

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF
COLLIERVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD**

Tuesday, November 18, 2014

The Collierville Public Library Board held a regular public meeting at 6:00pm on Tuesday, November 18, 2014, in the Board Chambers at Collierville Town Hall, located at 500 Poplar View Parkway.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**: Chairman Liz Rozanski called the meeting to order.
2. **ROLL CALL**: The following members of the Library- Board were present: Kathleen Bradley, Andre Crafford, Jeff Martindale, Liz Rozanski, Eddie Maier, and Mr. Patton.

Mr. Suddath explained that Mr. Harlow contacted him to say he had a schedule conflict and apologized for not being present.

Staff present were Assistant Town Administrator Josh Suddath, Town Administrator James Lewellen. Also present was LSSI CEO Ron Dubberly and LSSI Regional Director Dana Braccia.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 23, 2014**

Mrs. Bradley made motion, seconded by Mr. Maier, to approve the minutes of the October 23, 2014 Library Board meeting as written.

ROLL CALL: Bradley – yes, Crafford – abstain, Martindale – yes, Rozanski – yes, Maier – yes, Patton - abstain. Motion approved.

4. **CONSIDERATION OF AUTHORIZATION TO NOTIFY LIBRARY SYSTEMS AND SERVICES, LLC (LSSI) OF THE COLLIERVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD'S INTENT TO EXERCISE ITS RIGHT TO TERMINATE WITHOUT CAUSE THE LIBRARY MANAGEMENT SERVICES AGREEMENT (CONTRACT NO. GS-14-00589) EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2015.**

Mr. Suddath introduced Mr. Ron Dubberly, CEO of LSSI. He thanked Mr. Dubberly for coming to speak to the Board as they considered this decision on the library contract.

Mr. Dubberly thanked the Board for the opportunity to address them. He explained to the Board that all he has ever done was work with public libraries and described his career history and the various public library systems across the country he has worked with. Mr. Dubberly then explained his experience with LSSI starting 18 years ago with the Riverside County Library, which was the first library operated by a private enterprise (LSSI).

Mr. Dubberly said that from his experience being inside a government library, a consultant to governments, and in a partnership with governments, he felt that LSSI was a unique enterprise. He said that LSSI manages libraries for communities and operates them in a way to provide effectiveness and responsiveness at the most practical cost for that community. To do this, they have individual contracts and things like pay vary from community to community.

Mr. Dubberly said he believed in doing things right and doing them efficiently, and that LSSI strives to do the right thing. Contracts are all written so that each community, city, county is responsible for their own policies. Mr. Dubberly said he believes the relationship between communities and private enterprise works when communities are in charge of their individual policies.

Mr. Dubberly explained that LSSI also bases their partnerships on a multi-year plan, to allow the community to state what is needed for their library. This allows LSSI to allocate funds based on those goals. He then explained that LSSI only collects the contract fee, no other fees, fines, or costs.

In addition, Mr. Dubberly said that by practice, and sometimes by contract, each community is in charge of approving the library director. He said in every place he is aware of, the community is involved in who is chosen as a director, which may have been previously misrepresented to the Board.

In their partnership with Collierville, Mr. Dubberly said LSSI has been pleased to provide staff that is responsive. He believed the Town found it that way and LSSI would like to keep it that way. He said LSSI has given the Town a firm, fixed price contract and noted that Town staff has negotiated well for those contracts. Each contract includes staff, operations, and materials amounts, and each year the community sets those amounts and LSSI buys that inventory on the Town's behalf.

In addition, in some places he said LSSI would buy the equipment and in others they would just operate it. He said that Technology changes in libraries are coming and LSSI would keep pace. He said those opportunities would be made available to the Town.

Mr. Dubberly told the Board that LSSI has provided responsive programming for the library. He then described that a nationwide telecommunication program of libraries is being planned, and how it will span from one corner of the country to the other.

He reiterated that Library policies, including collection development policies, are local. He clarified that LSSI does not select materials, but provides information to help staff be more efficient. To be responsive to the community, the individual library staff members pick library materials.

With regard to staff development, LSSI has two training days and LSSI pays dues for directors to attend the American Library Association conference. They have hired several trainers, in various areas to support library operations. Mr. Dubberly then described why public libraries are unique and how they serve individuals in the community without an agenda.

He concluded by stating that LSSI has been pleased with the opportunity to provide services responsive to our community needs, to provide them efficiently and practically, and to pay the staff in accordance with the salary ranges built into the contract through their proposal. If a community wants LSSI to pay the staff more, as part of the contract, he said the Town can provide the funds to do that. If a Town wants something different for their staff, such as with benefits, there is a way to do as well. He said while LSSI is a national company and system in how they arrange their services, they insist to handle things locally to be more responsive. He

noted that Dana Braccia is the regional LSSI director responsible for supporting Collierville, and is also dedicated to support the library director.

