

Personnel and Public Relations Committee

Meeting, January 3, 1985

Minutes

Present were John Mueller, Edith Rossiter, Martin Seidman, Reba Jackson, Chair, and Sharon Alpi, ex officio. Also present were Robert Dumas and Judith Nichols, Children's Librarian.

The meeting was called to order in the Board Room at 7:05 p.m. by Mrs. Jackson, who turned the meeting over to Mr. Dumas for presentation of the first item of business, who noted that he had mailed to the Committee that part of Mrs. Nichols' monthly report in which she discussed some of the problems attendant upon children being left in the Library without parental or other adult supervision. Mr. Dumas remarked past discussions by the Committee about unsupervised children in the adult departments of the Library and asked Mrs. Nichols to present in detail the occasions, frequency and kinds of problems presented to the Children's Department staff as a result of children being left in the Library. The occasion reported by Mrs. Nichols ranged from parents leaving the children in the Library while they the parents went shopping to situations where children were left to be picked up by a working parent while the first parent went to work, to children suspended from school being sent to the Library by their parents to spend the day in lieu of school attendance. Children as young as two years old are left alone in the Children's Room for extended periods up to half an hour while parents use the adult facilities. On occasion children left in the Library have not been picked up at the close of business and Mrs. Nichols has remained in the building for as long as half an hour before the child was called for and on other occasions has driven the child home. Parents of such children sometimes cannot be reached by telephone. Young children left alone experience panic, fright, and start crying, requiring staff attention that prevents other work from being done. Children who can read eventually become bored when left for extended periods and then become behavior problems. There is additionally and perhaps most importantly a danger to the children that is not perceived by parents who leave their children alone downtown and in the Library. Mrs. Nichols asked for restrictive policies by the Board so that the staff can take appropriate action and feel that the Board supports that action and so that the policy can be quoted to patrons letting them know that staff action is not the arbitrary decision of that particular person.

The Committee after discussion and further questioning decided to recommend for Board action a policy to state that

- (1) No child under seven years of age shall be left unattended by a parent or other adult guardian in the Children's Room or other area of the Library.
- (2) No child over seven years of age shall be left in the Library without parental or similar adult supervision for a period in excess of one-half hour unless that child is in attendance at a Library sponsored program or is actively engaged in the use of Library resources.
- (3) If children of any age are so abandoned as described above, Staff will call the Decatur police to take custody of the children.

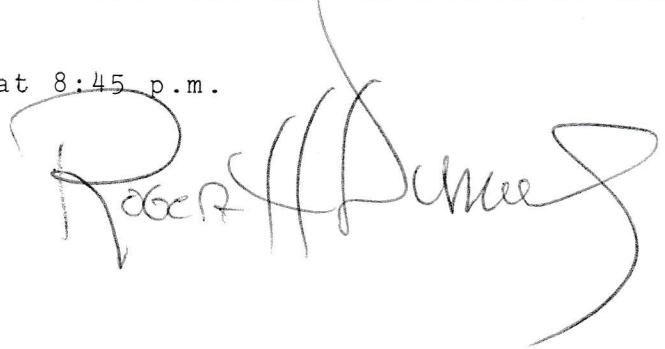
The Committee further decided that if such policy is adopted by the Board, the Library should prepare and issue a press release to inform the public of the policy and the reasons for it and also in the immediately following period should prominently post a notice of the new policy.

The second item of business related to a suggestion at the last Board meeting that the Committee look at the Book Selection Policy and give consideration to exempting gift materials from the provisions of the policy. Mr. Dumas spoke in opposition to such an exemption noting that the provisions of the book selection policy were adopted for the good reason of insuring the quality of the collection and if the policy were too restrictive it should be modified, but materials should not be exempted. If gift materials were exempted the Staff would have no guidelines to govern acceptance or rejection: it has neither the time nor expertise to evaluate each gift item tendered; if it accepted some and rejected some in a subjective manner, it would be vulnerable to criticism on both counts and therefore the pressure would be to add all gift books tendered. This would be inordinately expensive, would dilute the collection, and result in rapid filling of vacant shelving. Exemption would encourage evangelical and other special interest groups to use the Library for large amounts of material for which there would possibly be minimal interest. After discussion, the Committee decided not to adopt an exemption at this time.

The third item of business, also referred to the Committee from the Board meeting was a consideration of a salary increase for the Head of Circulation and perhaps other circulation Staff who were involved with the computer. Mr. Dumas noted that he had no objection to the generous proposal to increase the department head's salary, but he felt that a similar pay grade increase should in that case be made to the other two full-time Staff who will be console operators. He felt too that since the Circulation Department Head had received a salary increase seven or eight months ago and was now three pay grades above the salary grade of the Order Department Head, that a corresponding increase should also be given

to the Head of the Order Department in order that the disparity in pay between the two positions not become too exaggerated and result in a morale problem. Several members of the Committee expressed reservations regarding any salary change feeling that there should not be an immediate expectation of salary increments every time a job description changed in some way. Mr. Dumas noted that pay classification plans are horizontal in nature and a change in one place frequently dictates a change in other places in order to maintain fairness in pay across the board. This requires the expertise of a trained personnel professional and he suggested that the Committee might want Mr. Phillips to examine the impact of computers on the duties of Staff and the impact of changes of affected positions upon other positions. The Committee asked that Mr. Dumas contact Mr. Phillips to get his input about the matter and to continue the discussion at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert H. Dumas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "R" and a long, trailing flourish at the end.