

**Norman Public Library Board Minutes
Special Meeting: Monday, December 12, 2011
4:30 p.m.
Director's Conference Room**

Roll Call/Introductions

Members Present: Aleisha Karjala, Renee Porter, Jeffrey Wilhite, Karen Rieger, Tim Mauldin, Simm Rudnick (chair)

Members Excused: Breea Bacon, Glynis Edgar

Members Absent: Thomas Showman

NPL Staff Present: Leslie Tabor, Judy Day, Nancy Rimassa, Nancy Littlejohn, Basha Hartley

PLS Staff Present: Anne Masters, Director and Lisa Wells, Assistant Director for Library Services

Others Present: Brenda Hall, City Clerk, City of Norman

Meeting began with a tour of the Norman Public Library public and staff sides led by Tabor

Tabor then provided a brief summary of last quarter's meeting discussion that led to the special meeting being called:

- Purchase of the Borders building by the Pioneer Library System (not a Norman Public Library or City of Norman purchase)
- Potential for library space/branch in the Borders location
- Future needs and goals for library service in the Norman community
- Library board engagement with Council and community regarding library efforts

Anne Masters provided an update on Pioneer Library System (PLS) and the Borders building:

- Purchase closed on Friday, December 9, 2011
- Moving the Pioneer Service Center (PSC), currently housed on McGee Street in the old Hollywood Theatre, is the first priority because their lease is up in 2012 – hope to have them moved by the end of July 2012
- Now that the contract is closed Pioneer will put out an RFP for architects to fit the building for use (additional restrooms, etc.)
- Plan is to move administration from Norman Public Library to Borders building – this is the second priority after moving the PSC but there is no target date for the administrative move
- Pioneer recently leased first floor offices in the old Dale's Office Supply building on Gray Street for the PLS Foundation and technology storage
- The Friends of the Norman Library are also leasing space for their services – they have moved out of the library to provide more staff space and meeting space
- Clarification that the Hollywood Theatre and Gray Street leases are held by PLS and not the City of Norman

Masters continued with an update about the current library building and the impact, if any, of the Borders purchase and planned administrative move:

- Parking is a big problem with the library's current location – there are less than 75 spots that are not reserved for City of Norman use and they are shared with the municipal complex
- Limited utility of the current administrative space inside the library

- PLS Board of Trustees, chaired by Steve Eddy, is interested in some sort of public library service point inside the Borders building
- All PLS libraries partner with the cities they serve – the cities provide and maintain the facilities and PLS provides the staff and collections – decisions about new libraries and major upgrades are at the discretion of the cities
- The location is ideal to serve Norman, but the City of Norman does not know if they will be able to have any library space
- There has been lots of interest voiced in keeping the coffee shop and that is something PLS would like to do
- The Borders building is 25,000 square feet and a library space would potentially take up around 9,000 square feet
- A study session is planned in January for the City Council to explore the opportunity for library space in the Borders building
 - PLS will provide a picture of what library space might look like in that facility, including the potential use for space and cost of a lease
- PLS is gathering information to provide during the study session including comparisons of libraries in other similar cities, potential staffing and cost
- A study session is an informal opportunity for the City Council to consider items that may have potential for future agendas or ballots – the public is welcome to attend but there is not time allotted for public input like in a regular Council meeting
- No action from the Council takes place during a study session
- PLS is aware that the city may not be able to provide this type of library space at this time or that they simply decide not to – it is the privilege of the city to make the best decision for the community
- PLS and the library respect the city and what they can and cannot do and want to provide all the information needed to make an informed decision
- If the city is unable to provide library space at the Borders site, PLS will continue services at Sooner Mall and will also consider moving or replicating those services on-site
- The library and board need to remind the public and Council of the limitations of the Mall as a service point
- The Pioneer Library System is not in a place to make a firm recommendation to the city at this time because it is so early – there is still information to gather and the Study Session to complete – but eventually PLS will be able to provide a picture of what a reasonable use of the space will look like and cost
- The value to the City of Norman with the Borders purchase is that there will not need to be considerations for administrative space so the project will be smaller
- The current library facility is at capacity in regards to physical space both on the public and staff sides
- It is a given that there is an undeniable need for a new central library
- It seems that the city and community are also supportive of branch libraries on the east and west sides to serve all of Norman, the question comes down to the timing of the “whens” and “wheres”
- Projects and their success depend on the timing, funding, project specifics and overall picture

