

Session 17-01 A Regular Meeting of the Library Advisory Board was called to order by Chair Jacque Peterson at 5:43 p.m. on February 7, 2017 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: BOARD MEMBER PETERSON, KUSZMAUL, MASSION, FALLON, SPRINGER

ABSENT: BOARD MEMBER MONTGOMERY

STAFF: LIBRARY DIRECTOR DIXON
DEPUTY CITY CLERK KRAUSE

The Board met in a worksession from 4:30 p.m. until 5:33 p.m. The Board met with John Chrastka with EveryLibrary via Skype. City Manager Koester attended and participated in the Conference Call/Skype Worksession on developing alternative revenue streams for the Homer Library. Also in attendance was Susanna Haines and Andy Haas, members, President and Past President respectively of the Friends of the Homer Library.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair Peterson requested a motion to approve the agenda.

KUSZMAUL/FALLON – SO MOVED.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

RECONSIDERATION

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

Chair Peterson allowed the members of the Friends to speak on the worksession discussion with no objection voiced by the remaining members of the Board present.

Andy Haas, city resident, past President and member of the Friends of the Homer Library and Susanna Haines, city resident and President of the Friends commented on the worksession discussion being very informative and interesting. Mr. Haas opined that he did not think that it would be beneficial and wise use of funds to hire an outside business to conduct polling, he referenced what the City Manager had accomplished with the polling used for the budget in

the past. He wasn't sure that the presentation provided many options. He additionally felt that polling the public about taxes would not provide the best response.

A discussion ensued on the suggestions and recommendations made by Mr. Chrastka and how they could be approached in developing additional revenues streams for the library. It was pointed out that they know that there is great support for the Library but they need to know if there is anyone out there that would be willing to financially support the library. The facts that were presented by Mr. Chrastka were that 35%-40% of the voters would vote in favor of paying a tax automatically, 25%-35% of the voters would be agreeable after questions and information were exchanged, and then the remaining 30%-35% would not vote in favor due to the fact that they don't agree with paying taxes period.

Further comments on the value of submitting questions to residents on various aspects of support, use or willing to tax themselves to provide support for the Library; the education needed on all fronts; input from the Libraries in the other communities affected on whether they would support establishing a Service Area; and whether those voters would support funding a central Library ensued.

Ms. Haines believed that the library is a city function and as such the city should be funding it that said she questioned the inherent success of instituting fee for service and that it would be more difficult to obtain and more complicated than to talk or work in collaboration with the city but the idea of a new tax, such as having a bed tax should be an area of discussion that includes the owners of those businesses.

Mr. Haas noted that a tax may be the only answer but felt that they needed to identify the possible courses and feasibility. The tax will probably be the last political option and also noted that the Borough may not be supportive of this.

Clarification was made by the Board that the recommendation to Council will have to include the feasibility of all these options including user fees or fees in general; that there has to be a long term sustainable revenue option and the amount of fees that could be charged or collected would be minimal at best. No amount had been designated by Council that needed to be raised. Further clarification on the directive from Council to find ways that non-residents can assist in supporting the library since they do not pay through property taxes and only sales taxes but since the sales of food is non-taxable that represented a serious loss in revenue to the city in the amount of close to a million dollars which in essence would fund the Library.

Ensuing discussion on the reason that they are looking at funding options for the Library, new members on Council and the concern regarding costs, designating a dollar amount that is required to meet a budget deficit; the directive is general in nature and creating more issues that cannot be resolved; providing the revenue potentials that each recommendation would bring in such as user fees or a service area in their response to Council; city services provided to non-residents that do not adequately recompense ; what funding the Friends have provided and the potential conflict that additional Fundraisers conducted by the Board may have;

educating the current Council on the purpose of the Friends, that residents outside the city contribute through the Friends which provides for the programs that are available through the Library besides additional specialty items such as equipment. It would be good to meet informally to discuss this further.

Boardmember Kuszmaul pointed out the undercurrents of the discussion:

- they did not want the Library to be perceived as a charitable organization that is supported by/through donations
- That it is incumbent on the Library Advisory Board to ensure that the Library is funded by public funds as a public Library providing a public service.
- Maintaining that distinction is important since it could be eroded. The need to dispel the perception that the Library could be operated by volunteers or only people who pay for it can use
- You never know when you will need the services provided by the Library.

Ms. Haines provided the information that the Friends could provide, without disclosing personal information, an amount that is donated by people who live outside city limits. She added that it should also never be considered a subsidy for the library and reiterated that it is not the responsibility of the Friends to take on a financial supporting role for the Library. She felt that it would be an area for review to provide that information on the amount provided by non-residents already.

It was agreed that information for the newer council members would be helpful. Ms. Haines asked for the request for the information to be in writing to present to the Friends Board.

Boardmember Fallon cautioned the Board that they should consider exactly what they want from the Friends and possibly consider just including a statement that as with most Public Libraries they have a very active Friends of the Library and it is strongly endorsed by the community. It would also be fair to say that they have a substantial donations from members of the community that live outside city limits.

Ms. Haines suggested going to the residents and non-residents for suggestions before enacting fees or taxes. She cited the volunteer work that is provided by non-residents. That they should also include the reason why they are being asked.

Boardmember Kuszmaul has approached some of her neighbors and they feel that they are already paying enough through the higher sales tax they pay. She on the other hand was appalled that none of her property taxes did not support the library.

