

**Minutes of the Charles A. Ransom District Library Board of Trustees –  
February 17, 2009**

**Meeting was called to order by President Asselmeier at 7:05 p.m.**

**Members Present:** Klein, Prentice, Davis, Haan, Keeney and

**Members Absent:** Gelbaugh, Heed

**Director:** Katie Bell Moore

**Guest:** Artist Conrad Koffman

**Special Agenda Item:** Conrad Koffman presented his plans for a possible Phase II of the mural project for the area on the fireplace walls and columns. The mural in the children's area has received very positive feedback. The Phase II mural has a more adult theme and represents more of the community. The board had a general discussion of the project and some board members expressed some reservation of putting the mural too close to the fireplace.

**Minutes:** Minutes of the January 20<sup>th</sup> meeting were reviewed. *Motion Davis/Klein to approve with correction of attendance. Carried.*

**Financial Report:** Director Bell Moore recommended the following budget transfers:

- From 7007 –Books Adult, 132.00 to 7008 Books Children for summer reading prize books
- From 7010 AV 412.00 to 7017 Workmen's Comp bill is higher than budgeted
- Recommend holding off transfer to cover snow plowing until the end of snow season
- From 7010 AV 106.00 to 7025 M&R Other –needed for gate count repairs
- From 7033 Supplies Postage 34.00 to 7032 Supplies Cleaning
- From 7038 Supplies Children 11.00 to 7035 Supplies Programming
- From 7038 Supplies Children 1.00 to 7036 Supplies Processing
- From 7038 Supplies Children 32.00 to 7037 Supplies Other
- 7051 Conferences – MLA still waiting for reimbursement of conference fees
- From 7063 Purchased Services/Legal Fees 1092.25 should come from 7200 Building Restoration
- From 7067 Purchased Services Printing 295.00 to 7082 Capital Outlay Building Repairs for replacement of picnic tables.
- 7092 Automation New Software still awaiting reimbursement from Baker and Taylor
- 7110 Misc. Expense – was a "Bond Premium on Taxes Collected" from Cooper Twp.

*Motion Haan/Davis to approve transfers as presented. Motion Carried.*

Director Bell Moore also outlined her recommendations for possible cost savings with the knowledge that the library may be facing some reduction in expected penal fines or tax revenues and interest income.

## **President's Report- No Report**

## **Director's Report**

### Financial

- Recommended budget transfers are attached.
- I am starting work on the 2009-2010 budget. Unfortunately, we will not know any millage amounts for several months (typically we do not receive final data until May). However, the process does need to get started. I will hold the property tax values at their current levels and not figure on any increase, and be prepared to decrease them if the data from the coming months indicates that will be necessary. In addition, the City of Plainwell will be taking \$2800 for the DDA. I will focus heavily on reducing costs in the staffing budget and anticipate freezing current salary rates, eliminating the yearly bonus, cutting cleaning hours, and eliminating page staff hours except for Saturdays and Sundays.
- All print and AV standing order plans, except for the Automatically Yours plan (bestsellers), have been placed on hold until July 1 to conserve funds in the materials budget.
- We have received a few bills resulting from successful tax appeals, but they have been very small (\$100-200) each.

