

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
PIERCE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
JOINT MEETING WITH THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, TACOMA PUBLIC LIBRARY
JANUARY 16, 2008
MAIN BRANCH, TACOMA PUBLIC LIBRARY
1102 TACOMA AVENUE SO.
TACOMA, WA**

IN ATTENDANCE

Tacoma Public Library:

Michael A. Hudson, President, Board of Trustees
Bob Evans, Trustee, Board of Trustees
Ann Seago, Trustee, Board of Trustees
Susan Odencrantz, Director, Tacoma Public Library

Pierce County Library System:

Allen Rose, Chair, Board of Trustees
Paul Chasco, Vice-Chair, Board of Trustees
Gene Matsusaka, Trustee, Board of Trustees
J.J. McCament, Trustee, Board of Trustees
Budd Wagner, Trustee, Board of Trustees

CALL TO ORDER

President Hudson called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm. Chair Rose called to order the joint meeting with Tacoma Public Library at 5:33 pm.

President Hudson invited Board members and Directors to introduce themselves and it was done.

DISCUSSION RECIPROCAL BORROWING

Chair Rose read a prepared statement, which is attached.

Chair Hudson apologized for not having a prepared statement. He stated that it is key to point out that TPL has deliberated on this issue for some time and does need to make a decision. He stated the Board has a fiduciary responsibility to Tacoma residents and must use resources to an optimum level. TPL's resources have dwindled and demand increased and it creates a challenge for TPL. It is vital that the Board consider and not limit alternatives or options that may be made available. He acknowledged that PCLS has approached TPL previously. He stated that the TPL Board wishes to hear proposals and PCLS experiences working with Puyallup Public Library. He reported that Mary Jo Toregeson, Director of Puyallup Public Library was in the audience.

Chair Rose referred to a packet of informational material prepared by PCLS for review by the TPL Board. He noted that the PCLS Board recognizes the differences in the systems, particularly the advantage that PCLS has with a dedicated source of funding. He noted that the PCLS Board has been aware of the

detrimental impacts from TPL's funding issues. He expressed his appreciation to the PCLS taxpayers who re-authorized the library's levy which allowed funding for Sunday open hours at nine branches, live online homework help, and downloadable books and movies. PCLS is able to offer TPL those services through reciprocal borrowing.

Ms. Seago requested a quick summary of the pros and cons for the residents of PCLS and Tacoma through reciprocal borrowing.

Ms. Parikh responded first by noting that PPL came to PCLS asking for reciprocal borrowing, after they had been previously refused. PCLS is coming to TPL because we feel it would provide good customer service for all residents. For some time, the libraries have been experiencing situations with patrons who don't understand jurisdictional barriers, ask for service and are denied. People no longer work, shop or play in just one jurisdictional area. Our communities ask us to get along as governments and not create barriers. In addition, such an agreement increases the value of the taxpayers' dollar. Specific benefits to TPL would be access to Sunday open hours, online live homework assistance, and downloadable materials. PCLS recognizes that there may be risks in the heavier use of downloadable materials and the online homework assistance. Ms. McCament noted that they found that the benefits really can't be immediately recognized as there are many possibilities. It was for that reason that PCLS and PPL chose to do a 15-month pilot program.

Ms. Seago asked about increased costs related to heavier use of database for both systems. Ms. Parikh noted that generally billing for databases is based on purchase of simultaneous sessions, not volume, and she does not anticipate increased costs due to reciprocal borrowing. The risk is to PCLS for Tutor.com, the online homework help, as the charge is based on volume.

Ms. Seago asked if PCLS were a net lender in its agreements with other libraries. Ms. Parikh noted that PCLS is a net lender for interlibrary loan. Circulation data is not compared in the agreements with larger systems, however, it is being monitored in the agreement with PPL. PPL is considerably smaller and in the middle of the PCLS service area. PCLS patrons drive through and visit Puyallup regularly. PCLS patrons use PPL more. In the case of the reciprocal agreement between Seattle Public Library and King County Library System, there is actually more use by SPL residents.

Ms. Seago spoke to the holds ratio, noting her concern that a reciprocal agreement would limit TPL residents' access to bestsellers and it would increase costs to balance the holds ratio. Ms. Parikh noted that although PCLS residents check out more materials, PPL residents place more holds. Chair Rose stated that the PCLS Board recognizes that TPL has different policies and operating circulation procedures and that each system should retain their individual policies and practices.

