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## **Executive Director's Report**

### **May 2016**

**(covering time period of April 19, 2016 – May 19, 2016)**

#### *WLS's New Headquarters – 570 Taxter Road Update*

Construction activities are currently on schedule and within budget. The layout of the new space has become much more defined as the walls have been framed and the electricians have started to install electric and data lines, outlets and other infrastructure components. A flurry of other activities have been ongoing related to the relocation of the WLS servers to their new location (for more information, see the IT Department Report), the selection of staff workstations, vetting potential movers and many more related activities.

These efforts have been moving forward successfully due to the leadership of an excellent team that includes from Keystone Property Group: Peter Howard, Senior Property Manager; Dan Richards, Construction Manager; from Unity Construction Services, Inc.: Walt Youghans, Vice President/Project Manager; Frank Campanella, Project Supervisor; from Mack Cali: James Brooks, Director of Architectural Services; from Dennis Noskin Architects: Dennis Noskin, Principal; Amanda O'Leary, Project Manager; and from WLS: Elise Burke, Rob Caluori, Fran Feuerman, and myself.

#### *Library Trustees Association (LTA) of New York State 2016 Trustee Institute*

This year's LTA Trustee Institute was held in Plattsburgh, NY, on May 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. Two main themes emerged throughout the event. The first theme was that successful libraries actively embrace and act on their mission and core values. The mission and core values serve as benchmarks against which all decisions are evaluated. The second theme was that successful libraries embrace change as a tool that can help them to adapt to their community's evolving needs. The thriving libraries were the ones that recognized that the definitions of "providing good service" and "being relevant to the community" have shifted and continue to shift over time. Existing library policies, procedures and spaces might actually impede a library's efforts to fully engage with their local community.

Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, Coordinator for Library Sustainability, Mid-Hudson Library System, was the keynote speaker. Her presentation, *The Role of Trustees in the Future of Sustainable Libraries: Strengthening New York's Libraries through Awareness, Advocacy and Accountability*,

encouraged trustees to fully embrace the challenge of creating sustainable libraries that are deeply engaged in their communities. One of the greatest strengths of libraries is that they are trusted institutions and well liked. One of the biggest challenges for libraries is that individuals are not aware of all the types of services, programs and opportunities that are available. The full value of libraries is not achieved because libraries have not yet figured out how to effectively and consistently showcase their value in a world that continuously bombards individuals with information and advertisements. One of the most promising solutions is for public libraries to actively partner with their communities. By working with other institutions to identify and achieve community aspirations – even when these aspirations might not initially appear to be directly linked to library services – is a great way to build trust in and awareness about the many ways the library can support the community and its residents.

My presentation, *The Inside and Outside of Evaluations*, encouraged trustees to examine how well the existing board governance process and the library director evaluation process support the library's mission, vision and values.

*Board Governance Process:* Understanding the type of board that currently exists is important—Is it a consent, working, strategic or mindful board? Ideally every library board is at least at the consent stage, which primarily focuses on fiduciary oversight responsibilities and supports the agenda set by the library director. Working boards effectively use their committee structure, board members are able to work well together as partners and have a solid understanding of overall operations and the services offered to key target markets. Strategic boards embrace a longer-term view of the library's successes and potential impact on a community; however, that view is focused on only one direction. Mindful boards accumulate all the skills from the different board stages and expand the board's capacity to govern in complex systems. By expanding their purpose to include the well-being of the organization, those affected by the organization and its actions, and the fulfillment of the library's mission, vision and values, mindful boards reinforce a library's sustainability and increase its relevance and community value.

*Director Evaluation Process:* Trustees were encouraged to think about ways that the traditional performance review process, historically supported by a management by objectives approach, either supports or hinders the forward movement of the library. In the management by objectives approach, employers/superiors manage employees/subordinates by introducing a set of specific goals that both the employers/superiors and employees/subordinates strive to achieve in the near future. SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Agreed upon/Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound) are generally used as evaluation benchmarks. The performance review process generally measures how well an employee/subordinate has performed based on the SMART goals established during the previous year. As an alternative to the traditional approach that evaluates a library director on past behaviors, trustees were challenged to think about the potential impact of switching to an approach that evaluates library directors based on the forward motion achieved by the board and the director working together. This would be accomplished through a performance preview process.

