

IN PROGRESS  
REPORT NO. 32

DECATUR PUBLIC LIBRARY  
Decatur, Illinois

SPECIAL MEETING

Board of Directors  
Decatur Public Library

To hear the "Report Upon a  
Review of the Municipal Pay  
Plan, Decatur, Illinois, by  
Public Service Administration

Decatur Public Library, Decatur, Illinois - Special Board  
of Directors' Meeting, January 6, 1966

DECATUR PUBLIC LIBRARY  
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REPORT OF SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS - JANUARY 6, 1966

A special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Decatur Public Library was held on January 6, 1966 in the Boyd Room of the Main Library, 457 North Main Street, Decatur, Illinois.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. W. A. Sappington  
Mr. R. A. Grohne  
Mr. W. L. Olsen  
Mr. David Pilcher  
Mrs. Jos. Russell (late)  
Mrs. Erich Stern  
Mr. W. L. Tebussek  
Mr. Robert West

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mrs. Roger Pogue

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mrs. Mary T. Howe  
Mrs. Edith McNabb  
Mrs. Marilyn Byrd  
Mr. Kirk  
(Civil Service Commission)  
Mr. Heiser  
(Public Service Administration)

The meeting convened at 3:35 p.m.

KIRK: This study was requested by employee groups of the City of Decatur. We agreed with them that we would have made - cause to have made - a study of salaries and wages sometime during calendar year 1965 and that, perhaps, this study would then be a basis for negotiations or talks with those groups during 1966. As a result of this agreement, we asked for proposals and then contracted with the Public Service Administration to conduct this study for us...shooting for January 15th. They have done quite a fine job and a most complete one and here we are on January 6th and they are making their report and I think that you'll find that the study is very complete. I've been telling some of the other people that we've been talking to that Mr. Heiser here is getting the study out of the way because he is headed towards Canada during the next week or two. He has been watching the weather conditions up there. He tells me that the high temperature has been minus 20 for about three weeks, so he is really headed into it, I think. As a part of this study, the library board indicated an interest in taking part in it, so it is our purpose here this afternoon - Mr. Heiser's purpose, at least - to go through this study with you. There is a special chapter in the study devoted to the library. We have not enough copies for everyone, but we are going to have some more reproduced. I think we have enough though that if you sit together here.....

HEISER: I would like to both warn and reassure you that it is certainly not my intent and I am sure not that of Mr. Kirk or would be that of Mrs. Howe that a rather formidable document such as this one would expect you to digest and have intelligent comments upon. I have been faced with the situation myself many times. Somebody wants you to discuss a given report and they bring it with them at that time. I do want to briefly tell you what it is all about - run through it - skim through it - and then urge that all of you to the extent you have the time or that your specific responsibilities for the board indicate that to go through it in detail because, despite whatever defects it may have, it is a comprehensive study. It does represent a lot of detailed work. There are explanations given for everything that is done. There is what we call a narrative that goes along

