

Southfield Public Library Board of Trustees
Minutes of the Special meeting held March 30, 2015
In the Council Study Room of City Hall

Members present: Euni Rose, Deborah Evans, Carole McCollough

Staff: Dave Ewick

Guests: Fred Zorn, Sue Ward, Nancy Peterson, Darla Van Hoey, Renette Gordon, Yolanda Haynes and Don McGhee; with Council President Sylvia Jordan participating by speaker phone

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 by President Euni Rose.

New Business:

Northland Artwork – the meeting began with City Attorney Sue Ward giving a brief summary of the situation. Northland Center is closing April 10, 2015, and the court has appointed a receiver to liquidate holdings. There are substantial bills to be paid, including energy & water bills. The receiver is charged with keeping the property afloat until a new owner is determined and takes possession (approximately July). To do this he needs to generate some funding quickly.

One way of creating funds is to sell off parts of the property, like artworks. Due to historical and cultural interest, the City of Southfield has interest in keeping the artworks in the community. This meeting is to determine if there is interest and sufficient funding to make an offer on the artworks.

An appraisal was made for the receiver of a list of 9 specific items by Du Mouchelles.com. The amount they gave was about \$400,000. The receiver thinks this price is low and he would like to take the art to auction thinking he could make \$600,000. There will be a court action taken on Wednesday 4/1/15, where Judge Wendy Potts could move to allow the items to go to auction; or could order the receiver to sell them to a creditor for a specific amount.

The Library Board raised concerns including: that it was being rushed to provide funds toward purchase of artworks just because the City didn't have the funds; that no independent appraisal of the works have been done; and that no one knows the condition of the art nor costs to relocate it to City property, etc.

After much discussion, it was decided that all parties at the meeting were in agreement that we would like to see these artworks stay in Southfield and in spaces that are open to the public. There was agreement that the first step would be to secure the art for the community, then work together to determine placement, ownership of specific pieces, etc.

There was discussion about possible ways to recover some, if not all, of the funds invested by the Library, Friends and City. Finally, a suggestion was made asking if the City could support using a combination of LIRF or other City funds along with Friends funds and Library Funds to secure the purchase. Amounts were debated along with many ideas for crowdsourcing to allow corporations and individuals to assist with the purchase by reimbursing the original funds.

After more discussion, it was suggested that the City invest \$250,000; the Library invest \$200,000 and the Friends invest \$50,000 to generate a pool of \$500,000 that City Attorney Sue Ward could use to make an offer to the receiver. These sums fluctuated as the discussion went to being able to have some room to maneuver in negotiation.

MOTION: Carole McCollough made a motion to provide up to \$250,000 in Library Gift Funds toward the purchase of the Northland artworks collection as identified by Du Mouchelles.com appraisal letter to supplement monies procured from the Friends of the Southfield Public Library and the City of Southfield.

SUPPORT: Deborah Evans

Motion carried 3-0

The Friends of the Library have called a special meeting for Tuesday, March 31st, 2015, to vote on their portion and Fred Zorn was authorized by City Council President Sylvia Jordan to present the City's portion to the Council.

Future discussion will be held to investigate various options to generate funds to replace the funds invested in this venture.

City Librarian Dave Ewick will attend the 4/1/15 Oakland County Circuit Court hearing at 8:30 am and report back what happens to the Library Board.

With there being no further business, the Library Board meeting was adjourned at 6:15 pm by a motion from Deborah Evans.

Respectfully submitted,

David L. Ewick, City Librarian