Mr. Dubberly said that LSSI has turnover in their libraries, particularly at the lower levels, the same as other libraries, but if the issue is money, LSSI pays what they were told to pay through the contract. He told the Board that if they felt they had no local control, that they were mistaken. LSSI knows how to operate libraries and treat employees. Mr. Dubberly noted that this year LSSI was giving merit raises across the board, rebuilding their performance evaluation system, and rebuilding their merit system.

Mr. Dubberly then noted that he wasn't sure what the Board needed to know, but he knew the Town has a lot on their plate right now with schools and with an expansion coming soon at the Library. He reminded the Board that he has worked on numerous library rebuilding projects, and reminded the Board that LSSI has technology which the Town would pay more for if they chose to leave. He said there are changes coming in Library technology and that the company LSSI currently works with was recently bought by another company that charges more, and decisions will be required in the next couple years on technology topics.

He concluded by saying LSSI is like a guest in your home and if this relationship doesn't work, then they are thankful for the opportunity to have worked together.

Mrs. Rozanski thanked Mr. Dubberly and opened the floor up to any questions, to which no one rose with questions. Mrs. Rozanski then asked if the Board members had any questions.

Mr. Patton said that this was a little upsetting on his behalf, because in the contract up for renewal with LSSI included a 3 percent per year increase for staff. In the last one, there was a \$10,000 reallocation of funds to purchase materials, reducing it to only a 2% increase for staff. Being that we are local, many of the employees are members of the Town. The Board refused that contract and went to the BMA to say the 3% should stay as it was. He asked Mr. Dubberly to speak to that and the mindset of LSSI in that regard.

Mr. Dubberly responded that they committed to the 3% increase. He said they were making it available, and there was a misunderstanding that it should have been effective July 1. He said that they frequently wait until they can take care of all staff at once. A 1% increase has been issued back to July 1 for all staff with LSSI. In this contract, it is 3% and Collierville staff have received message individually that their increase is 3%. They did not take the 7.65% out for FICA. There was another library system that asked for more than that, and they have been given that amount. He said they planned to make the raises available in autumn, and they have and will remain committed to provide Collierville staff 3%.

Mrs. Rozanski asked if Mr. Dubberly could tell the Board when the raise information was notified to the staff.

Mr. Dubberly said it was done yesterday, and not because of this meeting. He said LSSI had been trying to gather the data and were unable to do that until this time for payroll.

Mrs. Rozanski said that she didn't understand. Best practices usually include performance appraisals and compensation reviews happening at the same time on an anniversary date. She

asked if that was considered a best practice to provide raises to all staff at the same time, or is this was unique to this budget cycle.

Mr. Dubberly said this was unique to this budget cycle. As far as he knew, there was usually a merit pool and people who deserve this merit pool get various raise amounts. He said LSSI is rebuilding the performance evaluation system and they are separating the raise from the post evaluation so there are more moments of evaluation conversation, without tying it to a specific moment, which is counterproductive. That is their new best practice.

Mr. Patton said that it looked bad on the last proposal that there was \$10,000 being moved over to a profit margin, as opposed giving that raise to staff. It went over very flat with the Board and while that may not have been the intent, that was how it was perceived. That was his concern.

Mr. Dubberly said that most contracts include a handling fee for invoices and processing. This contract does not include that and there was a question in negotiation on whether that could be instituted. It wasn't and they are not charging for it, but in no way were they trying to take money from the staff. That money was earmarked for the staff and he believes the issue was probably that it wasn't started in July, and he regrets that.

Mrs. Rozanski asked Mr. Dubberly for clarification that he was saying the raise should have been given in the summertime, but employees were notified yesterday that they will be given the raise.

Mr. Dubberly said yes, that employees were formally advised of exactly which paycheck they can expect the raise. He explained that he told the Board of Directors that those contracts that had commitments would be met.

Mrs. Rozanski then asked if in previous years this has also been the case.

Mr. Dubberly said that the merit pool is sometimes 2% and sometimes 3%.

Mrs. Rozanski clarified that we budget 3% every year and she was referring to the Collierville librarians specifically and our contract.

Mr. Dubberly replied that the contract is for a set of services. The increase is what it takes to deliver those services. It is not specifically stated that they will get an X percent raise. It doesn't work that way.