## Building

- Jim Kahlo from Plainwell Antiques visited the library on January 29<sup>th</sup> to appraise the paintings and other assorted items in the Burchfield Room. As he indicated earlier, he was not willing to give a written appraisal on the remaining ivory pieces, Foo dogs and other pieces. However, he did give me permission to pass along his informal evaluation that the pieces were not that old and/or valuable. His impression was that the entire group of pieces might sell for \$400-500 total. He will be sending a written appraisal of the four Fletcher Ransom paintings. He did indicate that all four paintings are in need of cleaning/restoration. However, at this point their condition is stable and they are not in immediate danger of further deterioration.
- I spoke with a specialist in antique furniture at Brook Farm General Market in Kalamazoo about determining the value of the china cabinet in the Birchfield Room. His estimation of the value, based on photographs I sent him, was \$300-700. He suggested that we might contact Plainwell Antiques for help in getting the piece sold, if that is what we wish to do.
- I spoke with Steve Henderson and reported that the Board would like to hire him for the bathroom repair job, which would include only the trim work (no ceramic tile), at a cost not to exceed \$600. Steve was very pleased to get the job, but wanted me to pass along to the Board the caveat that the total cost could possibly exceed \$600 once he started the project and could really see what was happening with the walls. However, he did state that if he anticipated costs would exceed \$600 he would first seek Board permission. He is in the middle of some other jobs at the moment, but will get the bathrooms scheduled as soon as possible. UPDATE: as of 2/12, work on the bathrooms has begun!
- I have submitted our paperwork to MMRMA for a renewal quote on our liability insurance package, which expires on April 1. I am also gathering quotes from other agents for comparison.
- Alan and I interviewed three handyman candidates in January. Our goal in interviewing candidates was to lower the rates we are currently paying for handyman service. We ruled out two additional candidates without an interview because they charged more than what we were currently paying. No "ideal" candidate emerged from the process, as there were clear positives and negatives associated with each candidate. However, I recommend retaining Rod Janes at this time. He has lowered his rate to \$36.80/hr for routine jobs, which fulfills our goal of lowering the rates we currently pay (\$44/hr). He is insured, has familiarity with our building and understands our needs for scheduling repairs around public service demands, and does not charge a minimum fee. It is my goal, however, to use his services much less than we have in the past.

## Programs

- The adult winter reading program began on Feb. 5, and will run through March 10<sup>th</sup>. The theme is "Book Your Winter Escape" and the program will conclude with a finale celebration on March 19<sup>th</sup>. John Otterbacher, the author of "Sailing Grace" will be the guest speaker. "Sailing Grace" is a Michigan Notable Book award winner. The Friends will pick up the cost of food at the reception, and a patron donation will cover the cost of the speaker.
- In addition to the adult reading program, Erin is also trying a winter reading program for elementary-age kids. Her program theme is "Read Around the World". Each child who participates will receive a passport, and must read six books over six weeks. Each book must be set on a different continent (yes, we are aware that there are actually SEVEN continents, but for practical reasons we are excluding Antarctica). Every child who reads all six books will receive an inflatable globe as a prize, and will also be entered in a drawing for a Barnes and Noble gift card.
- The Friends have set March 3<sup>rd</sup> as the date for the annual Dr. Seuss night. "Celebrity" readers are yet to be determined.
- The Library is once again teaming up with Life Care Center of Plainwell to present the second annual Plainwell Senior Expo on March 18<sup>th</sup>. The Expo will showcase area senior service providers, and will take place at Eesley Place Banquets, above the Plainwell Coffee Mill.
- We are going to start publicizing the Library as a source of help for filing unemployment claims. There has been much information in the news lately about how overwhelmed the state's telephone filing system is, and Internet filing is being strongly recommended as an alternative. Jennifer Granholm and other state officials have been quoted numerous times urging unemployed persons to file via the Internet at their local public library. Unfortunately, as we see on a daily basis here at the Library, this is not a quick-fix solution. Many of the persons seeking to use our computers to file have little to no basic computer skills, and require extensive staff assistance to complete the filing process. I have identified several staff members who are particularly skilled in helping individuals with the computers, and we will be working together to make sure that patrons are receiving the help they need.

## Administrative

- We will be utilizing a different distribution method for the next newsletter, scheduled to be published in April. We will be printing 2000 copies instead of our usual 6000, and we will distribute them through the elementary schools instead of through the Shopper's Guide. This will help us conserve funds in the printing area of our budget.
- I'll be giving a quick demonstration of our website and new Facebook page at our meeting.
- Library staff is actively involved in seeking potential grant opportunities. We have applied for the "We the People: Picturing America Bookshelf" program, which would award us a collection of classic children's books. In addition, we are also seeking funds from the Jenny Jones Community Grant program to build a collection of test preparation and adult basic literacy books to help unemployed jobseekers improve their basic skills. We continue to watch for other opportunities as they arise.
- I have been invited by Erik Wilson and Ron Kopka to participate in a "Community Conversation" organized by the Center for Michigan (<http://www.thecenterformichigan.net/>). These events will be taking place in cities around the state, and invite community leaders to share their thoughts on local and state issues and concerns. I'm very much looking forward to this opportunity!
- I have learned about a program offered through MMRMA that may result in potential savings on our gas and electrical bills. I have contacted them to begin the process of evaluating our current spending in these areas.
- Thank you to Davis for her work to promote the mural and the community outreach which has brought many people to the library.

