

Yorkville Public Library
Community Relations Committee Meeting
Wednesday, July 7, 2021 7:00pm
Michelle Pfister Meeting Room
902 Game Farm Road

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Committee Chairman Russ Walter and roll was called.

Roll Call:

Susan Chacon-(arr. 7:02pm), Ryan Forristall-yes, Rosie Millen-yes, Russ Walter-yes

Other Board Members, Library Staff & Guests Present:

Library Board President Darren Crawford, Library Director Shelley Augustine, Director of Technical Services Dixie DeBord, Youth Services Director Jennette Weiss, Circulation Manager Sharyl Iwanski-Goist, Judy Somerlot-Friends of the Library, Doug Somerlot, Joan Knutson, Daniel Chacon, Sue Smithmeyer-Friends of the Library, Carol Morris-Friends of the Library, Sharon Lowy-Friends of the Library, Lucas Robinson-*Kendall County Record*, Victoria Crawford-Kylynn's Ridge, Sands Uridil-Friends of the Library, Lou Uridil-Friends of the Library, Pat McNamara-Blackberry North, Cesar Chacon, Corey Johnson

Recognition of Visitors:

Mr. Walter welcomed staff and guests.

Public Comment: (Under New Business)

New Business:

Q&A About the Process of Conversion to a Library District

Mr. Walter opened the meeting and showed a map slide that illustrated the local city boundaries and library district boundaries. It also showed locations of the persons outside the city limits who have purchased a Yorkville library card. A question and answer session followed.

Q. Mr. Walter posed the first question--what is a library district? **Answer:** A district is its own entity, the district controls the levy, the Board is elected and all else remains the same.

Q. The second question posed by Mr. Walter was what is the process to convert to a district? **Answer:** There are 3 different ways:

1. The Board must pass a resolution, City Council must approve, court hearing, public input, judge decides based on public hearing, legal costs of \$16,000. Process would take a year.
2. Referendum whereby Yorkville residents must vote to convert or not.
3. Public initiative--signatures gathered on petition (must be 10% of registered Yorkville voters), residents vote.

Ms. Somerlot noted that the Aurora Library and City Council worked on the groundwork for many months for Aurora to become a district library. The Council approved a \$2.7 million increase in levy to form the district. Mr. Crawford said the Yorkville library would have to be solvent to bring forth a resolution and that the library still has bonds to pay. Mr. Walter noted that it takes approximately \$1 million a year to run the library. He does not want to affect the Yorkville resident tax which is now \$250-\$300 per year and there would be no increase to them. The goal of a district is to offer library services to those outside city limits. Costs to people outside the city would be based on their assessed home value which is currently the method used when purchasing a non-resident card.

Currently the city provides many services to the library that would be lost by being a district. Mr. Walter showed a slide of the additional costs that a district would incur including ComEd costs, natural gas, employee benefits, snow removal, mowing, grounds cleanup, payroll services all of which would add approximately \$160,000 to the annual costs. Mr. Somerlot asked if there is a coalition/pool of other library districts, to defer costs on the services. Ms. Augustine said there is a building insurance consortium through RAILS and she has reached out to the Plano Library in regards to this. Mr. Walter noted that a new librarian has just been hired who has experience with grant writing, etc. and she has been asked to help.

Q: How will conversion to a district affect operations? **Answer:** It will not change, the staff will be the same, etc., same number of programs, books, etc. Advantages: expand reach to unincorporated areas, library has increased bandwidth and personal computers can be used in library. An audience guest stated that a district library advantage would be expanded hours of operations. He said evening hours are needed since many kids now go to the Oswego Library which is open longer.

Q: What additional amount would be manageable for the budget? **Answer:** Budget is usually \$45,000 over what is received in taxes (a deficit budget), but the library budget usually ends with a surplus. Development fees would still be collected as a district.

Q: If there is a surplus of money at year's end, what happens to it? **Answer:** It stays in the library budget. Mr. Walter noted that the library bonds will be paid in full in 2025 and there will be a reduction in the taxes likely in 2026. With an approved referendum, the extra money from the tax bills could be put into the General Fund to pay for library operations.

Q: Ms. Victoria Crawford asked if the out-of-city residents could be surveyed, perhaps door to door, to determine interest in a district library. **Answer:** A survey could be possible, more meetings like this could also be held.

Q: Sue Smithmeyer asked if the referendum option is held back due to the bond payments? The surrounding towns would have the same other costs. **Answer:** Other districts have a larger area from which to gain resources. Board Treasurer Chacon said \$645,000 is the refunding bond and \$75,000 for regular bond that needs to be paid this budget year.

Q: How did Plano acquire all the area they have in their district? **Answer:** It is not known, they have been a district for a long time.

Q. Daniel Chacon asked if the random district boundaries of other libraries, contribute to funding deficits? **Answer:** Mr. Walter said the library has never requested an increase in the taxes. An increase could only be a certain amount due to a tax cap. For many years, books were purchased with only the money raised by Friends of the Library. Staff worked 6 years without a raise. If there was an approved referendum, taxes could be increased.

Summarizing the needs for a district library, Doug Somerlot said there are two components to becoming a district: increasing the money coming in and reducing the costs of each service for which the library must be responsible as a district. Additionally, he said that more firm cost figures must be obtained as well. Mr. Walter said electricity and benefits package would be the biggest expenses.

Q. Ms. Smithmeyer asked: Will someone contact ComEd to determine if a lower fee can be negotiated from them? **Answer:** Mr. Walter will attempt to contact them.

Judy Somerlot noted there were 5 Board members present at this meeting and she wondered if the entire Board is committed to this endeavor. She said there is no point pursuing this idea without the support of the entire Board. Committee member Millen said there is not enough information at this time, for the Board to take a vote. She would not want to cut benefits to employees, so much building maintenance is needed and much more than \$160,000 a year would be necessary. She added that Oswego is thriving with their expanded hours. She wants Yorkville to put more energy into the library services and expanded hours to help it grow.

Another participant wondered if the library wants to form a district so they can move in their own direction especially following the pre-school decision and the replacement of some Board members. Another attendee said there are many dedicated volunteers and that a district library would be beneficial for some autonomy for the library.

Audience members thanked the committee for holding the meeting and asked that more advance notice be given for any future meetings.

Adjournment:

There was no further discussion or questions/answers and the meeting was adjourned at 8:07pm.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by Marlys Young, Minute Taker