Daniel Boone Regional Library  
Minutes, Meeting of December 13, 2007

Call to Order, Roll Call, Determination of Quorum, and Introduction of Staff and Visitors

Powell called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. in the Virginia Young Room of the Columbia Public Library. Board members present were Pat Powell, President; Mary Ann Beahon; Susan Breyfogle; Linda Dellsperger; Rosie Gerding; Jim Loveless; Michael Luebbert; David McDonald; Tom Richards; Jessica Robinson; and David Webber. Terri Brunner, Patsy Craghead, Mary Fennel, Marie Glaze, Lynn Hostetler, and MaryEllen Sievert were absent. Terry Higgins and Tiff Lauffer arrived after roll call.

Also present were: Melissa Carr, Director; Elinor Barrett, Kris Farris, Melanie Henry, Linda Hodgkins, Pat Kopp, Sherry McBride-Brown, Marilyn McLeod, Karen Neely, Jim Smith, and Lauren Williams, DBRL staff; Chris Tatham, ETC Institute; and John Schloot and Rose Schloot, residents of Hallsville.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Approval of Minutes

Powell asked if there were any changes or revisions needed in the minutes from November 15, 2007. Hearing none, Powell declared the minutes approved as written.

Monthly Reports

Financial Reports – There were no questions on the financial report.

Service Report – Carr told the board that the Service Report in their February packet would include some of the changes the Statistics Committee has suggested and that she looked forward to sharing these improvements in February. In response to a question, she said some of the new statistics would provide information regarding things like computer usage.

Director’s Report – Carr announced that an article in the Columbia Daily Tribune reported that Forbes Magazine ranked Columbia the 19th best place to educate children based on public and private schools, public library use, and higher education options. Carr explained that due to turnover in security personnel, the CPL has been using off duty police officers to provide security, and she has received positive feedback from staff and patrons regarding the officers’ presence. Carr reminded the board to turn in their requests to attend Advocacy Day on February 12.
Report from Individual Library District Board Meetings

Boone County Library District (BCLD) – Robinson reported that the BCLD Board met on December 5 in Harrisburg and heard a proposal from Chad Sayre who is building a new development in Hallsville. Sayre is interested in leasing part of the development for use as a library. Robinson said that they talked about where the board is in its long range planning process and that the board is not in a position to consider new branches as this point.

Columbia Library District (CLD) – Richards reported that the CLD Board began its meeting earlier in the evening to discuss potential parking lot improvements and that this meeting will continue after the DBRL meeting is adjourned.

Board Committees

Ad Hoc Election Review Committee, Community Survey Report – Richards introduced Chris Tatham of ETC and said he was excited for the DBRL board to hear the final results of the community survey. Tatham told the board that conclusions presented tonight would be similar to those indicated by the preliminary results shared with the Election Review Committee in November. Tatham reviewed the survey methodology and said that the survey received responses from over 400 voters in each of the three districts. He pointed out that the differences in opinion among voters in the three districts are minor, that they agreed on 80% to 90% of the questions. He said that the survey’s precision is about +/- 3%, and the survey was administered only to registered voters. Tatham then reviewed the demographics of the survey respondents, including length of time they have lived in the region, age, gender, income, children in the household, and Internet access at home.

Tatham reported that while most respondents had heard about the Daniel Boone Regional Library, there was a good deal of confusion among CLD and BCLD residents about the library district in which they live. He explained that 89% of respondents had used library services and that those users are very satisfied with library services and the staff. He said he felt part of the reason the April 2007 election failed was that people are very satisfied with the current services and do not see the need for more taxes to increase library services. He added that those who did identify programs or services needing improvement named operating hours on weekends, computer availability, and the DVD collection. He noted that 57% did not identify any programs or services as needing improvement.

Tatham showed the board maps of the region with different areas of the maps color-coded based on the responses of voters in those areas. He told the board that the main purpose of the maps is what he calls “equity,” or showing pockets or areas where voters felt similarly or differently about certain issues. He warned the board that these maps are not statistically representative of those different areas (the colored area might represent just 10 or 15 people) and should not be the main basis for decision-making. Most areas of the region look about the same with only minor variations in opinion. Carr suggested
that board members look at the cross-tabulations by district and actual numbers provided in the survey results in conjunction with the maps.

Tatham showed a quadrant analysis of the satisfaction and importance ratings respondents gave to various programs and services, which shows those areas where the library is meeting or exceeding customer expectations, areas where residents feel it is important the library improve, and areas where the library could improve but such improvements are not identified as important by the majority of users. Tatham said DBRL should focus on the quality of the music collection, audiobook collection, and DVD collection, as well as the number of available computers, as areas to improve. He also said that continued emphasis should also be placed on selection of best selling and new books and hours the library is open on weekends.