In moving to a performance preview process, one of the anticipated outcomes is an opportunity to foster a more open, honest and proactive line of communication between library boards and directors. Such a shift would also help identify ways that board members and the library director

can maximize individual strengths and experiences. It would also help boards avoid the temptation of using the performance evaluation as a disciplinary tool.

Below is a chart highlighting some of the perspective shifts that would occur when transforming from a performance review to a performance preview process.

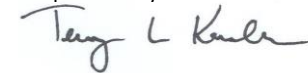
Move from:	Move to:
Performance review	Performance preview
Annual review	Continuous review
Focus on individual skills and tasks	Focus on context and partnerships
Past orientation	Present and future orientation
Reactive actions	Proactive actions
Progressive discipline approach	Progressive improvement approach
Hierarchical power / Power over	Shared power / Power with
Merit/rating-based pay	Market-based pay
Fear-based relationships	Trust-based relationships
Competitive environment	Team environment
Boss-dominated monologues	Two-sided conversations

The presentation provided an opportunity for trustees to reflect on the aspirations of their libraries and the systems and structures that are currently in place to support their efforts. A lively discussion followed with most questions focused on how one most effectively helps their library board evolve into a mindful board and how to initiate the shift from a reactive performance review process to a proactive performance preview process. I appreciated LTA's invitation to provide this workshop; and I have to commend the attendees' willingness to challenge the status quo and openly discuss new ways to perform their trustee duties.

**Future Events**

June 23-28 American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference – Orlando, FL

Respectfully submitted,



Terry L. Kirchner  
Executive Director

## LIST OF VISITS AND MEETINGS ATTENDED

April 19 – May 19, 2016

### APRIL

- 19 New York Library Association (NYLA) Advocacy Focus Group – Albany, NY
- 20 Palmer Institute Public Library Administrators' Certificate Program, Instructor, *Course: Principles of Public Library Organization & Management*
- 21-25 Vacation
- 26 NonProfit Westchester (NPW) Executive Committee Conference Call  
Pat Brigham, Director of Development  
Rob Caluori, Director of Information Technology (IT)  
WLS Board
- 27 Palmer Institute Public Library Administrators' Certificate Program, Instructor, *Course: Principles of Public Library Organization & Management*  
Hui Sheng, Manger, eContent & Resource Sharing Services  
Gerald Nichols, Director, Palmer Institute for Public Library Organization & Management
- 28 Sirsi Operations Conference Call  
Douglas Wray, Manager, Cataloging Services  
WLS Staff Meeting

### MAY

- 2 Elise Burke, Executive Assistant
- 3 Westchester Library System and Odilo  
Rob Caluori, Director of IT  
Webinar: *ProBono Partnership: Creating Scholarship Programs*  
Niche Academy, Jim Wilson, Founder
- 4 Volunteer NY Spirit Awards  
Pat Brigham, Director of Development  
Webinar: *Building and Operating Your Own Digital Media Lab*  
Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Grand Opening of Tech Central at the Yonkers Public Library-  
Riverfront Library
- 6-9 Library Trustees Association of New York State (LTA) Annual Trustee Institute – Plattsburgh, NY
- 10 Rob Caluori, Director of IT  
Public Library System Directors Organization (PULISDO) & New York State Division of Library  
Development Conference Calls
- 11 Pat Brigham, Director of Development  
Westchester Seniors Out Speaking (WSOS) Volunteer Recognition Luncheon, Crabtree's Kittle  
House
- 12 Construction Meeting at 570 Taxter Road  
Douglas Wray, Manager, Cataloging Services
- 13 Conference Call with Hollyann Kozlowski, Supervisor, Borrow Direct & ReCAP Access Services,  
Columbia University Libraries
- 16 Tara Seeley, Program Officer, Westchester Community Foundation; Nancy Dana Gold, Marketing  
Consultant, Historic Hudson River Towns; Brent D. Glass, Director Emeritus, National Museum  
of American History, Smithsonian Institution; Pat Brigham, Director of Development  
Elise Burke, Executive Assistant  
WLS Strategic Planning Committee
- 17 Rob Caluori, Director of IT  
Kate Meyer, Community Connections; Elise Burke, Executive Assistant  
Julie Roche, Co-Founder, Burbio; Andrea Pollak, Westchester Community Outreach Manager,  
Burbio
- 18 Pat Brigham, Director of Development
- 19 Public Library Directors Association (PLDA) General Membership Meeting