

**LIBRARY TRUSTEE
PUBLIC HEARING
BRANCH LIBRARY**

OCTOBER 7, 1999

PRESENT: Carolyn Benthien (Chair), Terry Pare, Ken Rose, Mark Choquette, Barbara Griffin and Russ Vanderhorst. Also present was Dianne Hathaway, Library Director.

Chairman Benthien called the hearing to order at 7:05 p.m.

C. Benthien: We are very pleased to see you here tonight. We want to hear your comments. We are surprised about some of the assumptions that have been made. We have not made any decisions about the branch library. We have lots of issues facing the whole library system. This is wonderful to see this turn out. We will not limit anyone's time for speaking, however, be mindful because there are many people here. We will not be answering questions or making any decision tonight. The point of this is to hear from you. We invite you to our next Trustee meeting, which is October 20 at the main library.

Charlie Carr: For over 23 years I have lived in the Village. I have heard people say that Pindardville gets ignored. I have seen a lot of evidence of that. I think the Trustees should have decided without any hearing that they should serve this part of the Town at least as well as it has been served. It is all one Town. A library should be as convenient as possible. I am especially concerned that the main library is not as convenient to the young folks. It is too dangerous for bikes to go from here to the Village. There have been attempts in the past to serve Pinardville. At one time there was a book mobile. For a while, the library was in the Bartlett School until they were too crowded to provide for it. Some citizens got together and provided this, which is really big enough for anything but a library for Pinardville. I feel this should be provided at least.

Judy Pancoast: We have lived here for four years. In our section of Town, there are not a lot of services for the kids. I believe the playground at Bartlett School is the only one that is locked. They do not have a skate board park. To think about taking away a resource like the library frightens me. We should be dwelling on the positive. How could we promote this library? We could put a sign in the front of the shopping center. We could talk about a volunteer program. St. Anselm College has programs for their students. We have a high school with students looking for an opportunity to put things on their college application. I would be happy to coordinate a program like that. Instead of cutting back on services, we should talk about making things like that happen.

C. Benthien: We have talked about a range of options.

J. Pancoast: There are a lot of opportunities to improve things that are wrong. If you close this library, how will you reach the kids in Pinardville who can't reach you?

Claire Loselle: I volunteered here and I really enjoyed it. Everybody came and they really enjoyed the programs. I think it would be a shame to close it.

Lorraine Gallagher: I have lived in Goffstown for 33 years. I always wished there would be something closer to my house. I have had the same feelings that Judy Pancoast has had since she has been here. I agree with everything she said. I use it as an adult just about every week. I was very impressed with the staff. They would always be very helpful. It felt more like a family.

Sue Paquin (Optimist Club): We have done many activities here at the library. We had reading contests. It has been a wonderful thing having this library here. We do not want to see it leave Pinardville. My children have come here. It has been a good experience all around.

Gloria Proulx (PTA President): It has been the only service that is an extension of our home. It has been good for my daughter to feel a comfort level to have people here who are almost like your relatives. We have seen other people here. It is a good root for all children to have as they are growing up. I would love to see the services expanded. I would not be able to patron the other library. I would go to Manchester because I never go there.

Nancy Dionne: I have been a resident for six years. I come here with my kids.

C. Benthien: One of the things that drove some of the discussion was our budget. Pinardville is in the budget right now. They had to be submitted by September 1. We also discussed a lot of issues like technology, Internet, access to all surrounding libraries. More of our patrons are using the common borrower card. Our discussions have been much more global at this point on how can we provide the best service, recognizing we need to support our budget in front of the Selectmen next Tuesday night. What happened was, at the Selectmen's meeting when there was some discussion about budgets coming in, there was a comment about looking at options.

B. Griffin: As the Selectmen's rep to the Board of Trustees, I report back on a weekly basis. I said one of the things that had come up was whether or not the branch should stay from a budget standpoint.

C. Benthien: We know that our rent here is going up dramatically, and we will assume all other fees. As a result of someone seeing Barbara's comments on TV, there was a letter to The Editor. We have not made any decisions. We said, 'let's have a hearing and talk to the people and get their feedback.'

