

Providence Community Library
Meeting of the Board of Directors
July 22, 2009

The meeting was held in the community room of the Knight Memorial Library, 275 Elmwood Ave. Providence at 5:30 pm.

1. Welcome and introduction of Members

The meeting was called to order by PCL President Marcus Mitchell at 5:45 who marked this first board meeting of PCL as a historic occasion. Each board member introduced him/herself to the meeting.

Present: Christian Caldarone, Harriett Frank, Dale Gorton, Althea Graves, Peter Karczmar, Linda Kushner, Rochelle Lee, Mark McKenney, Marcus Mitchell, Alix Ogden, Patricia Raub, Maureen Romans, Ellen Schwartz, Ken Wise.

2. Board Orientation

Linda Kushner presented folders to each new board member containing the by-laws; list of hours and the locations of the nine libraries; roster of PCL employees; List of Board members to date; and conflict of interest forms which she asked each member to fill out and return. She noted that our board is not yet complete. There are ten additional members to be added to complete the Board; the representatives of three friends groups (Olneyville, South Providence and Washington Park) the staff representative, the mayor's two public appointment and four more members to be elected by the board. These people will join the board at the September Board meeting which is also the annual board meeting.

3. President's report

Marcus Mitchell noted that the creation of PCL, which saved all the neighborhood libraries in Providence from closure, was a historic event. Cities across the nation are watching us as they face threats of library closure. We have a number of challenges; to build partnerships with community and corporate groups; to raise \$570,000 of private money to meet our budget and to rid ourselves of thinking of our libraries as branches. They are community libraries.

4. Director's Report

Ann Robinson, our new Director reported that since joining us on July 7th she has visited all nine community libraries and found high enthusiasm at each library. This is wonderful but she advised but PCL needs to continue our outreach to colleges, schools, and community groups in an effort to build each library. She reported to us that every decision that she will make would be focused on the primary goal of improving service to the library customer and the community.

5. The personnel report

Patricia Raub reported the guiding principles used in hiring PCL staff was to hire enough staff to keep all nine libraries operating smoothly for the same numbers of hours PPL had been running the branches; to honor the seniority clause of the PPL contract; and to keep staffing costs in line with our projected budget primarily by avoiding a top heavy administration. PCL has hired fifty-three union employees and six non-union employees including the Executive Director, two regional supervisors, and HR person, the Director of Development and a business manager who will come on board in August.

6. Treasurer's report presented by Ellen Schwartz

This month's report is abbreviated. A fuller report, with handouts, will be given at the annual meeting in Sept.

PCL's budget for this year is \$4,900,000: \$3,500,000 comes from the city; \$754,380 comes from the State, \$25,170 comes from fines and fees and \$580,000 must be raised through donations and grants. There is also \$75,000 from endowed book funds for the branches.

In addition this year we have \$100,500 in start up costs which were not included in the budget.

The City of Providence is handling our payroll, so we know that we will always have the money to pay our staff. In addition on July 1st, the first day of the first quarter they transferred to us \$300,000.

Even before we mount a fundraising campaign we are beginning to see bits of money come in from different sources: \$2,724 in fines and fees; \$6,520 in donations and a grant for \$25,000 from the RI Foundation.

After paying \$177,888.49 in bills, we have \$178,9987.75 cash on hand.

7. Development report

Steve Kumins, the development director, reported that we have the challenge of raising \$580,000 to \$600,000 from private sources. This requires a well-worked-out and systematic system of community fundraising and grant writing. The first step of that plan involved sending out 1800 letters to persons known to support the civic, educational and communal mission of libraries alerting them to the fact that PCL has taken over the operation of Providence's community libraries and has managed to keep all nine former branches of the PPL open. Although the letter did not solicit contributions, some are beginning to come in. Follow-up solicitation is in the works.

PCL has received a \$25,000 start-up grant from RI Foundation to help cover one-time start up expenses.

PCL and GTECH are entering into a partnership to advance computer learning in the community. GTECH has volunteered to create three computer learning laboratories at Wanskuck, Mt. Pleasant and Fox Point as part of their "After School Advantage" program. These computers will be for children, as well as adult patrons, to use. In addition, GTECH is giving PCL ten computers and three Laptop computers for the Administrative and Tech service departments to use. Mark McKenney called for a round of applause to thank GTECH for such a generous gift and every one readily joined in. There will be a press conference at Wanskuck Library on July 23rd at 3:30 to announce

the PCL/GTECH Partnership. It will be attended by GTECH officials, the Mayor and City Council members as well as Wanskuck patrons and available board members.