with it. There are all sorts of tables. There are all sorts of inter-relationships and things like that. Certainly, it would be foolish for me to attempt for me to go through it in detail now or for any of you to have specific reactions to it, so that isn't expected. However, between now and the time when you do consider your next fiscal year's budget, I do think that this will provide you with a firm basis for proceeding to it. People are still money - to repeat an old cliché - and to the extent that you can spend that money efficiently you, in turn, will keep on rendering good and possibly even better library service. Now, a separate study was not done for the library itself. Had we done it that way, you would have had to pay somewhere between two and three thousand dollars, which could not have been justified. For that reason, this report, and the way it approaches things has treated the library as one of the divisions of the general government - even though I have no illusions that it is such. All of this report is of equal applicability to the library, so please, as you go through it, think of it in those terms. The things we did, the things we considered, we also did for the library. In the first instance, in Chapter One we discuss a revised system of basic pay grades. Now, again, all of these things are suggested means of doing something a little bit better. They are not firm recommendations as such and, certainly, by no means has anyone voted for Public Administration Service or appointed us to any position here in Decatur. These are simply bases or things for you to think about. A revised system of basic pay grades...over a period of years there has been considerable employee complaint - and I think with some merit - about the mechanics of the city's system of pay grades, the system of numbers. The time it takes for someone to go from the minimum to the maximum. The fact that a series of across the board adjustments have created a situation whereby depending upon what range you were assigned to you got a different percent of raise. These things are not necessary and I think we have evolved a suggested system of pay grades which is responsive to that problem. It is shorter both in the sense that it has only six steps and since you start with one of them there are only five additional steps. Our suggested method of advancement through it is such that people should be able to reach their maximum within say 4 1/2 to 5 years instead of the current 7. That is to the extent I interpret correctly your class specifications which Civil Service and you use that is the basic philosophy of the way your jobs are classified. They are growth jobs, but they are not that long a growth job, at least in my judgement of the 7 years. For that reason, we are presenting a revised system of pay grades. For budgetary purposes, we show you annual amounts. For payroll purposes, we show bi-weekly - since that is the way you pay. Now, in the library board you had a further complication to that situation in that in addition to using the old system of pay grades you were using a slightly older one...that which the general government had used the year prior. Throughout here, without specifically saying so, we are proposing that the library utilize the same system - follow the same system - that the rest of the municipal activity does. I see no particular reason inimical to good library service why the same system of numbers by and through which people are paid shouldn't be the same. I think that it will facilitate the overall budgetary processing. We further made a comprehensive study of what is rather loosely termed the labor market. This includes not only the people you think of as running the library, but also the clerical people, the custodial people, those sorts of folks. That is presented on Page 7 in terms of narrative and then Schedule III shows your types of work in the left hand column and here, so that the library board can easily identify its positions, we have put at the end of all the charts where titles are used those that are applicable to the library. Therefore, on Schedule III you have to turn to the very last page - the last two pages, rather - not that in any way the library comes at the end of anything, but so that you can pick it

out and relate it to library employments. Here we show under Class Title, the titles currently in use. We show your present pay and then we show the data we were able to gather with respect to private business employments, with respect to regional cities, with respect to the State of Illinois. We try to find good and reasonable comparisons to make for what you might call entrance level occupations be they clerical, be they professional, and then escalate up or build up from there. In the library as in any other organization as you go up a higher step of the ladder it is more important that you have a proper relationship than that you get a proper relationship of a something or other to to the something or other to of somebody else's library. Some of these footnotes you will see for the professional positions reflect national figures. Our basic study conducted for the city, while they included an extremely good (and I say this in all modesty) bunch of cities throughout this part of the country, most of them did not have libraries or they did not report them to us or they were not - we felt - sufficiently comparable. There were available to us several regional indices. You will see in footnote C we have some data citing some 17 jurisdictions of central United States. There is nothing particularly sacred about these, they simply reflect a study conducted by another non-profit organization....the Public Personnel Association of Chicago who does this semi-annually. Footnote D are the figures relating to the Director position were from some 96 cities and reported to a similar statistical survey conducted by the International City Managers' Association. We did study, and I was grateful for the opportunity of doing so, your own librarian's survey, but I hesitated to reproduce it in the chart itself because one is always open to the charge of loading the dice when you make a survey to use the data collected by someone as close to the area of interest as that. This has nothing to do with the library itself. We would follow the same procedures if it was one done by your local Police Department or Engineering Department, but we certainly refer to it and there is reference to it here on Page 8. In addition to the cities and the private business data, we have these other sources that are not directly cited - some because they are confidential, others because we felt they were slightly dated in relation to somewhat similar data we got in our more recent survey - amongst them the Illinois Bell Telephone Company's study conducted as recently as September 1965, which is confidential. We did study it and develop what we call correlative or background information. Likewise, for office type employments, particularly the local chapter of the Administrative Management Society, and then these other ones that I have mentioned. The private business study, by the way, was surprisingly comprehensive. We got data covering over 15,000 jobs in the Decatur area. Some of these are significant because you are competing for the same types of people. There are a lot of big businesses here that are looking for people with basic clerical skills. They don't have a specific occupation or profession or they'd already be in it and, when you are looking for folks to train in to your employments here, it is those sorts of people who are making a judgement as to work for Firestone or whether they are going to go on and get some education that you need to worry about. All of this data you will want to think about. Actually, I found that in that area you had fallen a little bit behind and our recommendations look to an upgrading of that. I saw no particular reason why office type, clerical, fiscal type employment should be paid less here than they are in the Municipal Building or than they are in businesses throughout the country.