Tatham then reviewed attitudes about the library system, reporting that 87% of respondents were satisfied with the quality of services near their home. 84% were satisfied with the distance public libraries are located from their homes. He added that only 7% were dissatisfied with how long they had to travel to reach a library facility. 69% were satisfied with the overall value they receive for the taxes they pay to support libraries. Tatham said that the national average for satisfaction with the value residents receive for the taxes they pay to support local governments is 47%, so DBRL rated 22% above the national average. Tatham reported that 94% of respondents agreed with the statement that libraries are important to the community. Loveless pointed out that even though the majority of respondents have Internet access at home, they still don’t see the Internet as a replacement for libraries. Tatham pointed out that there was generally strong agreement with the statement that libraries should be open on Friday and Saturday evenings. Respondents also agree that more branch libraries are needed in general; however, Tatham pointed out that this is seen as a future need and voters are not willing to pay for new branches right now. He said that when asked about branches in specific locations, the people living in those locations were supportive, but since the library needs the entire district to support a specific location, passing an election for a specific location becomes much more difficult. Tatham then showed color-coded maps showing agreement versus neutrality or disagreement with various statements regarding libraries in different areas of the region. He said the biggest difference was the opinion of voters regarding whether or not libraries should be open on Sundays. Callaway County voters were largely neutral on this topic.

Tatham then discussed feedback regarding the Boone County Library District’s April 2007 election, saying that 65% of respondents opposed the library’s ballot issue, 6% don’t remember if they did or did not support the issue, and 29% supported the issue. Tatham said that for those who supported the issue, the leading factor was not any specific investment in a particular building or location, they just like the idea of libraries in general. For those who opposed the issue, the top reasons were cost and tax related. He said that educating people on the topic was not an issue because ultimately people felt that they had the information they needed to make a decision – the cost of the projects. Tatham said that mistrust of the library board also surfaced as one of the reasons for the election’s failure, but he said that there are always a certain percentage of respondents
who don’t trust the government. He explained that the level of mistrust of the library board was fairly average when compared to the trust levels of other government entities. Tatham said that in spite of the loss, there is some support for future investments. He said that in general voters want expanded services at the existing facilities and feel those facilities aren’t yet being used to their full capacity. He added that where there is support for a new facility or services in a specific location, the support tends to be where that facility or service would be located. Tatham said that respondents expressed the most support for opening the CPL on Sundays, opening the CPL on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday nights, increased parking at the CPL, and placing drop boxes for book returns at various Columbia locations.

Tatham next reviewed voters’ willingness to support a future bond issue, and he said that the majority would be willing to consider voting in favor of a new library proposal; however, this support depends on the proposal containing the new or improved library programs and facilities they support most. He added that voters would not currently support much of a tax increase; 56% would likely support a $2 per month increase (8 cents per $100 of assessed valuation).

Tatham summarized the results, saying that overall satisfaction with the library is high and voters feel they get good value for their tax dollars. He said that the main reason the election failed was cost, with mistrust of the board being a secondary factor. He clarified that the respondents who answered the questions regarding why they opposed the ballot issue are a subset of the 400 BCLD respondents, and question 6d is strictly to see the reasons why that subset opposed the issue. He cautioned the board against using the results from 6d for planning purposes and encouraged them to focus on the questions that were asked of all respondents. Tatham then offered to answer questions.

Gerding wondered about the seeming discrepancy between the high number of people who in general support new branches and the lack of agreement on where those branches should go and the unwillingness to fund new branches. Tatham said he interpreted these results to mean that people agree that branches will be needed as the region grows, but they see additional capacity at the branches the library currently has and don’t see a need for the branches at this time. When they are given specific locations they are indifferent because they don’t perceive the need today.

Dellsperger said that the fact that over 80% of the respondents are satisfied with the distance a library is from their home is very telling and indicates that people are satisfied with what we currently provide.

Richards asked if Tatham had a benchmark for trust or if he asks about trust when polling for other government entities, and if so, how DBRL compares. Tatham said that on the question about trust, 16% said that they do not trust the library board. Tatham said this is not unusual for a government entity to have about 20% of residents reporting that they don’t trust the government. He pointed out that for every person that doesn’t trust the board, there are three that do. He added that some people don’t have a strong opinion on this topic, and these people can be influenced by coverage of the trust issue in the media.
He said ETC doesn’t have a benchmark on trust, but they do have one for value received for tax dollars spent, and the library ranks very high. He said that if people didn’t trust the board, they wouldn’t report receiving high value for their tax dollars, and there wouldn’t be 80% of respondents reporting they would consider voting for another ballot issue.

