

Wabasha Library Board of Trustees
Minutes of Special Meeting – August 30, 2011
(Joint Meeting with City Officials on Financing Library Building Repairs)

Present: Trustees Hampe, Heimstead, Kennebeck, and Tentis, and Library Director McCaughtry

Absent: Trustees Borg, Carrels, and Gosse

City Officials Present: Mayor Rollin Hall, City Administrator David Schmidt, and City Attorney Peter Ekstrand

Mayor Hall opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m., commenting that all during his tenure as Mayor he has been hearing about the questions surrounding payment for repairs to the Library building and he is hoping that they can be talked about and resolved during this meeting.

McCaughtry began the discussion by stating that the basic issue arises from distinguishing between regular ongoing building maintenance and more significant repairs requiring capital expenditures. She described the immediate need, replacing a broken window, for which a bid of \$1,600 has been procured. She and Schmidt noted that the City's insurance on the building has a \$2,500 deductible.

Kennebeck noted that he has wanted most of all to have the City be aware of the situation with the broken window, but not necessarily to have it replaced at this time. Schmidt said he thinks it does need to be replaced now.

Schmidt also noted the general difficult financial circumstances that City government is and will be facing and the effects on Wabasha taxpayers. Despite those circumstances, he suggested that it would be possible to request an increase in the 2012 Library levy to establish a building fund. Ekstrand confirmed that it would be possible to do this at the September City Council meeting. Kennebeck noted however that funds for building repairs are not needed every year.

Hampe asked for clarification of the Library's legal responsibility, and Ekstrand cited Minnesota Statute 134.11, "The library board shall . . . have exclusive control of the expenditure of all money collected for or placed to the credit of the library fund, . . . and of the grounds, rooms, and buildings provided for library purposes."

Ekstrand noted the historical precedent whereby the City has paid for Library building repairs. He asked Heimstead for clarification of an email she had sent, in which she said that the previous Library Director has pointed out that having the City make those payments was a way to avoid increasing the Library's budget, and therefore increasing the State-mandated Maintenance of Effort amount.

Schmidt again noted the general situation that local governments are facing, and he suggested that the Library could ask the City to cover the immediately needed repair and then could later

request an expanded budget, in order to include a building fund for such repairs. Hall indicated he would be uneasy about having the City responsible in general for repairs.

Ekstrand asked whether the Library has significant structural problems. Kennebeck responded that we are not sure. Heimstead asked Hall to clarify his last statement: did he mean he would be opposed to Schmidt's suggestion? He said he was not, that he was not wanting an immediate payment to be setting a precedent for the entire time until the Library would have a building fund.

At this point, some discussion took place about these topics:

- potential future location of the Library
- renovation of the portico area of the current Library
- window technology that could help deal with possible structural effects on glass

Schmidt offered a more formal version of his suggestion. The Library could approach the City Council and request funds to fix the window now and state that next year they will be requesting an increase of \$5,000 in the Library levy for 2013 in order to establish a building fund for future repairs.

McCaughy mentioned the existence of donated funds at the SELCO Foundation. Schmidt noted that former mayor John Meisch had been of the opinion that those funds should be used for Library repairs, but others felt that this was not the donors' intent.

More discussion took place about the longer range building situation and the length of time that the current building would be used. Schmidt also noted that the Port Authority is working to create a Community Foundation and that it might be a source of building-related funds in the future.

Schmidt offered a modified version of his suggestion in which the Library would ask for the increased levy for 2012 rather than for 2013.

Hampe moved that the Library Board ask the City Council to support it in meeting its responsibility for maintaining the Wabasha Public Library building by

- providing funds this year of approximately \$1,600 to repair the cracked window, and
- increasing the Library's levy for 2012 by \$5,000 to create and maintain a building fund as part of the Library's budget.

Tentis seconded the motion. Ekstrand asked whether there would be particular issues with this request. Schmidt noted that there will be a change in the operation of the market value homestead tax credit that will result in non-homestead properties having a large tax

increase in 2012. Hall suggested that maybe the Library levy increase might better be requested for 2013. Hampe queried whether the situation might not be even worse in 2013.

Hampe amended his motion to move that the Library Board ask the City Council to support it in meeting its responsibility for maintaining the Wabasha Public Library building by

- providing funds this year of approximately \$1,600 to repair the cracked window, and
- considering a request next year for an increase of \$5,000 in the Library levy to create and maintain a building fund as part of the Library's budget.

Kennebeck noted that there is another urgently needed repair to the Library building, replacement of the warped door to the mechanical area. Schmidt suggested that the request could be stated as “not to exceed \$3,000” for the two repairs.

Hampe again amended his motion to move that the Library Board ask the City Council to support it in meeting its responsibility for maintaining the Wabasha Public Library building by

- providing funds this year, not to exceed \$3,000, for two needed building repairs – a cracked window and a warped door, and
- considering a request next year for an increase of \$5,000 in the Library levy to create and maintain a building fund as part of the Library's budget.

Tentis seconded the amended motion, and it passed unanimously.

Hall concluded the meeting, saying the City and the Library will keep communication open in the future. Hampe stated that we will look ahead, not back. Kennebeck added that the Library does not think it is “special” but that it is important.

Respectfully submitted,
Lenief Heimstead
Secretary