Now, I think that we have built up a reasonable progression from as valid recruitment indices at beginning level as I could encounter for the professional staff. In some instances, they are not as high as previous, but I do think they represent, to the extent I could interpret your specification, good progression.

Now, as I say, in the report there is a chapter devoted to the library towards the end. Mrs. Howe has had considerable difficulty in recruitment. If this continues you ought to throw the statistics out the door and pay what it takes to get people. Librarians are special people and even if its true that at the beginning level 17 cities throughout the central US can do a little better that doesn't mean you can. If you are satisfied that there is aggressive recruitment, that there is a good working environment, and our recommendations don't produce the kind of people you need then they shouldn't be followed. However, in our best judgement we have set up a scale that should be strongly competitive. I'm getting a little ahead of my story here. On Page 14 and following, you will find the type of assignment of positions that you are accustomed to seeing in that it starts off with range numbers and groups people under them. Now, jobs - kinds of work - arrive under these groupings under many different routes and they are good routes. They are based upon the backgrounds required, what the competition is doing - yet - inevitably you find strange bed-fellows and neither I nor anyone else can produce a logical explanation of why two or three given kinds of work turn up in the same pay range. You start out from different sources, different parts of the country, so to speak, you arrive at this same place.

Back on Schedule II is a possibility of a direct comparison of present rates and proposed. The very first fold-out here follows after Page 5. The last page of that will show library employments. Here you can see what you have been paying in terms of a grade number and then the present minimum and the present maximum and what we are recommending. Please remember that I am suggesting a totally new system of grades, so that these numbers don't have a precise relationship - one to another. You don't have people going from range 5 to range 10, but this shows you the minimum and the maximum and then, spread out, so you can identify each of the steps in the progression are the new suggested minimums and maximums. You have one position here which, because it was similar to other more manual type operations in the rest of the government, we also suggested a shortened range.

For trades, laboring, custodial, those types of jobs, we feel that to help meet competition from all these industries which are paying large sums in fierce competition - one with the other - for basic unskilled labor let alone crafts and that you need to recruit fairly high. Well, if you recruit fairly high and also have a long range you are going to have to wind up paying one heck of a lot more for work that, frankly, isn't worth it. On the other hand, when you employ people to do things like repair your wiring, your plumbing, clean up, whatever it may be, they are supposed to be able to do that pretty much right away. There isn't a long growth period. You are teaching them how to sweep out a library. It just isn't that different from sweeping out some other place. Pay them almost exactly what they are worth right away, assume they have a limited growth to go to because they aren't going to have much different to do next year or the year after and, thus, you come up with a shortened range. As you take time (and I hope you will) to see what is being done in the general government of the city, this is used throughout for those types of employment. Here you can make a comparison in terms of specific steps.

We are suggesting that Mrs. Howe, in consort with the Civil Service to the extent such is appropriate, work out probationary periods that, frankly, ought to be different for different kinds of work. This business of saying that everybody has a six-month probationary period or everybody's got a one-year one is nonsense. There are jobs where maybe three months is adequate. There are others where a

