

February 17, 1965

Report to League of Women Voters Executive Board
Operation and Needs of the Decatur Public Library

During recent months members of this committee have held nine study sessions, have met twice with the Decatur Library Board, interviewed the Mayor, City Manager, City Plan Director and the three-member library committee of the City Council, have interviewed Dr. Herbert Goldhor, Dean of the Library Graduate School of the University of Illinois, and made complete tours of the main Library building. As a study group we have reached the following conclusions regarding

Services: We feel that library services are fully adequate and excellent within the limitations of physical plant, staff, and available funds.

Staff: There is a vacancy for the staff position of Assistant Librarian (Personnel Director) that should be filled, which would give the Chief Librarian more time for administrative duties.

There are other staff vacancies due to lack of funds and qualified applicants.

Three of the professional staff are near retirement age and have no trained replacements.

Usual library staff recommendations call for a ratio of one-third to one-half professional staff. Decatur Library has five professional librarians and 44 equivalent full-time employees.

Physical Plant: We feel that there should be constructive promotion and planning for a new library building in the community because of the following inadequacies of the present building -

Library entrance and second floor stairway are inaccessible and dangerous to small children, the elderly, and handicapped because of the number of steep steps.

Outside walls only can be used for book stacks on portions of first floor and all of second floor because of structural weakness.

Much of the library collection is inaccessible to the public because of lack of adequate stairwells and crowded stacks.

Reading rooms and seating space are most inadequate because of lack of floor space.

The staff must work under handicaps that affect its efficiency and morale. Some personnel work in areas that are poorly lighted, overcrowded, and cold and drafty.

Physical Plant, cont.

There are poor and limited bathroom facilities for the public.

There are no music or audio-visual rooms.

Upon observation we feel that in spite of these and other handicaps, every attempt has been made to improve conditions as much as the building allows. The present building is as reasonably attractive as can be achieved within its limits.

There is a need for more public awareness of both the library's services and needs. Better rapport should be developed between the City Council and the Library Board. We hope this can be achieved by closer working relations between the Library Board and the Library Committee of the City Council which was formed six months ago.

We recommend that the study group on "Operation and Needs of the Decatur Public Library" continue as a resource committee so that we may provide more information to League members after the City Plan Department has completed its proposed study of the cultural needs and library services of the community. The City Council has advised us that this report would not be completed until August, 1965. The study group should also be continued to follow proposed state legislation on a "Plan for Public Library Development" which the Illinois Library Association has recommended.

Library Resource Committee

Lucille Crow, Chairman
Helen Gill
Shirley Landholt
Mary Langenberg
Louise Nelson
Ruth Smith
Laura Verbanac

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
LWV OF DECATUR
February 25, 1965

The meeting was held at the home of Jane Dilley at 9:30 a.m.
Present: Mrs. Hurst, Redford, Dilley, Ruedi, Becker, Protzman,
Mann and Doubleday.

There was not a quorum present because of a bad snow storm. The members who could make it considered consensus reached on the study of the operation and needs of the Decatur Public Library at the February unit meetings, and prepared a news release.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee Meyerson