Chair Hudson responded that he was glad Chair Rose spoke to the policies issue. He also stated that of concern is the impact on the budget and if it would cause a reduction of TPL materials. He also expressed concern about how it might affect TPL constituents and who would it irritate. He noted that it's important to understand the technical issues, budget issues, and political issues.

Mr. Evans spoke to his belief that libraries are essential services. He was concerned that with shrinking library services, the load might be dumped on somebody else, and there is a matter of turf. He stated that there are some thorny issues to get through, however, transit and utilities have learned to share the terrain and work effectively together. He said it's important that no library facility be lost.

Chair Rose noted that one of the interesting things is how the collections are different, which in essence means expanding both collections. One of the PCLS services that is wildly successful is online homework help. The charge is about \$75,000 per year. This would be a way of getting that service for Tacoma kids. Sunday hours expand access to libraries to citizens. He stated that the things that the

systems can offer each other for the price we pay is a really good value and that is an example of good government.

Mr. Wagner expanded by saying that PCLS and PPL chose to do a pilot program because it offered a safety net, as well as a matrix and measures to evaluate the program. In response to a question from Chair Hudson about who set the matrix and measures, Ms. Parikh responded that they were developed by library staff from both systems. It was noted that it was an important piece to educate the public that it was a pilot program in case of failure.

In a brief discussion about non-residents, it was noted that in 2007, 495 Tacoma residents had non-resident cards with PCLS. Ms. Odenrantz reported that TPL received \$28,000 in non-resident revenue for 2007.

Mr. Evans spoke to the possibilities to improve the cultural aspects of the city and possible partnerships. He suggested it be kept as an objection for the future.

Chair Hudson invited Ms. Torgeson to speak to the Boards to address some of the concerns and experiences by going into the pilot program. She noted first that PPL was excited to initiate the program. Her staff, as well as PCLS staff, were in the position of having to frequently say 'no' to those requesting cards. Both systems heavily promote services to school children and then have to say no to issuing cards because the students are in another jurisdiction. People are coming to the central part of Puyallup for events, activities, Sounder, an attractive library building and more computers. People are in the valley and going into the library. Library users are an avid bunch and will travel to use libraries. She noted that she wasn't sure what would happen and that is why a pilot program was developed. There were some surprises, but the purpose was also to answer 'what is our capacity?'. The workload has not been greatly impacted. She stated PPL doesn't have Sunday hours and they don't have the number of databases and downloadable materials. All those things are of great benefit to PPL library users.

Ms. McCament noted that one of the initial concerns was the return of materials to the wrong library. Ms. Torgeson responded that it proved not to be an issue and didn't really impact the workload. Of more concern was that PCLS and PPL are two distinct libraries and have different distinct policies, and it was very important to make the public aware of it. A public education campaign was undertaken. Ms. Parikh noted that the PCLS delivery van drives by Swasey and could pick up/returns materials that had been wrongly returned.

Mr. Chasco stated that he took an opportunity to look around Main Branch and he could certainly understand the desire to avoid negatively impacting TPL customers. He referred to his 35 years of experience working in the public sector and has seen many fine examples of governmental agencies working cooperatively to the benefit of all, such as fire districts and police agencies providing mutual aid, utility districts doing mutual purchasing, park districts sharing resources. He stated that he believes anything can be accomplished when organizations really put their minds to it. He also stated that he agreed with Mr. Evans that it was important to conduct a due process by taking time to have mindful deliberations and reviewing data staff had provided. He requested that a record of deliberations be established so that in the future others can learn from the process. He noted the importance of legislative relations and support. The legislature always looks at who is doing what in terms of efficiency, best use of taxpayer dollars and best services. He thinks a reciprocal agreement would provide goodwill and good graces of legislators. He thanked the TPL Board for their willingness to consider the proposal.

Ms. Odenrantz stated that both TPL and PCLS are have fine libraries and it's been interesting and inspiring seeing the great work and innovation of PCLS. She noted that TPL is already collaborating with PCLS on YA services and other ventures. She stated that regardless of the decision, the libraries can celebrate each other.

Ms. Parikh noted that the formal proposal was given to the boards in the informational packet prepared by PCLS. Ms. Odenrantz asked if the April 9, 2008 decision date referenced in Mr. Rose's remarks was a hard date or a target date. Chair Rose responded that it was a target date.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:21 pm on motion by Ms. McCament, seconded by Mr. Chasco.

Secretary

Chair