure how we account for travel so that everyone is reimbursed appropriately. And I have reimbursed the city for the 5th evening referred to in this report.

11. Historical books were being removed and sold for no valid reason

The auditor acknowledges that this is a routine part of library business.

In order to promote transparency I recommend that the Library Board consider approving an MOU that formalizes its relationship with the Friends of the Chattanooga Public Library.

12. Wasteful or improper disposition of old computer equipment

The Library adheres to the City's inventory requirements and participates in their quarterly inventory process. These records are available through the city's finance department. It is recommended that the Board formally approve this policy and its procedures at a future Board meeting.

13. Public Notice for Board Meetings

The Open Meetings laws of the State of Tennessee require that adequate notice be given to the public before open meetings are held. The Municipal Technical Advisory Service issued an opinion in 1997 that annual publication of notice is sufficient notice under the Open Meetings laws. In addition to the annual notice of regular meetings, all special meetings are published in the newspaper with an agenda. Additionally, effective with this meeting, the library is exceeding the adequate notice requirements of state law by posting signs on the front door of all libraries announcing board meetings and posting such notice on the library's web site.

14. Disbursement of Library funds to be authorized by the signature of two officers of the board.

Disbursements are currently approved by the Board at their monthly meetings. The office of the City Attorney is researching TCA 10-3-106 and we are awaiting their opinion.

15. Personnel Issues

Ms. Meg Backus has tendered and I have accepted her resignation. Mr. Nate Hill will receive a notice of suspension. Mr. Hill has a right to due process and a hearing will be scheduled so that he can be heard. Following the Hearing I will make my final decision.

In addition, as we move forward I will ensure that job responsibilities line up with staff skills.

Remarks and Recommendations:

As you can see, we have already implemented some solutions to issues addressed in this report. And, we have been working toward resolving many of the other issues.

With that said, I have the following recommendations:

- Adopt all City of Chattanooga Personnel Policies
- Automate all records using the City's Oracle system
- The Bylaws Committee should have a draft Bylaws for the Board's Review by their November 2014 meeting
- An annual audit should be conducted by a private auditor
- Library Administration must review its organizational structure to determine how best to oversee HR and budgetary policies and procedures and make a recommendation to the Board by their September 2014 meeting

We need to address cultural issues as well so that there is no longer any question about how we operate. In this regard, I recommend that we

Adopt the city's new employee manual when it is released in early 2015

Place on the agenda for the upcoming Library All Staff Day, of which I will be an active participant:

Having HR to report on City Personnel Policies and how that impacts Library staff

Legal will report on the Ethics policy

Training on Accountability and Responsibility

And our standard customer service and leadership development

Ladies and gentlemen, this library has made a lot of progress in the last two and half years. We have essentially been rebuilding this library system. What we have discovered is that we are so

much more than a traditional library. The community has helped us build a very dynamic library because Chattanooga is a very dynamic community.

But I want the Board and the public to know that as the Executive Director of this Library I am in charge. I understand and accept the level of responsibility that comes with that role. This happened on my watch, and it is time to move on.

Which means that I am fully prepared and committed to improving the daily operations of this Library as we move forward. I and my staff will tackle this phase of our growth with the same commitment and enthusiasm as we have tackled improving library service delivery to the public these last two years.

Chattanooga is a global city and the citizens deserve a library that others look to for innovation. I look forward to working with all of you as we move forward through this next phase of our transformation and weaving this into our Chattanooga story.”

Mr. Tom Griscom asked Ms. Valerie Malueg, City Attorney, if other agencies and boards in the City of Chattanooga notice their regular meetings annually or per meeting. Ms. Malueg stated that some agencies and boards in the City of Chattanooga notice their regular meetings annually and some notice their meetings per meeting.

Mr. Tom Griscom voiced his concern that the Board did not know an audit was underway. Ms. Corinne Hill stated that she had conversations with Mr. James Kennedy, Board Chair, after learning of the audit. Ms. Hill stated that she had no explanation as to why she did not notify the Board in its entirety and that not doing so was her greatest regret.

Ms. Karen McMahan, stated that she would like to revisit each section of the audit report. Ms. McMahan stated that she fully supports adopting all City of Chattanooga policies even to the extent of making library employees full City of Chattanooga employees. Ms. Corinne Hill stated that being in compliance with the City of Chattanooga would make everything so much easier.

Mr. Herb Cohn reminded the Board of the value and quality of the library. Mr. Cohn stated, “We have gone from a mediocre library to an excellent library and I want to be sure we don’t lose sight of that.”

Ms. Mai Bell Hurley stated that Chattanooga is a global community and the library has its reputation in the world because of what Ms. Corinne Hill has done as Executive Director. Ms.

Hurley stated, "She has apologized characteristically. She's going to fix it. She is not denying. She's not placing blame. She's accepting responsibility and I wouldn't expect anything less."

Ms. Lilian Bruce requested a copy of the Library's organizational chart and that a handbook for new board members be developed.

Ms. Karen McMahon requested to see the process in which an employee records their time and requests time off.

Mr. James Kennedy requested that Ms. Corinne Hill present to the Board a list of all the things she is currently working on with the City of Chattanooga and the status of each in the next board meeting.

The Board discussed forming two (2) subcommittees. The subcommittee that has already been formed to review the bylaws of other libraries with a governing board will continue to do so. Additionally there will be a subcommittee that will explore the governance issues of the library, seek resolutions for those issues, and present a report to the Board.

