

Farmington Community Library Board of Trustees
Regular Board Meeting - 7:00 p.m. – Ernest E. Sauter Board Room
August 17, 2017

**The Board Meeting moved to the FCL Auditorium to accommodate 14 members
of the public and Café owners who were present to comment on the closing of the Chapters Café.**

Board Members Present: Bosler, Bush, Doughty, Lazar, Paul, White

Board Members Absent: Liebold, O'Malley

Staff Members Present: Miller, Serresseque, Siegrist, Streit, Yunker

Staff Members Absent: None

Present for Public Comment: Café Owners, Jim and Christine Bezy
Thomas Howard, Dr. Ardeshir M. Irani,
Sanaya Irani, Sarosh Irani, Shekufa Irani, Charles D. Lacina,
Bill Largent, Aaron O. Richardson, Noah Richardson,
Ponnila Sampath-Kumar, Paula Shelton-Banks, John Stong

Board President, C. Doughty, advised the members of the public that although the Board normally meets in the Board Room, the meeting has been moved to the Auditorium to accommodate public comments, adding to those heard at the informational meeting just held with respect to the Cafe.

The public is entitled to stay after Public Comments and the Board will remain in the Auditorium to continue the Board meeting once comments were heard.

CALL TO ORDER

The Board Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President C. Doughty.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Board President, C. Doughty asked that because of the number of people in attendance, they limit their comments to three minutes per person and also to stand and give their name and address when they speak.

Comments are not whole and complete statements from each member of the public.

Jim Bezy, Co-Owner of the Chapters Café in the Library shared his concern that the Board made a decision to close the Café without consulting the taxpayers.

Christine Bezy, Co-Owner of the Chapters Café, explained the decrease in revenue due to the closing of Dunckel. She also offered to reduce the size of the Café to allow more study space for patrons. She asked the Board for an opportunity to change the Café to meet the needs of the Library.

Paula Shelton-Banks, 29990 Wildbrook Dr., Southfield, visited the Library and was impressed with the Library and the Café owners. She asks that the Board retain the Café to attract people to the Library.

Shekufa Irani, 28338 Timberview Ct., FH, asked, "What is the replacement value to me as a citizen and taxpayer? What difference will it make in my life? Is it more money for the city?"

President, C. Doughty thanked each participant for their comments and explained that after careful consideration, the Café area will be repurposed for meeting space with vending machines. Many other public libraries have done the same with good results. Since one of the major demands in the Library today is for group meeting/collaborative areas where patrons can have group study and discussions, the Library will repurpose the Café space. When this building was originally designed, this space was designated to be converted to that type of use. The lease expired almost a year ago and has been on a month to month basis. We believe it is the best for the Library.

Shekufa Irani asked if meeting rooms have been in demand and if the Library is catering to people who run businesses out of the Library.

C. Doughty thanked her for her comments.

Bill Largent, 28331 Forestbrook Dr., FH, spoke as a resident who has been involved in public policy for 25 years at the local, state and tribal level. He says that 750 people want to keep the Café and that, 1% of 72,000 square feet should not make a difference. He had read the lease agreement and agrees that the Library is within its rights, but it could have been handled better. He had read through prior months of minutes and could not find reference to café discussions. He asked if the Board would share the minutes where this decision was made.

C. Doughty advised that the minutes will be posted on the Library website as they are each month.

Sarosh Irani, 28338 Timberview Ct., FH, a WSU student who has used the Library meeting rooms and café, questioned the number of people who have an interest or need for meeting space. Was the number more than the 700 who signed the petition to keep the Café?

C. Doughty replied that although we know that the demand is high, we do not have an exact number.

Sarosh Irani asked if the Board has consulted with other libraries who have had cafes and was advised that, yes, there have been discussions. He further comments that the needs of the patrons who pay the millage to fund the Library are being compromised.

