

MINUTES OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

SEPTEMBER 25, 2007

6:00 P.M.

NORTH CAROLINA MECKLENBURG COUNTY

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Special Session at ImaginOn in the Wachovia Playhouse, Main Level located at 300 East Seventh Street at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 25, 2007.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Chairman Jennifer Roberts and Commissioners
Karen Bentley, J. Daniel Bishop, H. Parks Helms
Norman A. Mitchell, Sr., Dan Ramirez and
Valerie C. Woodard
County Manager Harry L. Jones, Sr.
Clerk to the Board Janice S. Paige

Absent: Commissioners Dumont Clarke and Bill James

The Board met in joint session with the Library Board of Trustees. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss library and other related matters of mutual interest.

The meeting began with dinner and afterwards the following discussion took place.

Board of Trustee member Darryl Williams called the meeting to order, on behalf of Board of Trustee Chairman Patty Norman, who was absent.

Trustee Williams said the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County desires to be the “best public Library in America” and has adopted the goal to be “America’s Best Public Library by 2010.”

He then reviewed the Library’s five key strategies to carry out that goal. They are:

1. To be a leader in building a highly literate and educated community
2. To contribute to the economic health, cultural and social capital of our community
3. To become a preferred employer in our community and nationally among libraries
4. To be highly accessed and cherished by our community
5. To be good stewards of the community’s trust and resources.

Next,

Director of the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County Charles Brown gave a brief history of the Library, as well as, an overview of its goals and aspirations.

Director Brown also reviewed the Library’s Strategic Plan 2005-2008 and gave an update on the status of the Plan. Below are highlights:

- ImaginOn opened in 2005 has received “rave” reviews. Almost a million people have visited the facility.
- The following requests have remained largely unfunded:

- **Building the Library’s Collections** – The Library is recommending a collection budget of \$7.21 per capita to bring the Library into the upper quartile of libraries of comparable size populations.
- **Improved Facilities Maintenance** – The Library is recommending a Library facility maintenance budget of \$3.54 per square foot (equal to that of County facility maintenance).
- **Installation of Self-Check and Radio Frequency Identification Technologies (RFID)** – To fully implement RFID technology would require a \$4.5 million investment to convert from the existing optical scanning system. Thus, the Library is recommending that this be phased in over a three or four year time period.
- **Literacy and Workforce Development** – The Library is recommending full funding for Library literacy initiatives to expand reading programs for children, literacy programs for adults and outreach programs for underserved communities.

Director Brown said the Library will present some capital project needs to the Board in November, including the need for signage.



Next,

[Susan Harden](#) with the Library facilitated a discussion between the two Boards, basically to receive input from the Board of Commissioners with respect to Library concerns of their own and/or of constituents.

Comments:

[Chairman Roberts](#) said she has mainly received positive feedback from constituents. However, two issues of concern have been brought to her attention regarding hours of operation and renovations.

[Commissioner Ramirez](#) said there’s a need for accessibility of services with respect to the Hispanic community, an understanding of what they need. He said Charlotte/Mecklenburg County is becoming more of an international community.

[Commissioner Helms](#) said the Library some how needs to focus on how it can contribute more when it comes to economic and social capital.

[Trustee Sally Robinson](#) asked Commissioner Helms if he had any suggestions with respect to moving forward on this issue.

[Commissioner Helms](#) said he didn't have anything specific at this time, but that it would involve community groups and also marketing.

[Commissioner Bishop](#) said he would like to know more about how technology has changed the “role” of the library.

[Commissioner Mitchell](#) said the concerns expressed to him have to do with equity funding of libraries. He noted that Steele Creek residents are pleased but there is concern on the part of the Beatties Ford Road residents with respect to enhancements of their library. He said they don’t want reductions made to the original plan for the Beatties Ford Road branch.

[Commissioner Woodard](#) commented on the need for revenue and said she wants to make sure increased library fees don’t end up being unaffordable for those wanting to use the library. She noted as an example the fee charged for meeting room space. She said often it’s small groups desiring this service and hopes it remains affordable.

[Commissioner Bentley](#) said she would like to know more about partnering between the Library

and Central Piedmont Community College and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools with respect to literacy and workforce development.

Trustee Williams with respect to the need for collaboration, revenue, and resources, said the question to ask is “are we taking advantage of all our resources;” noting the significant banking industry that exist in the community.

Chairman Roberts commented on the successful partnering efforts of the Park and Recreation Department.

County Manager Jones said County staff could work with the Library on looking at opportunities for functional consolidation and developing for the future with respect to how services are delivered.

A representative from Charlotte Reads noted that they would like to increase their work with youth but resources are needed to do so.

Commissioner Mitchell suggested the Library go back to the City of Charlotte and request that consideration be given to contributing to the library through their budget process. It was noted during the history presentation that the City of Charlotte no longer provides funding to the Library, that their contribution stopped years ago.

Closing Remarks:

Director Brown and Trustees thanked the Board for meeting with them and said attempts will be made to plan another meeting of this type in the future.

Chairman Roberts expressed thanks on behalf of the Board and concurred that an annual meeting of this type should occur in the future.

This concluded the meeting. No action was taken or required.

The above is not inclusive of every comment but is a summary of key points.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was declared adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Janice S. Paige, Clerk

Jennifer Roberts, Chairman