

DETROIT LIBRARY COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS

Special Meeting
July 8, 2009

President Hill called the Special Meeting of the Detroit Library Commission to order at 4:29 p.m.

Present: President Hill, Commissioners Bellant, Keith, and Kinloch, Scott, Thomas, and Washington

Administrative staff: Skowronski, Cromer, Machie, Moore, and Norfolk

Andrew Richner, Attorney, Clark Hill

Present also: Randy Call, Enid Clark, Atiim Funchess, Todd Kelly, President, AFSCME 1259, Patrice Merritt, Carolyn Mosley, Uzo Onyemaechi, Rosemary Patterson, Cledos Powell, Yvette Rice, Alma Simmons, and Michael Wells, President UAW Local 2200.

Commissioner Bellant spoke of the unresolved matter regarding the disposition of the vertical files and suggested forming an ad hoc committee to report to DLC in September. Commissioner Kinloch expressed his wish to serve on such a committee; Commissioner Thomas opposed the need for such a committee. Ms. Machie stressed that she had received a four-page explanation in a memo from Chuck Thompson today showing that he had followed DPL guidelines and there was no need for further scrutiny. A copy of the memo was given to each Commissioner.

COMMITTEE ON BOOKS & LITERACY

Approval of Membership Slate and an Amendment to the Resolution for the New Detroit Literacy Council

Commissioner Kinloch reported that the establishment of the Detroit Literacy Council was approved at the May 19, 2009 Detroit Library Commission meeting. The council would consist of 15 members to assist the library in achieving its strategic literacy directions.

In working with staff, the Books and Literacy Committee produced a list of 21 names to constitute the newly created Detroit Literacy Council.

Commission Action

Commissioner Kinloch moved to approve the appointments on the membership slate for the Detroit Literacy Council, and to amend the resolution approved by

Commission, to reflect an increase in the Council's membership from 15 to 21. Commissioner Bellant seconded. The motion carried.

Audit Committee Function

Commissioner Bellant voiced concerns about the increasing scrutiny on how the Library operates and that City Council may be initiating an audit.

Commission Action

Commissioner Bellant moved to have the Audit Committee (AC) transformed into a Committee of the Whole encouraging more Commissioners to participate.

Discussion

Commissioner Kinloch articulated that the AC has been transparent. Commissioner Thomas noted that the AC Charter structure stipulates up to five members would be appointed. Commissioner Kinloch suggested giving copies of the AC minutes to all Commissioners.

Commissioner Scott suggested the AC change members on a rotational basis. Commissioner Kinloch mentioned the AC just got started since Commissioner Washington was president. Commissioner Thomas said the AC should be autonomous and it would defeat the purpose of the AC if made a Committee of the Whole.

President Hill said it was wise to consider rotating on an annual basis but had concern about continuity.

Commission Actions Continued

The motion failed to transform the AC into a Committee of the Whole. Commissioner Kinloch moved to approve the appointment of AC members on an annual rotational basis. Commissioner Keith seconded. The motion carried.

Commissioner Bellant moved that the AC be recomposed for new membership at the next special or regular meeting. The motion failed.

Discussion on AC Continued

President Hill disagreed with Commissioner Kinloch that the AC was open and transparent. Commissioner Kinloch said we should have a process in place as it relates to Commission; however, the AC did follow the charter. Commissioner Thomas said it was not appropriate for someone other than the committee members to enter a closed session. Commissioner Scott said there has been a problem with the AC, so we should start with a clean slate. Commissioner Kinloch stressed that the AC had carried out its duties and responsibilities.

Mr. Richner said there was an issue of independence. The charter was drafted with good intentions in mind. If members were removed outside of the regular cycle, it may have implications.

Commissioner Bellant said that external factors/circumstances were sufficient reasons for change. Commissioner Washington said maybe the charter should be revised. Mr. Richner agreed that it was appropriate to review and possibly change.

Commissioner Thomas responded to Commissioner Bellant's charge that the Audit Committee was not being proactive about the letter from former employee Iyapo Montgomery. He said the issues were addressed and responses to questions were provided. He does not see the relationship to the Montgomery letter and Sheila Cockrel having anything to do with the Audit Committee.

Mr. Richer said that the Rules and Regulations of Commission may be changed as long as consistent with State laws.

Executive Session

President Hill called for a motion to go into Executive Session to consult with attorney on complaints against AC.

Commissioner Scott made the motion to go into Executive Session; Commissioner Washington seconded. The motion carried.

Commissioners Bellant, Hill, Scott, and Washington voted yes. Commissioners Kinloch, Keith, and Thomas voted no.

Staff was excused. The Executive Session began at 5:30 p.m. Following the Executive Session, the Special Commission meeting resumed and staff joined the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

New Director

Commissioner Keith reported that he had been in communication with Christine Boulware, The Boulware Group, and was close to reaching a final contract agreement. Mr. Cromer agreed to check with Ms. Moore to make sure benefits were consistent with City of Detroit's benefits and policies.

Commission Action

President Hill recommended naming an Interim Director. Commissioner Bellant moved to appoint Mr. Cromer as Interim Director; Commissioner Scott seconded. The motion failed.

Commissioner Kinloch said there was no need to go outside the framework provided. President Hill said the contracts do not specify appointments when a Director retired.

Commission Actions

Commissioner Washington moved to appoint both Mr. Cromer and Ms. Machie as Co-Interim Directors; Commissioner Scott seconded. The motion failed.

Commissioner Kinloch moved to appoint Ms. Machie as Interim Director until August 24, 2009. The motion carried by four yes votes, one no vote by Bellant, and an abstention from President Hill.

District Library Working Group

Commissioner Bellant noted Commissioner Thomas was the chair of the District Library meetings but there was no record establishing the Judge as the chair. President Hill said she had not made the appointment on the official record. Commissioners Thomas, Washington and Kinloch were asked to participate in a working group format. Commissioner Thomas explained that he was the only commissioner that came to the meeting with Mr. Tarnacki and Mr. Richner, so they just proceeded with the meeting. The meeting was just informational. Commissioner Kinloch was also at a meeting and reiterated it was a working group charged to gather information and present this information to Commission; that is what was done. Commissioner Bellant explained that was why he was troubled that it was not an open process. Commissioner Washington agreed to be the chair.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.