

# **DESCHUTES PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD**

## **BOARD WORK SESSION**

**April 28, 2008**

President Beth Pearl-Gent convened the work session in the Library Administration Building at 10:40 a.m. Also present were Board members Pat Lawrence, Ann Malkin, Ray Miao, and George Riser, and Library Director Michael Gaston. Policy governance consultant Margot Helphand facilitated the meeting.

### **Group Processes**

The Board discussed methods to build group cohesion. Team agreements were developed in the areas of decision making, surfacing and resolving issues, personal communication, electronic communication, and general communication. (Attached)

### **Public Input**

The Board reviewed concerns and suggestions that have been expressed by Board and council members and managers.

- A substantial amount of time is being invested by citizens and managers reviewing the Results Policies.
- Many council members are relatively satisfied with the current Results Policies.
- Many council members are concerned that advisory council activity has limited value.

The Board identified desired outcomes.

- Public input is solicited.
- Residents are familiar with Board policies and library services.
- Potential Board members are identified and provided learning opportunities.

The Board discussed alternatives to achieve the outcomes.

- Develop a pool of residents willing to serve on ad-hoc committees to assist the Board on policy issues.
- Form Board appointed ad-hoc committees as needed.
- Organize town hall meetings to solicit broad public input.
- Form a “library academy” as a method of developing future board members.
- Adopt policy that management will solicit public input on operational issues.

The Board discussed the distinction between Board and management appointed committees.

- The Board could form committees as needed to assist the Board with policy related issues.
- Management could form committees or focus groups as needed to assist management with operational issues.
- Board formed committees would advise the Board (not management).
- Management formed committees would advise management (not the Board).

## **Proposed Actions**

### Executive Search Focus Groups

Board members noted that advisory council members will be invited to participate in the executive search focus groups.

### Form a Results/Functions Committee

An ad hoc committee could be formed to assist the Board to edit the Results Policies to more closely reflect the structure of the 18 library planning functions.

### Form a Policy Review Committee

The Policy Review Committee would plan a series of work sessions to conduct a detailed review of all Board policies. The review would incorporate a series of town hall meetings. The review would provide an in-depth introduction to policy governance for the new director. The town hall meetings could also be used to introduce the new director to the community.

### Transition from Councils to Ad-Hoc Committees

- Prepare a letter to members informing them of the search process and canceling the May 16<sup>th</sup> all-council meeting (Beth Pearl-Gent).
- Amend Board policies to transition from councils to ad-hoc committees.
- Contact all council members to explain the transition and to invite council members to volunteer for future ad-hoc committees.

### Amend the Management Practices Executive Limitations Policy

Add a paragraph to Management Practices Executive Limitations Policy that directs management to solicit public input on operational issues.

“The director shall not fail to seek public input on operational issues as appropriate.”

### Form a Committee to design a Library Academy

Form a committee to design a “Library Academy.” The purpose of the Library Academy would be to provide residents an opportunity to learn more about library operations, and to help prepare future Board members.

**Deschutes Public Library District Board  
Team Agreement  
April 28, 2008**

Board members and the library director developed the following Team Agreement at a Board work session held on April 28, 2008.

**Decision Making**

- It's Ok to disagree in board discussions.
- We disagree with respect.
- We assure that there are opportunities to express disagreements at meetings and we take time to understand each other's perspectives.
- We surface and discuss issues at Board meetings.
- We summarize key findings from work sessions at Board meetings prior to making a decision.
- We provide closure at the end of a discussion (e.g. a decision or clear plan of action with milestones or endpoints.)

**Raising Issues Facing the Board**

- First, ask for clarification neutrally from the library director. Check assumptions and assume good intentions.
- If the issue is unresolved, request that the board president place the item on the Board agenda for discussion or possible action.
- The president will consider if the issue is a policy issue. If the president is unsure, he/she will consult with the vice president. If both are unsure the issue will be put on the agenda.
- Include all board members and the library director in any communication pertaining to Board issues.

**Personal Communication**

- Surface an issue directly with the other party.
- Thoughtfully express your view without undo emotion, speaking to the issue, not the person or personality.

**Electronic Communication**

- Send any email pertaining to Board matters to all board members and the director. (The director will send a hard copy to any Board member who does not have an email account.)
- Limit email communication to facts, data and relevant information.
- Keep in mind that emails are part of the public record.
- Reserve discussion and dialogue of issues for Board meetings. (Email discussions could constitute a violation of public meeting law.)

**General Communication**

- Be open and honest about biases as a starting point for discussion. State your interest upfront.
- Recognize and appreciate the background of each member.