year would be barely adequate. We feel that you ought to hire people at this minimum. That you ought to have a stated probationary period agreed upon between those parties that have to agree to it and it might be different for your book-keeping machine people, your custodial people, your professional people, and your general clerical people. Whatever it is, once someone has satisfactorily completed that let them go to Step B, their next step. Then - with the use of a reasonable employee evaluation system - if people are satisfactorily doing their work (and this should be a good system, much as I am aware as least as much as any of you here that these are extremely difficult to administer, with such a system), if people are satisfactory they ought to get annual raises. Now, if you could hold the line and restrict Step F or maybe even Step E to people who have done a little bit more than they've had to, I think that that actually would have a good effect upon morale. I am a bitter opponent of automatic raises and, in the long run, as I do this sort of thing around the country, I find more and more agreement with that...yet, in all fairness, I must say that that is one of the toughest things that management has got to do - to hold this line - if someone hasn't actually done something wrong, there they are and you see them every day. If they haven't had a raise in a year and they aren't at their maximum, there they are. I have no pat answer to this, but if somehow you could reward your really good people by withholding a step or two for those who are really good and applying that only to work categories where such is possible, I think that you would have an overall good result. I think that it is also true that not all jobs are susceptible to this. There isn't the same opportunity, job for job, to do something dramatically good or exceptionally fine. Some work is routine and there isn't any getting around it, but others are not like that. Where they are not like that and you and your Director agree to that, let's try to do something for them by permitting them to advance over their fellows on the basis of such increased merit. Now, what would such cost you? Over on Page 18 is a schedule, "Estimated Cost of Installing Revised Pay Plan Under Alternative Methods and Annual Amounts". Again, it is my job to come up with some alternative ways of doing this even though I know full well that it is within your competence, your discretion and, certainly, probably your obligation to look at this carefully and see where - with your more intimate knowledge of library problems, the individual people and their faults and good points within it - you might want to do something different.

However, looking at jobs rather than the people who occupy them, I have made three possible methods of installing this new plan and it will cost you three differing sums of money:

The least expensive would run over 3% of what you are now paying or approximately \$6,000. This is based upon the actual amounts of money being paid to the people on your payroll as of the time I struck this list, so it is not going to be precise. I didn't take into account temporary help and stuff like that. It is explained in detail here. People whose salaries now are below what we recommend as the minimum for that kind of work go to that minimum. In addition, people with salaries in between steps of the new plan go to the nearest next higher step. We want to get everybody on a new step. We are suggesting changes in the whole system or numbers in connection with this shortening of the ranges and that sort of thing. For that reason - assuming my fingers here are numbers in the new system - you've got people in here and people in here and people in here and just to get these folks on the system...this one to here and this one to here...that sort of thing costs you some money. Whenever you change systems, without trying to give anybody ten cents worth of raise, it costs you something. That is built into this 3% and

that is still there. That is all that this plan does. For that reason, it is a minimal plan. Somebody who is kind of bad off and yet was at Step D or E of their old range, but below the recommended minimum, they're just going to Step A.

Now, if you can afford it, the most equitable thing would be to put people on a step-for-step basis with where they are now. That will cost you - and this is all worked out, actually, to help you with your budget work, payroll work later...I have left worksheets of this in Mr. Kirk's office and he will give them to you - this would cost you some, a little under 7%, and this would cost you about \$13,800 annually. What this does is say that somebody who is under Step C, D, E, F, or G of the old plan goes to the corresponding step of the new plan. In individual cases, this might give some individual a very large jump. Now, maybe as a person they are not worth it. Maybe as a board you can't afford the sum total of doing this. I would be completely sympathetic if you couldn't because rarely, in installations like this, do I find a governing body that can afford this. You are a relatively small component of the government, yet, by the same token, your budget is small. I leave it to wiser heads than mine to decide whether you want to afford this or not. It runs, percentage-wise, about 9 1/3% over and above what you've been paying. If you do install this or something like it and you do not go to the corresponding step, some of your employees may say, "Well, by gosh, I've been working here for 10 years. I've got my maximum rate. Don't I deserve to be at the maximum?" You are just going to have to say, "Yes. You deserve to be at it, but we cannot afford to do this all in one fiscal year." This is - if - as I say, you don't do it.

If you can afford more than this minimal A, but yet you don't want to go as far as the "best of all possible worlds" B, we have come up with a C. As you can imagine, there are hundreds of ways of doing this. These are just three possible ones. Plan C says that this guy who was so bad off he was below the minimum, he goes to the A step. Now, with the ideal set of circumstances he'd go clear up here to D because that's where he was under your old plan. But, to give him something more than the minimal A, we've put him - in addition to A - up here on B. That gives him, roughly, another 5%, which is a significant raise. It is recognition of the fact that he has been somewhat underpaid, but yet it doesn't give him this big jump right away. Now, that (on overall departmental basis) would cost you 5 1/2% or about \$11,500.