Elizabeth Jefferson: It has been my experience when there is smoke, there is fire. Some things snowball. We do not want it to snowball. We would like to support a branch library in Pinardville. Some of the children's programs they had here were wonderful. I feel as part of the community I think don't do it. We are okay for businesses at this end, but not okay for the fluff ideas that you have.

C. Benthien: We are committed to Goffstown and Pinardville. I came over here during the transition and found old books and old resources. That has all changed. I apologize on behalf of this library that it was this way. We want you to have access to the best programming materials that you have. The biggest problem right now is the budget. Regardless of what comes out of this, I expect you to support the library when it comes to voting. If we fight hard with the Selectmen and the Budget Committee, then we need some packing from you all. It cannot be just us alone.

?: My sister takes dance lessons next door. When she first started, I got bored and the library was never open when I came and after a while, I just gave up. The hours were so strange.

E. Jefferson: Put my name down. I would be more than happy to come in here and keep the place open.

K. Rose: We have a good resource here, but it requires a massive investment and it would be prohibitive from a cost standpoint. We want to make a right decision. We want to make sure we are using the tax monies appropriately.

C. Benthien: Let's talk a little about the hours. Would it be better to have all day Saturday, rather than scattered throughout the week?

?: We don't have any morning programs any longer. It used to be open in the morning. I think you need some morning hours.

?: It sounds as though you have a fair representation of the constituents you are serving here. I think you need something in the morning to serve those members who are not doing other things at that hour. Then something after school so you can get the kids who can't get into Town, and hours on Saturday. The thing that is driving this seems to be the money. There are other things this is competing against.

C. Benthien: I would not say that is right. The technology issues are huge for us. Networking with a separate site and making sure there is access is huge and challenging. If we are trying to build an old collection, we have many challenges there. We are having to make some decisions about how we build the collection.

?: Most of us realize it is a branch. They just call the main library and get it in a few days. Knowing that it is here and within walking distance from my house, the library knows my kids' names. You come here and you are comfortable.

E. Jefferson: Why would you need to have technology at a branch? If it meant that the branch would stay open minus a computer, you have some great library here. If you need a book, they can call the main library. You don't need the computer right away.

T. Pare: We are looking at types of services in total that we want to offer. That involves what are we doing in the Town period. We have a full community, all of Goffstown that we need to think about. The more things you want, the higher the price tag becomes.

C. Benthien: Charlie talked about Pinardville not always getting what the Village gets. What the main library has everybody should have access to. I heard you mentioned not having to have everything. I hear a disconnect in these two comments.

E. Jefferson: I am saying to start off with. We are looking to save what we have. You are looking at the future. We are trying to save what we have and move on from there.

J. Pancoast: We are not asking for some big time improvement.

C. Benthien: The point you need to hear is what pushed this. We were told our tent is going to go up.

Robin Maloney: I patron both libraries very frequently. I teach kindergarten at The Kids Block. In the winter it is great to count on this place because it is so close.

Marie Cashin: Have you ever thought about relocating the main library to this part of Town?

T. Pare: Yes. We did investigate a number of spots to relocate the library years ago. None of them were financially feasible.

M. Choquette: As of about 2005, there is \$425,000 in CIP to maybe build a new branch. We put this in CIP last year to look into options. There are 15,000 people in the Town that vote on our budget. I have lived in Pinardville for 29 years. We don't want to shut it down, but we need to look at the overall picture. We need to answer to everybody, not just to you.

C. Benthien: We need to hear from you throughout the process. You will see us at the Selectmen's meeting on Tuesday night. We need you to call the Selectmen and the Budget Committee members. The library is a very small line item in the Town's budget. Last year when we asked for an increase, I have to say the Budget Committee has been wonderful over the last few years to the library. While we do write grants, we do not have access to a lot of funds. We need your help and your backing.

?: We should consider volunteers.

B. Griffin: Under the terms of our lease one of the provisions of that is that we do not get a sign out front because it is for the commercial operations that are here. He is limited by the Town Ordinance. The rent is presently \$650. It is going up to \$750 plus utilities. The facility costs estimate has been approximately \$30,000. Just the facility itself, not the books and staffing.

