

**Boone County Library District
Minutes, Meeting of August 26, 2009**

Call to Order

Dellsperger called the meeting to order at 4:00 P.M. in the Ashland City Council Chambers in Ashland, Missouri.

Roll Call and Determination of Quorum

Board members present were Linda Dellsperger, President; Bridget Canaday; Susan Daly; and Patricia Powell. Jessica Robinson arrived at 4:25 p.m. Also present were Rosie Gerding, DBRL Board President; Melissa Carr, Library Director; Elinor Barrett, Kris Farris, Karen Neely, Jim Smith, and Lauren Williams, DBRL staff; Bruce Wallace, *Boone County Journal*; and David Westhoff, Westhoff Rentals, LLC.

Introductions / Public Comment

Carr introduced library staff present. David Westhoff introduced himself and said he was in attendance as one of the people who submitted proposals in 2008 for a potential new leased library facility in Ashland. He pointed out the increased use of the Southern Boone County Public Library (SoBoCo) and described the property on which he proposed building a facility to lease to the library. He said that labor and materials prices have dropped since he made his original proposal and expressed the opinion that this might be a good time for the library to look at leasing a new facility.

Smith relayed a message from Dr. Bynum, the owner of the library's current leased facility in Ashland. He said that Dr. Bynum was willing to do whatever the library wanted to do with the current space, within reason, to improve operations.

2008 SoBoCo Facility Proposals

Carr provided background information regarding the Boone County Library District (BCLD) Board's decision to solicit proposals for a new leased facility in 2008 when the current facility's lease was up for renewal. Dellsperger explained that at the time there was talk in the community that the library might be able to get a bigger or better space for a similar cost per square foot, so the board directed staff to issue an RFP. She stated that all of the proposals came back with costs significantly higher than the library's current lease. Carr said that at that time the Boone County Board decided to wait for the strategic planning process to be completed before moving forward. Carr confirmed that the cost of the current lease for the 3,335 square-foot facility is \$13.50 a square foot. Dellsperger said that at the board's May meeting, former board member Tiff Lauffer raised the issue of asking Dr. Bynum to expand the current facility. In response, Robinson proposed revisiting all of the proposals for leased facilities submitted in 2008. Carr added that since the staff is currently developing Strategic Plan implementation steps for 2010, now would be the appropriate time for discussing items that should be included in these action

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plans. She stated that one of the objectives of the plan is to create a strategic property and facilities plan, but work on this objective is not currently slated for 2010.

The board discussed the land the library owns in Ashland and the failed tax levy in 2007 that would have provided funds to construct and operate a new 10,000 square foot branch in Ashland as well as a branch north of Columbia. Dellsperger said that in her opinion, the library could do more to expand services without building or leasing a larger facility at this time. Carr added that in light of the election outcome and the subsequent community survey, the charge from the DBRL Board was to create a Strategic Plan that does not include the construction of new facilities. Leasing facilities, however, is an option, provided the library can do so while staying within the current tax rate.

In response to a question, Westhoff stated that due to falling labor and materials prices, he could probably build the 4,000 square-foot building described in his 2008 proposal at an estimated lease cost of \$15 to \$16 a square foot. Westhoff expressed the concern that as the current facility gets more and more crowded, the size of the facility will be a deterrent and use will begin to decline. In response to a question regarding the opinions of Ashland residents, Carr said that the feedback the library received from the community survey and public meetings indicated that the general feelings about library services were very positive, but the levy failed due to a combination of cost, tax issues, and the location of the proposed north facility. She added that any tax increase would have to be approved by all of the Boone County Library District, not just Ashland area residents. Dellsperger discussed the complexity of the district's constituency, and any tax rate increase for buildings would require the approval of the majority of Boone County voters outside the 1965 city limits, which includes northern Boone County communities as well as a large part of metro Columbia.

The board discussed the idea of the library partnering with a community center, school, or city and mentioned other communities who operate libraries in this way. Westhoff speculated that the city of Ashland is years away from considering something like a community center. Carr said that in 2007, when it proposed building the new facilities, the library was looking into the future, and the library needs to decide what's next. She said that simply gaining 1,000 square feet at another leased facility may not be worth the cost and effort of moving, buying new furniture, paying for the installation of new utilities, and so on. Robinson added that the community survey results didn't indicate a current need for bigger libraries in Columbia and Ashland but showed that people want more of what the library is already doing and the library is responding with expanded access to services.

Gerding said that the overriding sense from the Strategic Plan is that the library is moving away from traditional services and is instead trying to provide new and enhanced services without being building-focused, including providing ways for patrons to access services without having to come to a facility. She suggested that expanding hours is a good idea and a cost-effective way to expand services and make better use of the existing facilities.

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Daly stated that she thought the board should investigate how much a new leased facility would cost with today's lower labor and materials prices. Dellsperger suggested that the board was not given that direction from the Strategic Plan and added that even if the prices were lower, the library could not act if the money to do so was not in the budget. Robinson said that based on current information and the costs of transitioning to a new building, adding staff, equipment, and furniture, she didn't feel the board had the directive from constituents to pursue a larger leased facility at this time. She added that she was not comfortable issuing another RFP just to gather pricing information and test the waters, fearing that doing so would cause the library to lose credibility with the building community.

Carr stated that the current lease was up for renewal in August of 2012 and suggested that exploring other lease options could be part of the 2011 Strategic Plan implementation steps.

2010 Strategic Plan Implementation Strategies

Carr outlined the process for proposing and approving the Strategic Plan implementation steps for 2010, with the steps approved by the Long Range Planning Committee presented to the full DBRL Board and then associated costs for those steps included in the budget for review by the Finance Committee. Expanding hours at the Ashland facility is a proposed implementation step for 2010. The board discussed preferences for expanded hours expressed by community members during the public forums held as part of the building planning process. Carr said that staff strongly recommends keeping the SoBoCo Library open on Fridays until to 6:00 p.m. starting January 1, 2010. The board discussed ways to gauge on which other days the public would most like to see the library expand its open hours.

The board discussed the current lease's 2012 expiration date and when the discussion about a larger leased facility should be revisited. Canaday expressed the opinion that more space is needed in Ashland and that she is open to expanding in the next year or two. She pointed to the large increases in usage at the SoBoCo branch since the 2007 election. Carr expressed concern about staff's ability to work on this topic in 2010 considering all of the other planned projects. After further discussion, the board members agreed that the library should begin to investigate lease options in early 2011, and Carr said that she could include in the implementation strategies for that year an exploration of facilities in order for the Boone County Board to discuss lease options in 2012.

Miscellaneous

Carr distributed tote bags displaying the One Read logo to board members.

In response to a question, Dellsperger said that she would call a Boone County Board meeting when there was business to discuss.

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Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjournment

Daly moved and Canaday seconded to adjourn. The motion passed and Dellsperger adjourned the meeting at 5:11 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Lauren Williams, DBRL staff.

Board Secretary