The next area or Chapter 6 deals in fringe benefits. Since the basic survey included private businesses, which do not employ library staffs as such, it dealt with your regional cities, many of which do not have libraries of this nature or have fiscal control and reportability over what they are doing, much of this is not as applicable to the library as it is to the others. I do think, however, particularly for your non-professional employees, it is the type of employer you are competing with and with whom your folks at least should be comparing what is granted to them. Now, this is couched in terms of vacation, but where we say in here what Decatur grants...this is the general government and not the library. Now, you pretty well know what the library does and what it doesn't and you can judge pretty well for yourself how it stacks up with these various fringe benefit categories. We are not making specific recommendations about what general government ought to do either. We are simply reciting here what the practice is for private and public employers in the area of vacation, how much service before you get it, how much do you get, can it accrue or build up; sick leave, how much is granted, how much accrues; holidays, how many you get in private and public; medical and related benefits; overtime pay; and clothing allowances.

Now, there is a brief narrative brief here. I always feel it is a bit stupid to read something to people who are also looking at the same thing, but it is brief:

"The Decatur Public Library is separately governed and funded, but was - by agreement - included in the study. Due to its semi-autonomous status, we have listed its employments in our recommendations regarding them in a manner such that they can be readily isolated, identified, and acted upon by appropriate authorities. The explanatory text or narrative has equal applicability to the library."

That is my introductory paragraph about it and, for that reason, I again urge all of you - both in your capacities of directors of the library board and in your capacities as responsible citizens of Decatur - to read the whole thing. This is your government. This is what is going to happen to a large chunk of your tax dollars and you all are part of the same family. Again, we suggest that the library compensate its employees to the same system of basic pay grade proposed for general government, which it is not now doing. We say that we have made strong efforts to bring the library's non-professional employments to a parity with comparable employments in city departments in general as well as with the competitive labor market, which they have not been. We suggest the library's current rates for professional staff compare favorably with reasonably valid regional indices we cite in Schedule III. We mention that your Director has had difficulty in recruiting and, if this continues, you ought to throw the statistics out the door and pay what it takes to get good librarians. I am one of the strongest backers of library systems. I know you have a hard row to hoe. You are not in the public eye when it comes to spending large sums of money and, yet, the day the library declines is the day the populus as a whole declines...even more than some of us think it is currently declining. In connection with this work, I have had occasion to visit and work with many of the country's better library systems and I certainly do not want to do anything in this report other than to make this library an even better one than it now is.

I do suggest an interim measure that might or might not help some of your recruitment efforts. It is, frankly, something that is a little bit off the cuff because we were not studying classification as such, but I think that you will find the Civil Service Commission amenable to helping you in maybe re-examining some of the classification structure. Pay rates are predicated upon group classes of work. The idea that you have a something or other I, and somebody grows through that and increases in responsibility for 4 or 5 years and then for personnel and administration purposes you kind of arbitrarily chop that off and say from there on up its a II, and then it becomes a III. You use these expressions in communicating with other libraries and with other governments and, to a certain extent, with business. Here in the library, you start out with a Page level. You go through three levels of Library Clerk. You go through two Sub-professional levels and five Professional ones. It just might be that that could be re-examined and something might result that would enable you to pay more for fewer classes of work. Whether this would help recruitment or not, I don't know, but - again - with the complete admission that we haven't studied classification, as such - just based upon gross numbers of classes or work as compared with other library systems of this size, maybe something could be done that might be helpful. I don't know. If you continue to have recruitment problems, that is an area you might want to examine. From my talks with both Mr. Kirk (from the standpoint of Civil Service) and your Director (from the standpoint of a professional approach to managing a library), I am sure if that is an adequate avenue, that you will find sympathy in exploring it.



In a nutshell, that is it. As I say, with due regard to whatever defects this might contain, it is a detailed comprehensive plan that is the result of a considerable amount of work by a lot of people - primarily in Chicago and other parts of the state, rather than here - so, I do urge you to look it over carefully and to use it as a basis for whatever your procedures are as you go in to your next personnel services budget. I would like to say that I have had very excellent cooperation throughout from the standpoint of your Director as well as from the municipal government staff and you can rest assured that this is a completely unbiased report. We are a non-profit corporation and, as such - in a nice way, we couldn't care less what happens to who in Decatur or any other place.