C. Benthien: We are looking at creating a foundation for the library, which will have a 5013C status. If you contribute, you would get a tax deduction. We have not moved as quickly with that because we have had a full plate.

?: What is the status of coordinating library services with the school?

D. Hathaway: They are proposing to renovate the high school and build a new elementary school.

?: The branch was located at Bartlett School until they needed the space.

D. Hathaway: There were other issues about having the people in the building during school hours.

?: How long will this branch be open?

C. Benthien: It is in the budget through the end of the year. The new budget begins in January. Pinardville is still in that budget, so pay close attention to what happens.

?: Has the library looked into renting to organizations?

C. Benthien: We explored that about 15 months ago. We talked about the need to provide additional services for you. Then it became an issue of how do we make decisions about leasing it out. We created a new policy regarding the use of the conference room at the main library. We thought it would fit with both the library and the branch, but it never came to be. We have been subleasing from the PCA for the last few years. That is not out of the question at all. Dianne has talked with some of the organizations that have used this facility.

?: The Optimist Club rented here. We did pay rent. I know there are other groups that may do it.

?: You alluded that this is an ongoing process. The time line extends into 2000. What can we do?

C. Benthien: By your presence here that is good. The process before the Budget Committee is very important. I would encourage you to pay attention to this and when decisions are made, they need to hear from you about how important this facility is.

B. Griffin: The department heads were told to get their budgets together and give them to the Board of Selectmen. We are in the process of getting their requests. Presentations have been ongoing. Next Tuesday there is a presentation from the Library Trustees to the Board of Selectmen. The Board will be discussing the budget to come up with a budget that we believe represents services in a manner that can be affordable. That budget is then given to the Budget Committee. The Budget Committee will then review the budget as proposed by the Board of Selectmen.

They have the right to cut the budget at that point. It then goes to a deliberative meeting in February that is held at the High School. That meeting determines the budget that goes on the ballot. The ballot is when you go to vote at the polls. You will be given whatever budget is approved by the deliberative meeting to vote on. The large number has an alternative known as the default budget. This is the same money that you got the prior year. The default number is usually lower. You have the power to create an article to raise monies to operate a Pinardville branch library. It is important for you to keep up with the process and watch what happens . Every department's budget is up.

?: The decision about the allocation, is the money you receive in the budget the Trustees' decision?

C. Benthien: Usually. We have had years where the Budget Committee has said we are going to cut a certain amount from a certain line. It was a strong message to the Trustees and we listened.

?: The Trustees will decide how best to allocate the resources they are given?

C. Benthien: Yes.

J. Pancoast: Would you make a contract with the citizens of Pinardville that you will continue to support our branch library?

C. Benthien: All we can say at this point is there are funds until the end of the year. We will take everything you have said into consideration. This has been very important for us to hear this.

There was a discussion regarding the budget, warrant articles and the cost of technology.

T. Pare: We are trying to create library services in the Town of Goffstown that you can be proud of. They all take time. The time is missing here and in the Village. The demands are coming from all sorts of issues. We want a library service in this Town that we can be proud of for everyone.

C. Benthien: We talked about how we can be creative in the sorts of collaborations. We met with the Superintendent to see how the schools and the library can work better together. We are exploring options at this point. I think we can make a contract that you will not lose services. We cannot say we will definitely be in this facility or what the hours will be. The services of book loans will definitely be here.

E. Jefferson: Will the Board give support to the Pinardville area?

C. Benthien: We will give it every effort.

?: If you need volunteers, I think a drive could be initiated.

Sue Phillips stated that she is in support of the library and would like to see the branch remain open.

K. Rose: I suggest you talk with the Friends of the Library, they need people.

C. Carr: I want everybody to be impressed with the fact that your most important meeting is the ballot determination meeting in February. Bring as many people as you can. That is when the budget items can change.

C. Benthien: Thank you all for coming. Our next meeting is October 29 at 7:00 p.m. at the main library.

The public hearing was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Ann D'Avanza