

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Mount Vernon City Library Board of Trustees
May 6, 2008**

Board members present: Marija Anderson, Bill Craig, Paul Jensen and Lucy Wells.

Excused absence: Paul Jurenka.

Library staff present: Director Brian Soneda; Deputy Director Sara Holahan, Betsy Cherednik and Linda Allen for part of the meeting.

A. Call to order: Mr. Jensen called the meeting to order at 5:44 PM.

B. Approval of minutes from the April 3, 2008 meeting: Mr. Craig moved that the minutes of the April 3 board meeting be approved as submitted. Ms. Wells seconded the motion; all were in favor.

C. Visitors: There were no visitors in attendance.

D. Surplus material: Ms. Anderson moved that items withdrawn between April 2 and April 27 be declared surplus and transferred to the Friends of the Mount Vernon Library. Mr. Craig seconded the motion; all were in favor.

E. Signature of warrants: All vouchers presented to the board were approved for payment.

F. Budget report: Mr. Soneda highlighted one item from Synopsis of Payments, the \$7,126.65 for SirsiDynix from the "Software Maintenance, Horizon" line, noting that this was for the main annual payment for our Horizon ILS (Integrated Library System). Mr. Jensen asked about the implications of the library's research into a new ILS system to replace Horizon. Mr. Soneda responded that the research was ongoing and that even if the decision turned out to be to go to a different vendor, the migration itself would not happen until well into 2009 and thus "SirsiDynix" would continue to appear on vouchers at least for many months to come.

G. Monthly statistical report: Mr. Soneda highlighted one item from the April statistical report, the over 3,000 item increase in monthly circulation over April of 2007, the fourth month in a row that circulation figures have been significantly higher than in the previous year. Mr. Soneda noted that it has seemed very busy this year and these figures reflect that. Ms. Holahan noted that the approximately 85,000 items in the library's collection represented about as many items as the library could attractively and safely shelve, so that items added and items withdrawn are running at close to a one to one ratio. A discussion of options that might address this issue followed; none of the short-term options (such as crowding more books onto shelves, adding additional vertical shelving or sacrificing table/chair area for more shelving) mentioned seemed like good options. Ms. Anderson and Mr. Jensen asked if the library tracked how many items were out of

the library at any one time. Mr. Soneda said that this was not routinely tracked; Ms. Holahan said that she would look into this. Mr. Soneda noted that the only thing he knew for sure was that MVCL was a well-used library with very high circulation figures and that if those circulation figures were lower and even more items were on the shelves that “we would be in a boatload of trouble.”

H. Director’s Reports:

a. OLA/WLA Conference report. Mr. Soneda noted that due to the unusual Tuesday occurrence of Board Meeting, all of the library’s attendees at the Oregon Library Association/Washington Library Association Joint Conference (April 16-18, in Vancouver, WA) were on duty and available to address the Board. He asked that Ms. Cherednik and Ms. Allen come in and briefly share their highlights from the Conference, along with Ms. Holahan. Ms. Holahan highlighted her attendance at a breakfast featuring Paul Mortimer, who spoke on fundraising. Ms. Anderson related a story about a bequest to a library, and a discussion of estate planning followed; Ms. Cherednik mentioned a huge bequest to Tacoma Public Library that involved careful and considerate, but also fairly aggressive courting of the donor. Ms. Allen highlighted a rousing session by author Jose Luis Orozco, where she learned that animals are depicted as making different sounds in different languages, and the funny breakfast presentation of author Rick Riordan, in which ex-middle school teacher Riordan opined that teaching this age level was actually great preparation for writing his award-winning murder mysteries. Ms. Cherednik highlighted a session that provided information on how much personal data was available from online voter registration sites. Ms. Anderson asked about the potential for invasion of privacy; Ms. Cherednik acknowledged that the valuable research potential had to be balance against people’s right to privacy. Ms. Cherednik also presented a one minute “elevator speech” about the value of the library, and urged trustees to come up with their own speeches and seize opportunities to talk about the library in public. Mr. Jensen concluded by observing that having four staff members at the conference was a very good thing and that there was a “better chance of making a difference” when multiple attendees brought back information and energy from a conference. Ms. Holahan, Ms. Cherednik and Ms. Allen excused themselves following this agenda item.

b. Friends Book Sale report. Mr. Soneda described the Friends’ spring book sale as very successful. He credited Mr. Jurenka for his hard work volunteering on the book sale. Approximately \$1,148.00 was taken in by the Friends from sold items, and new Friends memberships from sale attendees and some donations added approximately \$150.00 more to the Friends’ coffers. Mr. Soneda commended the Friends and staff volunteers for this great success in spite of the “challenging” weather. A letter thanking the Friends for their efforts on behalf of the library was passed around and signed by the four trustees in attendance.