Ms. Mai Bell Hurley made a motion that the Board creates within itself two (2) subcommittees. One subcommittee will continue its work reviewing the bylaws of other libraries with governing boards. One subcommittee will explore the governance issues of the library, seek resolutions for those issues, and present a report to the Board. Mr. Tom Griscom seconded the motion. The motion was approved and carried.

The Board discussed sending a response to the City Auditor, the Mayor, and members of City Council to include action items in Ms. Corinne Hill's statement and information agreed upon in the special board meeting.

Ms. Mai Bell Hurley made a motion that Mr. Tom Griscom and Ms. Corinne Hill take on the responsibility of sending an immediate response, on behalf of the Board, to the City Auditor, the Mayor, and members of City Council to include action items mentioned in Ms. Hill's statement and information agreed upon in the special board meeting by Wednesday, September 10, 2014. Ms. Theresa Liedtka seconded the motion. The motion was approved and carried.

RECOGNITION OF PERSON WISHING TO ADDRESS THE BOARD:

Mr. James Kennedy recognized the following people:

- **Ms. Janet Hopings (Retired Library Employee)** – She wanted to know why the Library staff is different from the rest of the City of Chattanooga staff as it pertains to the decision of when to give raises approved by the City of Chattanooga to the Library staff.

The Board replied that the committees will be working toward compliance with the City of Chattanooga policies including raises.

Ms. Hopings wanted to know if the Board gave Ms. Corinne Hill any objectives to achieve and report before going on trips around the world. She wanted to know what the real purpose was for so many different trips if everything can be done by computer in the Gig City.

Mr. James Kennedy emphasized the importance of face-to-face work that takes place at meetings and conferences. He stated that the Chattanooga Library is now an internationally known entity. Mr. Kennedy stated that he and Ms. Hill talk about her trips and what she is doing and much of the travel is paid outside of the Library's budget.

Ms. Corinne Hill referenced her most recent trip in August where she traveled for the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA). It began with a satellite conference in Birmingham, England for the Public Library Division of IFLA of which she is one (1) of two (2) United States representatives for public libraries on the international board. Ms. Hill stated that she was a speaker at that conference and IFLA paid her way to Birmingham. Ms. Hill stated that she then traveled to the city of Exeter in Devon County where she spoke at Exeter Public Library, did a workshop for their staff and a public meeting. Exeter Public Library paid her way from Birmingham to Exeter and back to London. Ms. Hill stated that she left London compliments of Friends of the Library who paid her way to Lyon where the IFLA Annual Conference was taking place where she is an officer. Ms. Hill stated that Friends of the Library paid her airfare, registration, hotel and she covered all her incidentals.

Ms. Hill stated, "People are incredibly interested in what we are doing here. We have a story to tell. When I went to Birmingham and Exeter, I told the Chattanooga story. When I went to IFLA in Lyon, that is where my professional development began where I learn from my colleagues, then I come back and I'm better at my job because of it."

Ms. Mai Bell Hurley stated, "I think we all acknowledge that Chattanooga has gone through a renaissance. It would never have happened without the interaction we've had with other cities and other communities. I would even go so far as to say this is an economic development which

I think companies have chosen us because of the quality of life. Libraries are essential to the quality of life. This one has been dormant and it is not dormant anymore.”

Mr. Herb Cohn stated, “Friends of the Library has partially funded key staff people to attend conferences. Any of you who have been in any kind of business, if you are not finding out what others are doing successfully and what their best programs are, if you confine yourself just to here and you don’t go out there and see what’s going on, it’s going to be a disaster. On several occasions we’ve had staff members come to board meetings and express their appreciation. It energizes them and shows them how much we value their service. I think it’s really important to get out there.”

Ms. Hopings wanted to know if Ms. Corinne Hill meant “library culture” when she mentioned looking into “cultural issues”. Ms. Hill stated that every organization has a culture. An organization with a solid culture will say, “this is how we’ve always done it”. Ms. Hopings stated, “When I hear ‘culture’ I hear ‘diversity’ and one of the things I’m concerned about is that the Library’s staff is not diverse. We only have one (1) person to my knowledge who is a Spanish speaker. Many communities have an influx of Spanish speakers. We have one (1) half-time person. We have about two (2) African-American professionals. It concerns me that in a city that is about 35% African-American, we have 2% African-American.”

Ms. Corinne Hill stated, “I couldn’t agree with you more and it’s something that I’m always looking for and when we’re looking to hire new staff it is absolutely critical to me. In fact, we just hired a part-time person Downtown who speaks Spanish because we are constantly looking for diversity and that has been a concern of mine since I came here.”

- **Mrs. Alma Webb (Library Customer)** – She wanted to say Ms. Corinne Hill should not receive all the credit for the library going as well as it has because the City took over gave more money to bring in things and do things. Ms. Webb asked if the library is doing so wonderful, then why does it look like a deserted hotel when you walk in and no one wants to visit the downtown library anymore.

Ms. Corinne Hill replied that the door count statistics disagree with that statement. Material usage is up almost 30% and the door count percentage has a double-digit increase. Ms. Hill stated that the library is constantly working on its appearance. There is a first floor design team working on how the floor will look. The café area is incredibly welcoming as you enter the building. The alcoves are being cleared out to make study areas and materials are being moved out onto the floor. The library is constantly in a design process.

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. James Kennedy adjourned the meeting at 12:15

p.m.


Dr. Chrystal Partridge
Secretary