- The city can ask for the library board's input regarding library space and recommendations for projects like flooring – there is renewed interest from the board and city to engage the board for the purpose it's here for
- Councilmember Gallagher attended the last quarterly board meeting and reported at the City Council's most recent meeting during miscellaneous discussion
 - Briefly mentioned the Borders closing
 - Spoke to the current condition of the library as "terrible" and that the library should be a "showpiece" building and it is being neglected
 - Councilmember mentioned that the space vacated by administration for the Borders move will provide "multitudes of room" – this is not a correct assumption to make, especially when considering the cost of remodeling, issues like parking and that the building would still be at capacity for utility even after administration leaves
- The administrative move to the Borders building would free up approximately 5,000 square feet, but that space is only appropriate for staff use and storage – this space would basically allow staff to not have to work on top of each other and hopefully allow for more work efficiency
- Preliminary best use plan:
 - consolidate and move circulation staff to administrative side to free up more circulation space for returned items and delivery processing
 - consolidate reference and children's staff – currently there are two staff members in the storytime room, so a move would free up more storytime space
 - re-arrange literacy services
 - staff work space for projects and storage
- It would be impossible to adequately staff and monitor public services in the vacated administrative space, especially without any capital investment or major renovations – having the public on two fronts would also be a safety issue
- To move library administration (branch manager and department heads) further back would remove them from the floor and hinder their ability to monitor the public and supervise staff
- The volume of the Norman Public Library is larger than that of any other library in the tri-county library system and we are doing more than we have the space to accommodate – with each year that services increase staff must do more with less space
- The library has outlived the building and any solution besides a new central library will basically be a short-term Band-Aid fix
- The current building was built in 1964-1965 when the population was only around 30,000
- The last major renovation was around 1985
- More library space is needed to serve a city and community of Norman's current and future size
- Even with growing technology, statistics show that library use increases exponentially after library renovations and improvements – the library has a powerful and important role in the community as a free gathering place
 - Sister libraries in Moore and Blanchard have seen their circulation numbers double in each of the years following their renovations and re-openings
- All of the points discussed will be evaluated by PLS and the City of Norman to determine what is best – Pioneer will do everything in its power to provide information and give advice *but we do not want to get in front of the city*

Brenda Hall spoke briefly about purchases the City of Norman has made that may have potential as future library sites:

- A purchase of 10 acres on the east side was made previously for potential fire department use – this site could also have a branch library
- Grainery site purchased because of its proximity to the municipal complex – would probably also require some more property if used as central library site
- Clarification from Anne Masters: currently no additional available land around the Borders building and probably not in the future, either

General/miscellaneous discussion:

- PLS and the City of Norman are still in the preliminary stages of discussing the opportunity for a west side branch in the Borders building
- There is still the question of whether or not it would be best to present a single proposal at one time that includes an east side branch, west side branch and new central library
- City will be preparing for FY 2013 from January to June and there is hope of new library flooring
- Library board would like to adopt a formal resolution to forward to the City Council after the study session – this will tentatively be an item on the February agenda
- Why did the library vote fail in 2008?
 - Feelings that the central library was “too big”
 - Too much money – cost too high
 - No inclusion of branches on the east and west sides
 - People did not like the location or felt that it wasn’t clear
- Report from 2008 is still somewhat valid and PLS will find copies for the board
- Library board would like to form a committee of its four officers and previous chair to draft formal resolution

Closing statements from branch staff:

- Tabor assured the board that the library staff are working very hard with what they currently have
- Make every effort to keep the building clean and functioning
- Concern that there is public thought that the library is intentionally making the building dirty in order to “force” the city to build a new library – this is not true and quite the opposite
- Staff work very hard to be good stewards of the space and public funds
- We do everything within our capability to provide services and keep the library functioning at a high and active level
- 5 Bin Sorter scheduled for installation in mid-January
- HVAC project is going well, anticipate meeting February completion date
- Lighting project to update all lights after HVAC is completed

Summary/Talking Points of current building limitations (undeniable need for new library space):

- PARKING – less than 75 unreserved spots in the complex for library use
 - Even if the building were renovated, PARKING would still be INADEQUATE
- PUBLIC SPACE – there is not enough room on the floor to accommodate a growing collection of materials (books, magazines, audio CDs, children’s, DVDs), public computers and study/meeting space

- Growing demand for public meeting space as the library is used more and more by community organizations – public libraries are one of the last places with FREE public meeting space
- The building looks old and outdated
- STAFF SPACE – staff are housed in storytime rooms and often share work space, growing need for project work space to maintain collections and provide programming
 - There is only ONE male staff restroom – more males work in libraries than when the library was originally built
- ELECTRICITY – the building is almost maxed out in regards to electrical wiring and power
 - More technology requires more power and more outlets for library and public use
- USE – 10,000 to 15,000 citizens visit the library each week
 - Current flooring is not able to handle that wear and tear
 - Need to update/expand public restrooms

Action items:

- Library board members attend City Council study session in January 2012
- Library board form committee to draft formal resolution to forward to City Council
- Library board put resolution on February agenda (subject to study session date)

Respectfully submitted by Leslie Tabor, 12/13/11