C. Doughty thanked him for his comments.

Bill Largent asks that "the record show that I am asking the Board to reconsider this decision and allow them to operate. Put together a community group. So let the minutes show I am formally requesting that the Board reconsider this decision and at a later meeting to make a motion to appoint a community

group to investigate what we can do to make this the living room of Farmington Hills.”

C. Doughty thanked each participant.

Dennis Lacina agrees with the idea that the Café be maintained as a service the Library provides.

Paula Shelton-Banks says she appreciates the fact that she can spend the day at the Library without leaving to buy food.

C. Doughty thanked each participant for their comments.

John Stong, 30165 W. Fifteen Mile Road, W. Bloomfield, felt that the Café provides a warm and friendly addition to the Library and if it closes, he may not visit the Library again.

Ponnala Sampath-Kumar, 29515 Ardmore Dr., FH, stated that she has always found a place to study and that the Bezys have always been hospitable.

Sanaya Irani, 28338 Timberview Ct., FH, felt the Café is a good place to study or take a break and quite a few people appreciate what the Café has to offer. It makes the Library different from other libraries.

C. Doughty thanked her.

Aaron Richardson, 27300 Apple Blossom Lane, Southfield, spoke as a personal friend of the Bezys with no background of the Library. As a pastor, he felt a decision should be made in the best interest of the Library, but people should not be overlooked.

C. Doughty thanked him.

In answer to Sarosh Irani’s question of how many Board members patronize the Library, President, C. Doughty responded, “Every single one of us use the Library”.

Sarosh Irani’s asked, “Do the Board Members use the café?”

Board Trustee, J. White responded that he uses the Library extensively. He made several points:

- I have used the cafe also and tried to use it when it was not open; an issue that has not been brought up. It is obvious how much you care.
- I agree, there is no way a vending machine can replace that human relationship and that is probably the thing that you are most angry about. Everything else that we are talking about, we are not that far apart.
- We are talking about trying to establish collaborative study spaces, not merely study rooms, where people can have discussions. We have a demand for that. You are not seeing that demand. I would have been sitting in your chair two months ago, I am new on the Board. But I have heard from our staff how much the need is there.
- Anyone who has come in when you need to meet with a group, it is not always possible to get a room. So it is not about 1% here. We are not comparing it to the rest of the Library. There is a space we have dedicated to a café right now vs what space do we have available that could potentially be a collaborative space without moving walls.

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- Again, the human connection is the part that I cannot answer. It is obvious how much you care about that.
 - I know how important it is to have snacks and coffee in the Library, but those of you who are here for eight hours know that the café is not open for eight hours. So if you are here all day, you know that you don't have access to it and there are hours in the morning and evening when we can't use the space for people who might want to use it.

Question from audience: What about extending the hours?

Trustee, J. White responds that the two people who are working are the only two people working. But that would be the one thing that a vending machine could do – patrons could have food whenever they are in the Library.

Bill Largent comments that he had made reference to the fact that if there were performance issues or financial issues, they should be discussed. Mr. Largent was not happy with the way the Café was notified of the closing.

Library Director, E. Streit, asked to speak and explained that she and the Library Board had prepared a letter to be hand-delivered to the Café owners. She explained to Jim and Christine that the news was not good but she would stay to discuss the letter once they had read it. Branch Head, J. Miller and E. Streit stayed in the Café to clarify questions.

Bill Largent commented that he had addressed discussing performance issues in his opening remark, including an extension of hours, giving the Library more money and expanding the menu. Could the hours be extended? More money? Expand the menu and be more profitable? He further commented that the Library is quiet in the morning, until kids come from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m., with a crowd in the evening. He advised putting together a community advisory group to discuss the Café situation.

Trustee, J. White responded that last year, Dunckel wasn't open at all so the situation with students was different. When Dunckel reopens, it will be a K - 7. We don't expect kids will be crossing 12 Mile to get to the Library.

