

Minutes
Special Meeting of the Board of Directors
of Hartford Public Library
25 July 2008

A Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of Hartford Public Library was held on Friday, July 25, 2008.

Present: Gregory Davis, Stephen Goddard, William Large, Jackie Lilly, Cynthia Reik, Enid Rey, Romulo Samaniego, Annette Sanderson, Paul Shipman, Geraldine Sullivan and Carlos Valinho.

Absent: Jo Champlin Casey, Thea Montanez, and Brad Noel.

The meeting was called to order by President Geraldine Sullivan at 7:50 a.m.

The special meeting of the Board of Directors was called for the purpose of discussing the FY2008-2009 budget.

President Geraldine Sullivan gave an overview of the July 24 community meeting hosted by HOPE and Blue Hills Civic Association. She stated that the sentiment from the community is to reduce hours everywhere and "share the pain"

Chief Librarian Louise Blalock shared the 4th Quarter Performance Results Report which shows consistent and strong results.

Blalock presented both long term and short term recommendations. In the long term the library must be at the table where policy decisions are being made and secondly, the library should look at the feasibility of a separate taxing district.

In the short term Blalock presented the pros and cons to the staggering of branch days which has been suggested to provide equity across the neighborhoods. Blalock also presented an option 2 which would be to provide after school programs in the two neighborhoods where the branches have been closed. The most salient issue has been -- what will the children do after school? This option would maintain a continued presence in the neighborhood.

The Chief Librarian reiterated the costs associated with the reopening of the two branches - \$550,000, running the two after school programs - \$300,000 and, staggering the days of 9 branches - \$200,000.

President Sullivan told the Board that she is not hearing that there is any new money.

William Large suggested that the public policy may be unwilling to fund a library of this size; that every avenue for remedy seems to have closed; and that the library is experiencing "death by a thousand cuts."

Board members shared their opinions and thoughts on the budget crisis and the many options presented. Many expressed concern that all the suggestions were band-aid remedies.

The Board requested that the chief librarian cost out the option of closing one day a week at all sites.

President Sullivan stated that there seemed to be a consensus to continue the discussion and exploration of options; and suggested that the Board take no action until following the August 11, 2008 Council meeting.

The President invited comments from the community; Councilman Larry Deutsch, Brenda McCumber and Susan Hood spoke.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

Respectively submitted,

Louise Blalock, Acting Secretary