

MINUTES FOR COMBINED MARK & EMILY TURNER MEMORIAL LIBRARY AND PRESQUE ISLE RECREATION DEPARTMENT BOARDS  
HELD IN THE LIBRARY MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM  
THURSDAY, MAY 21, 2009

**Present:** Tom Stevens, Presque Isle City Manager; Sonja Plummer-Morgan, Library Director; Chris Beaulieu, Recreation Department Director; Pat Webb, Finance Director and Ex-officio Library Board Member; Gail Roy, Greg Curtis, Paul Hamlin, Susan McPherson, Elaine Sipe, A.J. Clukey, Nate McLaughlin, Rick Graves, Judy Perkins, Lisa Shaw (Transcriber)

**Absent:** Kevin Sipe, Board Chair for Library and Board Chair for Recreation Department; Deborah Dunn, Hailey Johnston

Tom Stevens called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm.

### **Introduction**

Tom Stevens introduced the purpose of the meeting of the combined boards of Mark & Emily Turner Memorial Library and Presque Isle Recreation Departments by reviewing the following facts:

- The Library has requested funding for an expansion project inclusive of an elevator
- The Recreation Department has requested funding for an expansion project inclusive of a new building and location
- Due to a severe economic downturn, funding for both projects, if indeed either, *at this time* is unlikely
- The respective Boards of the Library and the Recreation Department have been asked by the City Council to meet with each other and devise a proposed plan of action for the Council regarding the timing and proposed funding for these projects

### Public Comment

- As indicated on the Agenda, members of the public were invited to provide comments to the Library Board of Trustees or the Recreation and Parks Board. No citizen comments were made.

### **Proposed Projects**

#### *Library*

Library Director Sonja Plummer- Morgan presented the following synopsis of the rationale for the proposed Library expansion:

- In 1998, the Library Trust purchased property adjacent to the library and funded demolition of the old building erected on it as well as pavement of the lot
- In 2003, Alpha 1 conducted an ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) survey on the library, and the library was found to be out of federal ADA compliance because the chair lift currently in use does not accommodate modern electric wheelchairs, thus inhibiting access to the library for wheelchair-bound citizens
- Architect Mark Carter from North Peak Architecture offered two options: 1) an expansion, consisting of a "box" addition which would include an elevator and space for a teen area, at a projected cost of \$1,000,000; or 2) just an elevator which would still be a third of the projected cost but with no additional space

## *Recreation Department*

Recreation Department Director Chris Beaulieu presented the following synopsis of the rationale for the proposed Recreation Department expansion:

- In the fall of 2006, several serious structural issues with the roof of the Haskell Center were identified and estimated to need \$80,000 worth of repairs
- In lieu of adequate funding, the roof was patched and shingled at the time
- The current building housing the Recreation Department is 65 years old and too small to accommodate proposed programming
- Preliminary architectural designs have been drawn up for a proposed building
- The location for the proposed recreation center has been selected, and three-fourths of the property has been purchased, consisting of eight acres (for total land purchase) and proximity to Riverside Park, the baseball field and outdoor swimming pool
- The total projected cost for the Recreation Department expansion is estimated to be \$10,000,000 for land and a 35,000 square foot two-story building inclusive of the following features: a gymnasium with raised walking track; an arts and crafts room; a multi-purpose room; a teen center and a senior center, both on the ground floor

## **Current City Financial Considerations**

Tom Stevens presented the following financial facts regarding the respective proposed projects and the City of Presque Isle's current financial situation:

- The City is currently paying down debt for the Community Center's land purchase; said debt should end in 2012
- The City currently holds no debt for the Library project, and the Library Trustees have agreed to pay architectural engineering expenses estimated at \$90,000
- Both projects have worth and merit for the community
- Both projects will probably receive community donations
- A feasibility study should be conducted by the City for the Community Center, given its higher overall cost, and for which there is \$25,000 available
- The Community Center already has part of its land purchase costs factored into the current budget; the Library expansion will be "new" money
- The Library has the greater legal challenge to the City due to its ADA compliance issue
- The remaining acreage to be purchased for the Community Center has some oil spills resulting in DEP (Department of Environmental Protection) concerns
- The City is facing an estimated budgetary shortfall of approximately \$375,000 due to various economic factors and decreased revenue from the State
- No new spending for the City is likely to occur in 2009 nor in 2010
- No City money is required for the early stages of the Library expansion project, as the Trust has agreed to pay architectural engineering costs
- Feasibility funding for the Recreation Department has already been factored into the budget

## **Comments**

- Nate McLaughlin expressed concern about maintaining public interest through the economic downturn
- Paul Hamlin stated that the Library Trust would be willing to put in the same percentage of financial support for the Library if/when the economy recovers, resulting in a larger overall dollar amount
- Judy Perkins stated she would like to see some form of commitment from the City Council in support of both projects
  
- Librarian Sonja Plummer Morgan commented that this both projects are important for sustainability of a community. Our respective missions and user populations intersect and, as such, this is an opportunity for both boards to build a relationship and a coalition with other nonprofits and organizations in the community.

## **Conclusions**

- Both the Library and Recreation Department Boards expressed willingness and ability to work together on community fundraising projects
- Both the Library and the Recreation Department Boards expressed a desire for the City Council to create financial and timetable commitments to both projects
- Recreation Department Director Chris Beaulieu added that if the Library expansion were to be approved and funded first, the Recreation Department would like to have some form of ongoing funding commitment from the City Council for the Recreation Department project while the Library project is being completed

## **Plan of Action**

- City Manager Tom Stevens must present a budget proposal to the City Council at their next meeting on June 1, 2009
- Tom Stevens will work with Department Heads Sonja Plummer-Morgan and Chris Beaulieu to come up with a five-year budget plan for both projects, and he will send the proposal back to both respective Boards

## **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 5:16 pm.