Director, E. Streit added that she had talked with George Heitsch from Farmington Public Schools who said the parents will drop children off and pick them up in the afternoon. The Library has not had a problem which Dunckel students in over a year simply because Dunckel is closed. The Monitors have not been required because the Library didn't have the problem.

C. Doughty asked that we limit additional comments then close this portion of the meeting.

Comments continued about students walking over to the Library after school and how many more meeting rooms the Library needed.

C. Doughty advised the attendees, "We dedicated an informational meeting about two weeks ago for just this purpose. We have opened the Public Comment segment of this meeting and we have given everyone an opportunity to speak and we have not held it tight to three minutes. There really isn't anything more that could be said. There is really no question in our mind that Bezys have a lot of friends and people who think really highly of them. They are well respected and they do what they do very well and most of it is personal relationships. But we have made a decision. We had open discussion on it.

We talked about whether anyone’s position has changed. It has not. We are moving on. Any time a decision like this is made, there are going to be people that are disappointed - that are unhappy. We think, in the end, it will be best for the Library and for the community. We are going to move on the meeting. You are welcome to stay. Thank you.”

The Meeting was called back to order by President, C. Doughty at 8:05 p.m.

MINUTES

MOTION by G. Bosler to approve the Minutes of the June 8, 2017 Board Meeting was supported by B. Lazar. Board approved. Motion passed.

OPERATING BILLS

MOTION by J. White to approve \$540,131.83 of expenditures for check numbers 23972 through 24075 issued on July 13, 2017 was supported by S. Paul. Board approved. Motion passed.

MOTION by B. Lazar to approve \$429,680.96 of expenditures for check numbers 24076 through 24149 issued on August 10, 2017 was supported by J. White. Board approved. Motion passed.

FINANCIAL

MOTION by G. Bosler to receive and file the Monthly Budget Report for May 2017 was supported by B. Lazar. Board approved. Motion passed.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Board received a letter from the Jim and Christine Bezy’s attorney, Mr. Nickolas M. Guttman, PLC, with respect to the Café. Copies were distributed to the Board Members and the Board President contacted Mr. Guttman.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

- Staff Programs – Great American Solar Eclipse on Monday has prompted several different Library programs which drew almost 200 patrons. We initially received 200 solar eclipse glasses and distributed them at Library programs. We ordered a second time and were able to accommodate most of our patrons’ requests.
- Mr. M. L. Liebler, author and poet, presented “Heaven was Detroit” which attracted more than 24 patrons to hear music and talk about Detroit’s musical past. He will return in October for “The Beatles Forever”.
- The Children’s Department hosted 1,200 children and adults to conclude the Summer Reading Club. Overall, 3,000 children, 264 teens and 61 adults participated and over 61 programs were offered during Summer Reading.
- The Library has experienced six power outages within the past two months. An electrical panel was replaced caused by damage during the June 16 power outage. This was an after-hours

repair since all electricity (phones, computers, Library catalog, etc.) had to be brought down then returned to power by the time the Library opened.

- The Horizons Film Collection is underwritten by a benefactor. At the request of the benefactor, we have put into effect programs to highlight these films such as an Anime Film Festival for ages 10 and over with crafts for YAs and a Reel Life Stories film series which began in June with the screening of “The Native Experience”.
- At a joint meeting with the School Board and the two City Councils, we received updates on the closing of Harrison in 2019 and moving FPS Administrative offices to that location. In the November election, they will be asking for a Headlee Override. If it is defeated, they would lose \$19 per student or approximately \$172,000. The Library will lose about \$45,000. Ken Massey talked about C.A.R.E.S. (Community Action Resources Empowerment Services) that purchased the St. Alexander Food Pantry with the possibility of turning it into an area consisting of resources for getting clothing, counseling, life skills, work related training, grief and suicide prevention awareness, and more.
- The Library will be present at the Farmers Market on Saturday. We are filling the book bike with books to be purchased or checked out. We have interacted with 400 people in two months.
- The Library is also a drop off point for school supplies for disadvantaged children.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

MOTION by G. Bosler to move the Committee Reports to the end of the Agenda was supported by B. Lazar. Board approved. Motion passed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Carpet and painting has begun. Branch Head, Jaclyn Miller, has done a wonderful job as liaison with the carpet and paint crews and the staff. Both crews are a pleasure to work with, are very professional, and have accommodated all staff requests.