GROHNE: All of our businesses seem to run the same way...non-profit.

PILCHER: Non-profit...it wasn't planned that way, its the way it turned out.

HEISER: You are caught from the standpoint of recruitment even in this non-professional area. I will say this: That there are few cities that I do work in that have Decatur's problems in that somehow you have managed to bring together an industrial complex here that is comparable on a lesser scale with Milwaukee's and you have a central city attempting to support this and govern it that is still a reasonably small Illinois town and, gee, this is rough. There is mad competition for every worker who can do anything at all. As you will see in these figures, the basic pay rates for unskilled labor are out of this world. As somebody was telling me, this responsible person, in this recent strike or rather lay-off up in Kenosha, several firms in Decatur are busily up there recruiting! They are trying to get some of those folks to come down here. The same is true of the graduates of Library School. You've got universities here who want them; you've got other cities who want them and, you know, this isn't Glamour Town, U.S.A. It is a nice city, but you've got Miami, you know; you've got Denver; and you've got these young kids who are still essentially females even though the tendency is now going a little bit the other way. They are sort of like nurses their first year, you know, until they get married and have to settle down they want to go to the glamour spots and I wouldn't blame them. You don't have a beautiful beach here, beautiful mountains, and that sort of thing. Decatur does have problems and to the extent that you can possibly scare up the money, you are going to have to, I think, pay for those problems. Well, I'm not here to make a lot of speeches. I thank you very much.

GROHNE: Have you presented this to the Council yet?

HEISER: Yes, I met with them this noon. I didn't go in to all this detail about the library.

HOWE: Oh, you didn't, shame on you.

GROHNE: Well, that's alright. We've got a recording of it. If they haven't got the message, we'll find an occasion someplace and play it back. All joking aside, it sounds to me like you've done a real fine job here. I think that the important part - which you have emphasized - is that this is a starting point, a guide point. The areas where we will have to go above are probably very few where we would go below. But, isn't it true, Art, that we've expressed ourselves. We want to be consistent with the city's policies. In other words, we feel that the library should not be at a disadvantage even in its competition with the city for comparable jobs.

HEISER: Right. You know, you are not going to suddenly fire everybody and hire a new staff and if in here there is a recommendation giving a substantial raise to someone that you keep hoping is going to quit - really - as a library board, I wouldn't do it if I was on the library board. You see, you have to deal with kinds of work, not people, and - inadvertently, I'm sure - I come up with a raise for someone in this category who is a marginal employee because they are occupying a job that ought to pay more and if you can do a little something extra for someone who throughout the years has done twice what they were supposed to do, do so. That is one of the advantages of executive power. Only you folks know these things in detail. For an outsider to plunge in to that morass would just be chaos.

SAPPINGTON: Have other governments used these two optional brackets or steps that you suggest?

HEISER: Yes. I couldn't just off the top of my head call out one to you, but I know that many of them have. They try hard to adhere to it. Some will take the last two...some the last one and say that, by gosh, there is going to have to be a showing of exceptional merit before he goes to this. One of the problems here is that you've got to be selective. You've got to discriminate and its hard to do that in today's society. There are jobs - what would your building custodian have to do - or your bookkeeping machine operator have to do - to demonstrate this exceptional merit. That's fine for a department head, like here, one of your library department heads. There is a chance for them to do that, but there isn't a chance for the others. A lot of cities have tried this and some of them are making it stick.

GROHNE: It looks to me that from this point on we've got an analysis job to see how this fits in to our present picture and then try to figure out where we're going and to go and then explain it in about ten words to the City Council and get the money.

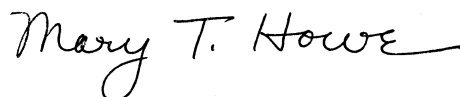
PILCHER: Say that fast, "Get the money." Mr. Kirk, when will we get more of these?

KIRK: We'll leave all of these with you and I might talk to Mrs. Howe and see if you need any additional ones.

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

VER BATIM TYPED SCRIPT TAKEN FROM TAPE RECORDER

Respectfully submitted,



MARY T. HOWE  
Librarian