



UPPER HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM

Together. For Better Libraries.

SERVICES COMMITTEE

March 13, 2013

PRESENT: LouAnne Lundgren, Judy Brown, Daniel Curtis, Richard Naylor, Tim Burke,
Heidi Fuge

EXCUSED: Brian Hartson

3:10 PM – Meeting called to order by L. Lundgren, Chair

I. FREE DIRECT ACCESS PLAN - CONTINUED DISCUSSION

L. Lundgren asked what the end result of the discussion should be. T. Burke suggested that it should provide him with some direction for a response to the letter from the East Greenbush Board of Trustees.

There was extensive discussion. The highlights have been condensed below:

T. Burke reviewed the two areas of discussion: the definition of underserved, and the percentages that can be used to allow libraries to make modifications to the Free Direct Access Plan without prior Ed. Dept. approval. He noted that the majority of Library Systems use the Minimum Standards as their definition for underserved while others use a per capita support formula. He noted that the underserved designation does not mean anything other than the fact that it is a way for a System to identify those libraries that need additional support or that are under-performing. He feels that it is a philosophical problem and that by labeling a library as “underserved” it is denigrating that organization and its supporters.

D. Curtis asked if a library could use the designation “underserved” to try for better local support. T. Burke noted that this has not been a successful approach in the past and that, again, it unfairly labels a library as unsuccessful.

R. Naylor noted that underperforming/unsuccessful doesn't mean that a library is bad, it just means that another one is better and that this does not provide a justification for forcing other libraries to change. It is not a good thing to suddenly label a library as unsatisfactory that has been serving and satisfying patrons. It would require a whole new Free Direct Access Plan with a very complicated formula to come up with a completely equitable approach.

M. Muller noted that from the position of a UHLS Trustee, it does not make sense for one library within the System to charge another because of patron use. T. Burke noted that their option, available in the current Free Direct Access Plan, allows them to restrict access to certain library materials, thereby making sure that the patrons of the home library have first access to new materials, programs, and media collections..

M. Muller suggested that another approach to the EGRN situation would be to allow EGRN to

become a co-Central Library and therefore gain a certain amount of the Central Library Aid that would then help support their materials budget.

T. Burke noted that local public support has been used by some Systems as a way of identifying underserved. However, when figures are taken from the State Annual Report, there is no guarantee that they are comparable: the libraries all have different methods of reporting their local aid (some in the form of direct financial aid, and other as in-kind services).

D. Curtis agreed that UHLS would not want to adopt something that was more rigorous and complicated than that used by the rest of the State. The criteria should be fair and standard for all libraries and this appears to be the case.

R. Naylor noted that EGRN has the option to restrict access as allowable by State law. If they feel strongly about their over-use by patrons from outside their service area, they are just going to have to step up and make a decision rather than trying to force UHLS to totally re-define an already accepted Plan.

M. Muller suggested that anything that can move EGRN and some of the other Rensselaer County libraries toward the creation of a Library District would be good from the System viewpoint.

L. Lundgren asked how the Schodack payment was divided among the three libraries. T. Burke noted that Schodack gives a fixed amount to CAST and NASS and then has a formula-based contract with EGRN with a payment of approximately \$100,000.

Discussion regarding the points to be made in the response to EGRN:

- applaud their efforts at providing good library service to their own and surrounding communities
- changes to the current Free Direct Access Plan are not warranted at this time but the Committee appreciates their recognition of the situation and bringing it forward for discussion
- the Committee took their concerns very seriously and engaged in some very robust discussions
- the Committee recognizes their situation but also has to recognize how changes will affect other libraries
- the criteria used in the current Free Direct Access Plan is fair and standard for all libraries

MOTION: D. Curtis moved to not recommend any changes to the Free Direct Access Plan as presented. R. Naylor seconded. Unanimous.

4:00 PM Meeting adjourned.

Heidi A. Fuge
3/18/13