The Build It area in the Children’s Department, which has not been operational for years, will become a storage area.

It is necessary to replace the 15 year old chairs in the Adult Area. We will order 151 new chairs (less expensive than repairing/recovering older chairs) which will total about \$50,000. Throughout the Library, there are ottomans which need to be recovered and in the Children’s area, a couch may be recovered with two additional couches ordered for the area.

NEW BUSINESS

The Board of Trustees was asked to confirm information on the Board address list. It is proposed that the Library would create a form which would allow the public to contact the Board members. The form could be filled out and submitted to a specific Board address. There was agreement by the Board to move forward with the form to contact the Board members.

Staff Evaluations were completed on a timely basis. It is not easy to prepare multiple evaluations at one time, but our Supervisors were able to accomplish the task. We would like to keep increases to one

time a year, but to talk with staff throughout the year as big projects are completed. We would like to find a simpler way to accomplish this.

C. Doughty informed the Board members that an invitation was extended from the Farmington Hills City Council to meet on September 18 with various Boards and Commissions throughout the City. They will be discussing an ordinance which was passed earlier this year in an attempt to bring uniformity to the Boards and Commissions. There are specific references to the Library Board. C. Doughty will be attending that meeting and give an update to the Board.

C. Doughty commented that, "We are a District Library formed under State law, formed by joint agreement with the City of Farmington and the City of Farmington Hills. We are an eight member Board, four members appointed by the Farmington City Council and four members appointed by the Farmington Hills City Council."

At 8:45 p.m., Board President, Clark Doughty, called an Executive Session and the Board moved to the Board Room.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Benefits Committee

The Benefits Committee met to discuss WCBC requests.

Staff has proposed increasing the self-funding Dental Optical plan benefits from \$1,000 to \$1,500 for full-time employees. This would be an increase of an additional \$16,000 to fund the plan. The Benefits Committee recommends approving this request. Staff also proposed that the \$25 deductible on this plan be waived. The 25% copay would remain.

Staff requested that they be permitted to spend their Dental/Optical money on supplies without having to purchase through a licensed practitioner. The Benefits Committee recommends supplies still be prescribed by a licensed practitioner although the purchase of these supplies can be decided by the staff member. The Committee recommends the change.

Staff has also requested a supplemental health insurance. Effective January 1, 2017, the Library has offered the Health Care Savings plan to all full-time employees. The Benefits Committee recommends that the request not be revisited. The Committee does not recommend approval.

When an employee's status changes but duties remain the same, do they require an orientation? The recommendation is, yes, an orientation will still be required and staff will receive a 3 month and 6 month meeting with their supervisor. Although it does not have to be extensive, there should be communication and a method of telling whether the employee understands duties.

Finally, as an operational issue, staff proposes that the drive on the side lot where many staff park should be blocked to traffic. The suggestion is to close off the end closest to the book return. The Committee recommendation is to use the most effective but least expensive means to block off access to the staff parking area.

MOTION by G. Bosler to accept the Benefits Committee recommendation for approval to increase Dental Optical from \$1,000 to \$1,500, and in addition to further recommend that the deductible for Dental/Optical be waived, was supported by J. White. Board approved. Motion passed.

Finance Committee
Nothing to report.

Personnel Committee
Nothing to report.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by G. Bosler to adjourn was supported by B. Lazar. Board approved. Motion passed.

The Board meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m. by President, Clark Doughty. The next meeting of the Library Board is scheduled for Thursday, September 14, at 7:00 p.m. in the Ernest E. Sauter Board Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

G. Bosler, Secretary
Library Board of Trustees

GB:dls