

Finance and Properties Committee Meeting

February 16, 1982

Minutes

Mr. Marshall called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Present were David Marshall, Martin Seidman, Edith Rossiter, Shirley Moore - ex officio, and Robert Dumas. Meeting with the Committee was a delegation from South Wheatland Township Library Board, led by Roger Peterson.

The subject of the Decatur Public Library supplying library service to South Wheatland Township was broached. Mr. Peterson in response to Mr. Marshall's question itemized several considerations which his Board felt should be explored in the discussion, to wit: In order that South Wheatland might develop a core collection that could be used as a basis for their own library in several years, 50% of expenditures would be used to acquire titles that would be the property of South Wheatland Library Board; Any contract negotiated should be over an extended period, perhaps three years; A representative from the South Wheatland Library Board should attend meetings of the Decatur Library Board in order to contribute to discussions of matters affecting their service; South Wheatland Township residents should receive such mailings and other publicity regarding programs as Decatur residents; and, in the event that a branch library is constructed, it is the hope of the South Wheatland Board that consideration be given to a south side location.

Mr. Marshall noted that the question of vesting interest in the book collection could present problems and that the Library did not have a branch under current consideration for the near term, but that the other proposals of the South Wheatland Board should present no problems.

The question of cost of service was then raised and Mr. Marshall presented the cost question as a consideration of equity between residents of Decatur and those of South Wheatland. In presenting the issue he reviewed three approaches that had been considered by the Finance Committee: That the cost be calculated as a per capita cost equivalent to those borne by Decatur residents; that the cost be based on the number of families multiplied by the non-resident fee; or that the cost be based on a levy equivalent to the Decatur library levy. This provided a range from over \$40 per capita to a high of more than \$60. Mr. Marshall recognized the problem in the third instance of exceeding the base maximum levy which would require a referendum and suggested that the original cost be kept within the base maximum levy and that a referendum be scheduled after three or four years when the service had had the chance to justify itself.

South Wheatland members expressed the hope that the costs could be kept closer to the out-of-pocket costs to Decatur of \$23,000 as suggested by Mr. Dumas when he met with their Board in the summer of 1981. Considerable doubt that a referendum to a higher library tax level would be successful was voiced and Mrs. Donna McIntosh raised the question whether such a referendum could have passed in Decatur if the home rule elevation of the levy had not been possible. Mr. Marshall indicated this would have been a problem. Mrs. McIntosh, in addressing the question of equity, remarked the qualitative difference in the tax base in South Wheatland vis-a-vis Decatur in that the property tax in her community derives mainly from farm land rather than from industrial and residential property and raised the issue of whether a farmer should be assessed \$350 for library support. Mr. Marshall agreed to the pertinence of such considerations.

South Wheatland cannot levy for taxes until September of 1982 for revenue to be received in 1983/84. In the meantime that Board hopes to receive \$10,000 in revenue sharing from the Township to finance library service. Action on the request is expected in about a month. Since this amount possibly would not cover a program that re-imbursed each South Wheatland registrant for the Decatur non-resident fee, alternative solutions to problems of near-term financing of library service were solicited and discussed.

The discussion with South Wheatland Library Board members terminated with an agreement that each side would consider the proposals and problems voiced at the meeting, that no specific action be taken at this time and that the two groups would meet again after deliberation of proposals.

Upon departure of the South Wheatland delegation the Finance and Properties Committee continued their meeting with the discussion of the draft budget which had been mailed to them several weeks ago. Mr. Marshall noted that the expenditures total would mean that the fund balance on May 1, 1983 would decline from that on May 1, 1982. The Committee recalled, however, that the levy for 1982/83 was reduced by \$35,000 by Council in the belief that the fund balance was in excess of its needs and could be decreased partially to fund expenditures.

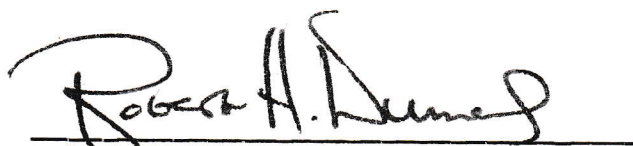
The budget in operational lines represents comparable activity with the current year with the exception being another half-time custodian added to the work force. This will provide for 2½ custodians and may be compared with 3 persons employed in this work in the old building when janitorial services were provided by contract. The old building was 20,000 sq. ft.; the present building is 64,000 sq. ft.

In the capital accounts provision has been made for a delivery van and typewriters, as well as a needed growth in the book budget to remedy the disproportion of operating costs to materials cost, Decatur currently having one of the poorest ratios among the libraries with which it compares. Other capital items are mainly funded from the Illinois per capita grant including a substantial addition to the AV materials budget which will permit the initiation of a video collection. During discussion the Committee also authorized the purchase of video cassettes and video disc players for the purpose of auditioning selections, much as we make similar provision for phono discs and tapes.

The question of the scope of the video collection was raised in the preceding discussion. Mr. Dumas indicated the lack of standardization in the field which some people feel may be true for a decade or more. The Library will follow the advice of those who advocate acquisitions across a limited section of available systems, buying both disc and tape as was done by libraries developing phonodisc collections in the early days of long-playing records. A survey of patrons within the next few weeks will seek to identify the best choice of cassette and disc systems.

After noting Personnel Committee action with respect to job classification of the Maintenance Man, the Committee instructed that the draft budget be modified to reflect that change.

The Committee adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

  
Robert H. Dumas, City Librarian