Richards said that he has learned a lot from this survey process, particularly how important a tool like this can be. He said he felt strongly that the board should do a similar survey on a periodic basis, and had the board had this information a year ago, it never would have gone for an election. He said that the committee had reviewed the survey results in great detail at two meetings and they developed some general observations to bring back to the board. First, the library asked for about three times more than what voters are willing to pay for additional library services. No matter the specifics of the proposal, the costs were simply too high. He said that with the other tax issues that will be on the ballot in the coming years, the library will not be able to pass a tax increase large enough to support a facilities expansion plan. Second, the committee was surprised and pleased by the magnitude of support for the library system. He called this support the library’s biggest asset, but also its biggest problem when it comes to asking for more money; voters are satisfied. Richards said that there is little support for additional branches, but there is support for investment in and better utilizing the facilities we already have. Richards reported that the committee also agrees that the board needs to refocus its priorities. He said that since 1999 the library has been setting aside funds for branch expansion, but now the board needs to listen to what it has been told and shift its focus towards better supporting operations and better utilizing existing facilities.

Richards said the Election Review Committee has brought four motions to the board. The Ad Hoc Election Review Committee recommends that the DBRL Board accept the 2007 Daniel Boone Regional Library Community Survey report as presented in its final form. The motion passed.

Richards thanked Tatham and ETC for their work and encouraged the board to continue a relationship with ETC in the future.

The Ad Hoc Election Review Committee recommends that the Long Range Planning Committee develop a strategic plan to enhance library services without the construction of new facilities. The motion passed.

The Ad Hoc Election Review Committee recommends that the Communications Committee develop a communication plan to:

- Increase communication;
- Define trustees’ individual roles in communication; and
- Address existing perceptions and advocate library accomplishments.

The motion passed.
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The Ad Hoc Election Review Committee recommends that the Ad Hoc Election Review Committee be disbanded upon presenting its final report to the DBRL Board. The motion passed.

Powell thanked the members of the Election Review Committee: Tom Richards, chair; Terri Brunner; Patsy Craghead; Terry Higgins; Jessica Robinson; MaryEllen Sievert; and David Webber. The board thanked Tatham for his hard work.

Risk Management Committee – Dellsperger reported that the committee met during the last week of November and reviewed the RFQ processes for putting the library’s legal services and retirement plan out to bid. She said the committee heard a report on the number of worker’s compensation claims which have been very low largely due to the work of the staff on the safety committee. This committee has implemented some effective workplace changes and increased educational efforts. She also reported that the library’s health and dental insurance premiums will not increase for 2008. In response to a question, Carr said that the RFQ for legal services will ask for references.

Old Business

Gerding reminded the committee that she had been investigating having Ellen Miller come to Columbia to do a workshop for the board. She said the cost for Miller and her partner to do the trustee training would be $2,000. She said that money from the trustee development budget normally used to send a trustee to ALA could be used for this training for the entire board. She suggested that the workshop could be held on a Friday evening and Saturday morning, or the workshop could be held just on a Saturday. Gerding reviewed just a few of the topics Miller could cover, including self-evaluation, board evaluation, dealing with constituents and the public, goal development, or procedural and policy issues. She said that this evening she needed to know if the board did want to have the workshop, and if so, would members prefer a Friday/Saturday workshop or just a Saturday. Higgins expressed her support for having Miller come speak to the board, and Richards added that he felt it would be an effective use of funds. He suggested that the board could invite Centralia’s board for a portion of the workshop, and asked that the other trustees consider this idea. Powell suggested that this workshop could take the place of a board meeting, and that a short board meeting could be conducted during the workshop. The board members present agreed that they would like to have Miller and her partner conduct a workshop for them, preferably in late spring or early summer. Luebbert asked that the date not overlap with the 100th anniversary celebration of the Fulton library, scheduled for late June. Carr said that after the first of the year staff would send out an email with possible dates so that we can make the necessary arrangements with Miller.

Public – Comments on Agenda Items

John Schloot asked Tatham if each red dot on the map in his presentation represented a single survey respondent, and Tatham said yes. Schloot said that there are about 5,000 households within a five-mile radius of Hallsville, and it looked to him like only 10 or so
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participated in this survey, so it is not representative of the feelings of the residents of that area. He told the board that they intended to push forward with their efforts to establish a library in Hallsville.

Staff – Comments/Announcements

There were no staff comments or announcements.

Board – Comments/Announcements

Powell said that she saw library staff member Pat Kopp’s husband in a recent newspaper article about MU adding rare maps to its digital collection.

Luebbert reminded the board that they are invited to attend Linda Hodgkins’ retirement celebration at the Callaway County Public Library on Monday from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, Powell adjourned the meeting at 9:03 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Lauren Williams, Executive Assistant.

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Board Secretary