

Personnel and Public Relations Committee Meeting

March 7, 1985

Minutes

Present were John Mueller, Edith Rossiter, Martin Seidman, and Reba Jackson, Chair. Also present were Sharon Alpi, ex officio, and Robert Dumas, City Librarian.

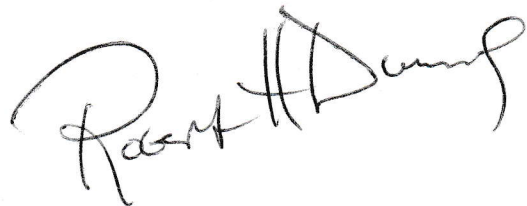
The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mrs. Jackson, who called on Mr. Dumas to summarize the problem relating to Mrs. Higar and her daughter.

Mr. Dumas stated that from time to time patrons will assert upon receipt of an overdue notice that they have never borrowed the item for which they are charged. In most cases he felt that the patrons were honest and not seeking to evade legitimate charges. It is possible that in some cases the charge is a result of human error by library staff and where it is possible to identify that such an error has occurred, the fine is cancelled. Most cases, however, do not admit to identification of the problem and a fine must be charged. He recommended adoption of a policy similar to the policy for claims that an item has been returned, namely that the patron's word be accepted in the matter for a limited number of instances.

The Committee discussed whether the Board should deal with each instance as it arose, noting that a person who took the trouble of coming to the Board would be acting on principle, not to evade a small fine. It also discussed whether the Librarian should be authorized to deal with the problem and forgive such fines. Mr. Dumas noted that neither he nor the staff could determine the validity of a claim and that while most people were honest, some were not; to decide favorably for one is to imply dishonesty with respect to the person whose case was decided unfavorably; and that in each case, lacking objective criteria, one could be wrong.

After discussion of the options, the Committee voted to recommend to the Board that a patron's word that he never borrowed certain items would be accepted for a maximum of three times.

The Committee adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert H. Dumas". The signature is written in dark ink and is located in the lower right quadrant of the page.