c. Verbal report on Department Heads meeting. Mr. Soneda reported on the April 29 meeting of City Department Heads with Mayor Norris. This was a valuable retreat with department heads each sharing departmental project

priorities for the next 3-1/2 years. Mr. Soneda's part of the discussion focused on ideas for "mixed-use" development with a new library as part of larger facility, with multiple partners/funders. He reported that there was a good consensus among the retreat attendees that mixed-use was a sound development philosophy.

d. Staffing update. Mr. Soneda noted that there had been one addition to staff, with Emily Watilo, a former MVCL Page who had gone off to college, returning as a part-time temporary (3 month) Public Services/Summer Reading Assistant. Ms. Watilo has a good library background, worked in a library during her college year and has been welcomed back to staff. Mr. Soneda also noted the strong progress that has been made in performance evaluations. He predicted that by the next Board Meeting that the first round of annual performance evaluations would be completed. He again credited Ms. Holahan with her hard work on this process.

e. Other. Mr. Soneda handed Mr. Jensen the Continuing Education grant claim form for his approval that the library would then submit to the State Library. This would allow the library to recover almost half of the costs associated with the attendance of Mr. Soneda, Ms. Holahan, Ms. Cherednik and Ms. Allen at the OLA/WLA Conference. Mr. Soneda noted that he was not sure he had announced to the group that there were two new directors in the area, Maggie Buckholz at Burlington Public and Aimee Hirschel at Upper Skagit. Finally, Mr. Soneda noted he had been thinking about the fact that two trustees' terms of service were ending at the same time, on December 31, 2008. While he would have to run this idea by the City Attorney on whether it was ordinance-compliant, Mr. Soneda asked if either of the two trustees going off Board at the end of the year would be willing to serve an additional year. This would put the rotation back on schedule, with one term of service ending each year. Mr. Jensen noted that he would be happy to do so: Mr. Soneda promised to talk to the City Attorney and get back to the trustees at the next Board Meeting.

I. Board Chair's Report: Mr. Jensen made some comments about issues discussed at the April Board Meeting, from which he had an excused absence. He referred to the Tulips/Lemons suggestion box idea; Mr. Soneda reiterated his commendation of Cheryle Coapstick and Ms. Holahan for their colorful and creative revision of the suggestion box format, which had resulted in many good suggestions and comments. Mr. Jensen asked for a little more detail on the coming ILS selection process. Mr. Soneda responded that a committee had recently been formed to oversee this process and schedule onsite and offsite visits to research the four ILS vendors' products. He stated his intention to work on a very careful and open-minded process that would end with a good choice that worked for staff and for the public. Mr. Jensen commended Mr. Soneda's reports on the PLA Conference and the OLA/WLA Joint Conference. He also noted that he would have to miss the June Board Meeting, due to the high school graduation of his granddaughter in Wisconsin. Finally, Mr. Jensen referred to Ms. Allen's report on ex-middle school teacher and murder-suspense novel writer, Rick Riordan, and concluded with a joke: a reporter covering a couple's 50th anniversary event asked the wife if they had ever

contemplated divorce, to which the wife responded, “divorce never, murder, many times.”

J. Other Trustee Comments: Ms. Anderson noted that she was pleased to hear that ex-MVCL employee Janna Gage had presented a program at the library about her new book. Mr. Soneda responded that he had not been able to attend that program, but heard very good things about it. Mr. Craig asked about the Tulips/Lemon comment questioning the library’s balance in adding donated books to the collection. Mr. Soneda responded that he knew there was no intent to be anything but balanced in adding books, be they donated or purchased, to the collection, but that this comment had really gotten his attention and had engendered a very productive staff discussion, and that he was very appreciative of the comment for that reason. Mr. Craig praised the new Burlington Public Library and asked if there might not be increased “linkage” between the catalogs and other offerings of the two libraries in the future. Mr. Soneda responded that because the two libraries currently had a reciprocal agreement as well as the same ILS, that this was possible in the future, and added that the six libraries in Skagit County were discussing the possibility of choosing the same ILS, which would foster county-wide potential for linkage. Finally, Mr. Craig applauded the Teen poetry reading event he and his daughter had attended at the library, describing it as lightly attended but fun and with a lot of energy.

K. Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:02 PM. The next meeting of the board of trustees will be on Thursday, June 5, at 5:30 PM at the library.

Minutes by Brian Soneda, Library Director