Ms. Haines stated that she was a member of the Library Advisory Board and they have had this discussion off and on for 27 years now. She remembers speaking about it when her daughter was 2 yrs old and she is 29 now.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes for the December 6, 2016 Regular Meeting

MASSION/FALLON - MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 6, 2016 REGUAR MEETING.

Boardmember Kuzmaul noted an incomplete sentence on page 6 (page 2 of the minutes), under Reports, Friends. It appeared that it was cut off. Deputy City Clerk will research that and correct the minutes accordingly.

Chair Peterson inquired if there were any additional changes to the minutes, noting none were offered she inquired if there were any objections to approving the minutes as amended.

VOTE: YES. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

REPORTS

A. Library Director's Report

1. Statistics for 2016 and January 2017 (Laydown)

Library Director Dixon had provided the statistics. The Big Read is going and very successful, great events, close to the wrap up. She pointed out that circulation was up 15% over the previous year. January circulation was just 100 short of the record in August of 2016. The Library is being used.

B. Friends of the Library –January Meeting

Chair Peterson provided information on the Friends willingness to be a pass through for three specific accounts, one for equipment & technology, one for building loan/maintenance and one for materials/collection development. The Friends response was that they were a volunteer organization but she thought they were receptive to the idea, since then it appears that they are not too receptive to the idea. She understands that they have their own directives, guidelines, etc., however without them she is unaware of what they could do.

Library Director Dixon recommended that Chair Peterson speak directly to the Board of the Friends and ask specifically about it. She has heard reservations expressed by two members. Boardmember Fallon echoed those same sentiments that there is hesitation from those Friends Boardmembers who have served on the LAB and they were worried about a blur of the missions of the two organizations. She believes that it has to be done carefully.

Library Director Dixon mentioned the Alaska Community Foundation website lists several Libraries that have funds through them – Endowment, Friends, and an Association Fund. She is not aware of how they work but it may be somewhere to start for information.

Boardmember Massion volunteered to try to attend the next meeting of the Friends.

Library Director Dixon also informed the Board that they cannot bundle the existing loan on the Library so currently the only option would be talking to a commercial bank. It was suggested that they have a pay off the building loan funding drive.

Board member Massion stated that has been his task since it would be a big savings since it represents \$99,000 per year and \$50,000 of that is interest and they have 17-18 years left. He questioned why they could not request Council to consider paying off the loan of \$1.2 million which he has been informed that the city has the money, it would be a savings of close of at least \$500,000 or more.

It was commented that direction would be a great recommendation and councilmembers could present the large savings opportunity to the residents as another reduction in government spending. It was suggested that they speak with the individual Councilmembers to get their support.

Chair Peterson requested Boardmember Kuzmaul add that suggestion to their spreadsheet. Boardmember Kuzmaul wanted to keep the spreadsheet focused on their directive toward non-residents. Library Director Dixon wanted to have a separate spreadsheet that contained this recommendation and others. Boardmember Massion volunteered to provide a pro and con and revenue implication for Boardmember Kuzmaul.

Chair Peterson inquired if the Board still wanted to meet in a worksession on February 15, 2017 at 4:30 p.m. The Board agreed by consensus that it would be good to talk over the information from tonight in detail. The meeting will be upstairs.

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

A. Developing Revenue Streams for the Homer Library

1. Amazon Wishlist

The Board members discussed this item and confirmed that staff was agreeable to do the work needed to accomplish. The following points made were:

- Recommendation to use the local bookstore
- Boardmember Fallon will double check participation with the Homer Bookstore on offering a similar program as the Amazon Wishlist and participation in separate events such as a Book Tree
- Financial Support from the Friends for Marketing such events

2. Financial Pass Through – Friends? Foundation?

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

3. Marketing

Chair Peterson wanted to hold discussion on this item until the Worksession next week.

4. Other Ideas or Options

- a. Indoor Putt-Putt Golf
- b. Fundraising Tips

Deputy City Clerk Krause provided these items as suggestions. Chair Peterson appreciated the ideas and stated that there were many ideas that could be done such as Murder in the Library Event that could bring in \$2000 or so to offset the book budget.

Boardmember Kuszmaul suggested as outlined in the Fundraising Tips establishing an amount as a goal and whether they want to hold several smaller events raising a few thousand dollars each time or a couple of fundraising events that could bring in larger amounts.

Further discussion on establishing an amount would not be the best idea, creating or establishing an endowment or legacy fund, the Board's job is to deal with the policies and process where the Friend's goal is to raise funds to pay for the programming and advocacy, and; using the existing fund for donations and the requirements to have Council approval to accept and use those funds.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Presentation for Worksession with Council on Funding
 - a. Scheduled for Monday, May 8, 2017 Worksession at 4:30 p.m.
 - b. Status update on presentation materials and content

There was no update, discussion or action on this item by the Board.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- A. 2016/2017 Board member Attendance at City Council Meetings

Boardmember Fallon offered to attend a meeting February since she was unable to attend a meeting in January.

- B. Resolution 16-124, Establishing the 2017 Regular Meeting Schedule of City Council and Advisory Bodies.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF THE BOARD

Boardmember Kuszmaul inquired if they should be considering overhead in the budget discussions. Library Director Dixon felt that they were not asked that so that they should not worry about it at this time.

Boardmember Massion commented it was a good discussion tonight.

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Board the meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m. A WORKSESSION IS SCHEDULED FOR **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2017 AT 4:30 P.M.** IN THE UPSTAIRS CONFERENCE ROOM AT CITY HALL. THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR **TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 2017 at 5:30 p.m.** at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

RENEE KRAUSE, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: _____