8. Facility report

Linda Kushner reported PCL manages the libraries but does not own, (or wish to own) the library buildings themselves. The City owns one of the community libraries, Washington Park. The Fox Point library is situated in property rented from the Fox Point Boys and Girls Club, The remaining seven libraries, Rochambeau, South Providence, Wanskuck, Mt Pleasant, Smith Hill, Knight Memorial and Olneyville, are located in buildings still owned by PPL. These buildings are presently being leased to the City and PCL subleases them from the City (for \$1.00 a year.)

Last year PPL promised that it would convey these buildings to the City, were the libraries at these sites to be operated by the City or another 501(c)(3) rather than PPL. That conveyance has not yet taken place. Alix Ogden, the Mayor's staff representative on the PCL board reported that negotiations are taking place between the City and PPL to effect this transfer.

9. Friends Committee report

Because a Friends Committee has not yet been established, each of the Friends Representatives reported on what was happening in their group.

Dale Gorton reported that although the Wanskuck Friends group is 20 years old they now are working on building their membership.

Maureen Romans reported that the Mt Pleasant Friends group, which is one of the older Friends groups, has been very active selling T-Shirts and had received notice from state Representative Joanne Grannini that she has applied for a \$3,000 grant for the Friends.

Ken Wise reported that the Fox Point Friends group, only a few months old, had raised \$1,000 and had given the Fox Point Library \$250 of that money to augment its activities. They are working on completing a Fox Point Friends Website.

Harriet Frank reported that Rochambeau Friends are developing a core of volunteers to be trained under Librarian Tom O'Donnell's instruction to be shelvers at Rochambeau. They are working on a board orientation program which they would be willing to share with other Friends groups. Rochambeau also had a robust sale of T-Shirts.

Althea Graves reported that the Smith Hill Friends has been active since the late 70s. They enjoyed a great celebration, with a large community turnout for the July 1st opening of PCL.. The Smith Hill Friends owns a plot of land which abuts the library. At this time they are raising funds for a fence for the Friends Garden.

Peter Karczmar said that the Knight Memorial Friends was working to have an accurate report of the condition of the library building. Mark McKenney, who served for 5 years on the PPL board, said that status reports on all the library buildings should be available from PPL and urged PCL to get hold of these reports.

Christian Caldarone expressed his concern that PCL be supportive of the Friends Groups and help them develop. Linda Kushner said that strong friends groups were indeed important to revitalize the individual libraries but that an important function of the Friends groups was to work together to create a strong PCL without which no individual library could exist.

Announcements:

The next meeting of the PCL board will be on Sept 22nd at 5:30 at Rochambeau. This September meeting is also the Annual meeting of PCL.

A Joint potluck Staff/Board brunch will be held at Mt Pleasant library on August 7th from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.

Marcus Mitchell announced that the Met school is interested in providing volunteers at the library. Linda Kushner noted that while it is good to have volunteers, under union rules volunteers had to work at the invitation and under the supervision of the branch staff and had to perform specific tasks.

Public Comment

More than a dozen members of the public attended the meeting. The following people offered comments:

Morgan Mitchell

“Why won’t PPL give PCL the book trucks etc they no longer need but PCL needs?”
Response from Board: We don’t know but we will ask again.

Linda D’Ambra, (Children’s librarian at South Providence.)

Why is PCL delivering books to PPL in the face of their refusal to give us certain equipment they no longer need? Response from many board members – “we are taking the high road.”

Ann Keefe

The annual meeting offers a good opportunity to have some kind of celebration highlighting PCL.

Response – Perhaps Ann Keefe and Steve Kumins should look into this.

Dehlia Kovac.

PCL should develop a wish list on its website for needed equipment.

Response from Board: Great idea. Stephanie Chausse, our web specialist will look into setting this up.

Stephanie Chausse (IT staff)

Thanked the Board and Executive Board for all the work they did in creating PCL.

Karen McAninch (Business Manager for the Staff Union):

Reiterated that not all volunteers are good and that they need to serve under the direction of the local staff.

Adjournment

Marcus Mitchell thanked all present for their work in helping to start the PCL and accepted a motion to adjourn from Mark McKenney, which was 2nd by all. Meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Linda J. Kushner
Secretary

DRAFT