*Bell Moore requested the March Meeting be changed from the 17<sup>th</sup> of March to the 24<sup>th</sup> of March. The board consensus was to move the meeting to the 24<sup>th</sup>.*

## **Committee Reports:**

### **Building and Grounds:**

- Davis has several artists willing to display their work in the library. A new person will be showcased each month.
- Davis questioned progress to repair the lawn sign.

### **Endowment:**

- Discussion- would it be possible to have Jim Meles invest funds the library does not need for immediate expenses.

### **Personnel**

- Director evaluation forms are now due, return completed forms to Prentice in a seal envelope.

### **Public Relations**

- No Report

**Trustee Comments:** No Comments

**Comments from the Public:** No Public

## **Continued Business:**

**Second reading of Policy No. 21 Subject: Competitive Bidding Policy- Additions/corrections to presented policy:**

**General Guidelines: bullet one:**

- The Ransom District Library will seek competitive bids for all projects/purchases/services anticipated to cost over \$2500.00

**Bid Submissions and Opening: bullet two:**

- Bids must include proof of appropriate business license and appropriate insurance coverage.

*Motion Prentice/Davis to adopt Policy No. 21 with additions/corrections as stated.*

*Motion Carried.*

- **First Reading of Policy 2A Independent Contractors - This policy identifies Independent Contractors as non employees and will be issued 1099.**
- **Motion to adopt Policy 1 Hiring and Wage Administration was rescinded for further discussion.**
- **Estimates for slab repairs have not been received as of this date.**

## **New Business:**

- President Asselmeier shared with the board ideas to enhance library services that could aid patrons who need assistance with obtaining skills to find jobs or improve skills to obtain job advancement. The ideas included a training curriculum for computer classes and a Job Club to help patrons write resumes and preparing for job interviews. The board consensus was that these were good ideas and good services, the cost of providing such services would need to be investigated. One source Asselmeier suggested was using part of the carry over that is budget each year.

Other ideas were to fund the classes by charging something to those signing up for classes. It was also discussed that most people taking computer classes probably have a computer at home and could afford to pay a fee to take classes.

Two lists were provided by the staff of ideas of programs that could be offered.

The first list was two pages of Children's Programs Ideas. The other list was for computer classes and the job club/job searching.

*Motion Prentice/Klein to encourage adult programs the computer classes listed on the page titled Fundamental/Beginner Computer Classes be offered as a fee based program, the amount of the fee will be determined by the Director the other items listed Job Club and Job Searching would be offered at no fees. Motion Carried.*

*Motion Prentice/Klein to approve the children's programs as listed on the list titled Children's Program Ideas/Prices be provided within the scope of staff time and funding, with the exception of the Free book program with the cost estimate of \$1000.00 that is on this list. Motion Carried.*

- Discussion on the missing ivory items that were taken from the cabinet in the Burchfield Room. *Motion Prentice/Klein to publicize the missing pieces and offer a reward with no questions asked if returned. Publicized in the Shopper's Guide, and local newspapers.*
- After discussion a Motion Prentice/Haan to confirm Fletcher Ransom paintings are properly insured and if not remove them to a safer location until the paintings can be insured. *Motion carried, Davis nay.*
- Discussion on cost for general library repairs. The board consensus was that cost has been high for general repairs and there is a need to look into ways to reduce these expenses. *Motion Prentice/Haan to set a fixed rate of \$25.00 per hour for a general handyman, with the requirement of a background check and proof of insurance for any handyman who does regular projects at the library. Motion carried.*

*Motion Klein/Davis to adjourn at 9:50 p.m. Carried.*

Respectfully Submitted,  
Connie Haan, Secretary

**Next Meeting: March 24, 2009**