Mr. Patton said that in the Library Board's refusal of the contract, when it was sent back to LSSI, the Board specifically said we did not want the original contract, and that the entire 3% should be given to employees.

Mr. Dubberly said that he has been working on this for a while, and if there was a misperception that it would be effective July 1, he apologized.

Mrs. Rozanski said she didn't think anyone would want to get a retroactive raise. In her experience, when you are given a performance evaluation, you are given a raise right then if it is deserved, not months later. She felt that was common practice. Mrs. Rozanski also said that the Town now employs librarians through the school system, and those librarians are making more than what our fellow librarians next door make. She feels this creates a perception in the

community regarding equity that needs to be addressed. She said we have been fortunate to have success in the launch of our school system, due largely to some talented individuals, and that she feels we have some equally talented individuals at our library currently. She acknowledged that the turnover has been noteworthy of late. She said the Board was aware LSSI is not a not-for-profit company.

Mrs. Rozanski thanked Mr. Dubberly for appearing before the Board and then asked if there was a motion from the Board.

Mr. Suddath offered that he was ready to provide a presentation similar to the previous meeting, if the Board required any additional information.

Mr. Patton made a motion that the Board defer this item until such time that the Library Board could convene in a work session before the Mayor and Alderman to discuss the possibility of moving forward with or without LSSI.

The motion failed for a lack of a second.

Mrs. Rozanski clarified that what was decided by the Board was not the final decision; that it would ultimately rest in the BMA's hands. The BMA could decide to reject their recommendation.

Mr. Suddath confirmed this, stating the Library Board and the BMA both must give consent to terminate the contract.

Mr. Martindale asked Mr. Patton why he would prefer a joint session with the BMA, as opposed to making an approve or deny decision this evening.

Mr. Patton responded that there were several factors. First, if there were a joint work session, the Finance Director would be present and could work up numbers that Mr. Suddath probably isn't ready to provide. She could work up costs to give the Board a full estimate of the overhead cost of operating the Library. This would allow the decision based not only on operating procedures, but also based on a financial perspective. A work session where Mr. Suddath and Finance could generate the numbers with the financial ramifications of terminating the contract would be good. Number two, what type of equipment that is at the Library currently would leave with LSSI.

Mrs. Rozanski said there is nothing; that the Town owns everything. The only thing LSSI controls, according to her reading of the contract, would be the HR aspect.

Mr. Patton noted that retainment of staff would be another consideration. Mr. Patton said he didn't think we would have the answers if you were to ask staff right now what it would cost per year to operate.

Mr. Suddath responded that the only aspect that would truly change would be the personnel and that those numbers were provided within the packet distributed to the Library Board. As far as materials, if the BMA set a \$200,000 materials budget as they traditionally have, the library staff would buy within that budget. With regard to Polaris Interlibrary System, the quote received by the Town shows that it will likely cost a little more than LSSI, but it's hard to make an apples to apples comparison on that. Personnel would be the largest portion of the budget and staff has worked to assemble scenarios for the Library Board showing how much this aspect would cost.

Mr. Patton mentioned that each employee would be put on the Town health insurance, pension, and other benefits. He said he felt the total amount would be greater, which is why he suggested a work session. In addition, both Boards would have to agree to terminate the contract.

Mrs. Rozanski stated that Exhibits A and B did show a comparison of library employees with Town benefits vs. aligning them into the Town pay plan and benefits. She noted that both of those numbers were less than the proposed contract personnel amounts with LSSI.

Mr. Lewellen noted that the Board could get a recommendation tonight, if they were ready to do that, and carry it forward with an offer to have a joint work session with the BMA, similar to the recent Parks Advisory Board. The Library Board could then present the background study and recommendations to the BMA before they take it under consideration.

Mr. Patton stated that with the Parks Advisory Board they were entering a 10 year contract with Desoto Athletic Center, and he felt that work session worked out really well. The PAB was able to present their case and the BMA better understood where everyone stood on the topic afterwards.

Mr. Martindale made a motion, seconded by Mr. Maier, that the Board exercise its right to terminate without cause the contract with LSSI, pending a work session with the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to discuss further.

All were in favor; none were opposed. Motion is approved.

5. OTHER BUSINESS/DISCUSSION

For the sake of preparation, Mr. Lewellen noted that the next BMA meeting was December 8th and Library Board members should check with calendars to see when they could participate in the work session with BMA. He noted that due to the busy schedule at the end of the year, we may end up proposing a work session directly before the BMA meeting on the 8th.

6. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was declared adjourned at 6:48pm.



Liz Rozanski, Chairman



Josh Suddath, Assistant Town Administrator