

The Holmes Public Library

470 Plymouth Street

Halifax, MA 02338

Debra.DeJonker-Berry@sailsinc.org

Directors Report October 2009

Building/Mechanical

John Campbell, Chair of the Municipal/ School Building Committee will provide an update today, but to re-cap the Town received three bids--all far exceeding the available funds:

- RCH Roofing: \$242,600 for the base bid; \$38,600 for Alternate 1 (the school portion)
- Commonwealth Building Systems: \$269,000 for the base bid; \$88,000 for alternate 1
- Northern Roofing: \$318,000 for the base bid; \$36,395 for alternate 1

Since, the bids received for construction far exceed the available funds, the Building Committee had no choice but to reject all the bids received. The Building Committee has developed a new approach that will still include the ventilation space and are estimated at costing half the price of the construction bids that we received. The new approach, however, will still cost perhaps as much as three times the amount that we have funding for. So, the Building Committee is planning on going to May Town Meeting. This means a delay in the roof construction, but there is a contingency plan that will buy us more time (it involves spot repairing the really mushy portions of the roof with plywood, labeling with paint the beams on the roof so that if someone needs to go up there it is safe, and to place the heat tape on the roof again so that there is no ice build-up).

Because one of our two roof-mounted heating units was non-functional last week, the Town electrician was on the roof installing a control unit to make a repair. When the system was turned on, fumes were released through the vents. We evacuated the library. In addition, the fire alarms did not go off at the time, but in the next half hour, a malfunctioning smoke alarm did go off bringing the Fire and Police to the Library. Gerry Elliot quickly responded and by the end of the evening, the Fire Alarm system was repaired. The heat should be addressed by the end of this week. Mr. Elliot has located a replacement unit in the event that a repair is not viable.

Draft Action Plan

Attached is a draft FY2011 Action Plan that must be approved and submitted to the Board of Library Commissioners by December 1.

Reference Librarian

I'd like to introduce Susan Scott, our new Reference Librarian, to the Board. Susan is a Halifax resident, has an MLS from Kent State University and had been a reference librarian at the Bridgewater Library where she responded to requests for information in person, by phone, email, fax and through the Internet using 24/7Reference Software. She has more than 35 years experience working in public libraries--including experience in adult programming, circulation and children's services. We are delighted that she has joined our staff and are looking forward to more cooperative programming with the COA, on local history and joint programming with the Friends.

Programming

We are in the full swing of fall programming. The Homework Club has begun; Jean's book club adjusted their schedule to allow readers to enjoy the group and then attend Town Meeting; Betsy's Knitting Group is back; and Marie is enjoying strong attendance with Infant Lapsit and the three other groups

(Pre-K, Toddler and Preschool). Amy and Marie put together a display for Banned Book Week which always has patrons coming with questions about the display. Finally, remember the Halloween Party & Costume Parade on Saturday, October 31 from 11-1.

This week is National Fire Prevention Week. The Halifax Fire Department has loaned us equipment for our display case, and Chief Carrico will be reading a story on Friday. In addition, he will bring a fire truck for the children to explore! The Library has a small collection in its pamphlet file on the history of the cranberry industry. I am hoping that this will make a good display and am wondering if there is a way to tie in an adult or children's program with the display.

On Wednesday, Susan has an organizational meeting for a new book club for seniors. The meeting will be held at the Council on Aging. In addition, I am hoping to tie in our Homebound Delivery program to expand that service. Kathy Drinan held the first organizational meeting of the Art Docent Program at the library last week. We will incorporate their schedule on our web-site.

May is bicycle safety month, and a Trustee has suggested that we hold a bike safety workshop. I have been looking to see whether there is some grant funds and found an interesting Safe Routes to School mini-grant that we could consider applying for either this year or next

http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/news_room/minigrants/index.cfm

Library Activities

Last week, with the help of the Building Department Staff, Gerry, Tom and Brenda, the Staff completed the huge shift that was approved at last month's meeting. Patrons should enjoy easier access to the videos and DVDs and staff enjoy the ease in their workload. We can now address simpler aspects of the move and work on finalizing signage in the next few weeks.

The MBLC annual reports are now complete. We will receive 28% less in State Aid this year. Funding for next year's SAILS membership will be close. In addition, the MBLC is looking at a potentially devastating 16% cut to their programs: The recommendations include elimination of the Regional Reference Centers, consolidation of the Regional Library Systems, a reduction in funding to the Library Networks, and a reduction in funding to the two talking book libraries.

Last weekend, the tree in memory of Royce Whitaker was planted. It is the Tamukeyama variety of a Japanese Red Maple, a red-leaf, dissected cultivar that grows in a mound or dome to 6-8' tall spreading by weeping and cascading branching to 12' wide. It is very lovely and is well-suited in the chosen spot next to the Reading Garden.

I am continuing to investigate new adult lounge chairs, and because of Susan's suggestion, am seeking quotes for re-upholstery of our existing chairs. So far, the only quote I have received back is too expensive at \$599 per chair. I have spoken with the Fire Chief about a defibulator at the library. No decision has been made, however, as on where the two units will be installed. The Lions Club has agreed to fund a subscription to the Readers Digest Large Print Magazine. Down the road, this may be a popular tie-in with the Council on Aging program and the delivery service. The Trustees page is up on the web-site and includes the agenda, my report and the names of the Trustees.

The State has made changes to the Ethics Law and the Open Meeting Law. The changes to the Open Meeting Law will take effect on July 1. In particular, these include a change in how the 48 hour posting requirement is calculated: Saturday no longer counts; the agenda must include a "listing of topics that

the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting;" minutes need to be more complete and include the date, time and place, members present or absent, a summary of the discussions on each subject, a list of documents, and the decisions made and actions taken, including the record of all votes. In addition, the Ethics Commission will be requiring mandatory (online) education and training for all public employees. The Ethics changes state "On or before December 28, 2009 and every 2 years thereafter, all current state, county and municipal employees must complete an ethics training program on the Commission's web-site." Both changes in laws will apply to both Library Staff and the Board of Trustees. The ethics training web-site is http://db.state.ma.us/ethics/quiz_MEthics/index.asp

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra DeJonker-Berry,
Library Director