



PLAINTALKER II

PLAINTALKER II IS THE SUCCESSOR TO PLAINFIELD PLAINTALKER, A HYPERLOCAL BLOG ABOUT PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2014

Library Board Seeks Budget Help

City officials assured Plainfield Public Library board members Thursday of the administration's budget support in 2015, though not offering a way to offset 2014 costs that led to curtailed hours as of this week.

The library board of trustees held a special meeting in City Hall Library with City Administrator Rick Smiley and Finance Director Ron West. Board President Anne Robinson said a \$220,000 charge for health benefits plus unforeseen emergency expenses forced the **reduction of hours** and could cause staff layoffs.

"The library has hit a significant wall," Robinson said.

West said Mayor Adrian O. Mapp intends to reverse in 2015 a five-year policy of charging back health benefit costs to the Plainfield Public Library.

"Our plan is to fully fund the library," West said.

As for the remaining months of this budget year, West made no promises. Budget transfers may be made in November, but West told the board, "The transfer piece is tight."

Smiley called a transfer of funds to the library "highly unlikely."

"Let me make a small plea," Robinson said, noting grants and other funds were not enough to offset the "extraordinary expenses" this year caused by a "contaminated environment" at the library. West suggested that library officials contact the Health Division for help.

Library Director Joe Da Rold said the library has to close and address such problems immediately as they occur. He said the library used to be able to keep a "sinking fund" for emergencies, but that is no longer allowed in the budget.

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BLOG ARCHIVE

Robinson said the library has raised fines for overdue books and fees charged for meeting rooms. The next cost-cutting step would be layoffs.

The coming year will start off with a temporary budget, West said, and then the City Council will be reviewing the administration's proposed figures. In 2014, the governing body did not review all divisions, but the administration will soon be holding departmental meetings on 2015 budget requests. West advised the board to state its needs, but said he already knows there will be a tax increase due to the number of abandoned buildings in the city.

The governing body has the power to amend the introduced budget before final passage.

In public comment, resident Alan Goldstein suggested that because the library building is city-owned, the Plainfield Municipal Utilities Authority should provide trash removal at no cost as with other public buildings. Robtinson said she would pursue his suggestion "with gusto."

Goldstein also inquired about having the library open on Sundays. Robinson agreed on the need for seven-day access, especially to library computers for job searches and communication with distant family members. She said library officials are researching ways to open a portion of the library to permit computer access without having to staff both floors of the building. The library's computers have become more needed, she said, as job postings now are mostly online.

In other business at the special meeting, the board elected Donna Sandorse to serve as secretary and Pat Fleming for secretary for 2014-2015. The board's next regular meeting is 11 a.m. on Nov. 20.

--Bernice

POSTED BY [BERNICE](#) AT [6:26 AM](#)

6 COMMENTS:

Alan Goldstein [October 17, 2014 at 8:30 AM](#)

Inter Local Agreement- Section 204C

"The Authority hereby agrees that all properties owned or controlled by the City and connected to the Sewerage System shall not be subject to the payment of Service Charges or other periodic charges. Further, the City shall also not be subject to the payment of Service Charges for all Solid Waste generated by properties owned or controlled by the City. The City shall pay Service Charges to the Authority for the cost of collection

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and disposal of Solid Waste illegally dumped on City owned property that the Authority collects and for which it arranges disposal at the direction of the City."

It is past high time for the City to either enforce the terms of the contract governing its relationship with PMUA, or dump it. The same can be said for enforcing the City ordinance regarding compensation received by members of the Board of Commissioners. There is no excuse for the continuing lack of accountability when it comes to the Authority, and PMUA should credit the Plainfield Public Library for the entire sum of payments made over the last 17 years.

Note- Today is the 17th Anniversary of the effective date of the Inter Local Agreement. It should be required reading. <http://www.dumpppmua.com/files/PMUAInterlocalAgreement.pdf>

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Dottie Gutenkauf [October 17, 2014 at 11:57 PM](#)

The library is a gem and the city should do everything possible to help!

[Reply](#)

Anonymous [October 19, 2014 at 12:32 PM](#)

It is improbable that the public will read the Interlocal Agreement between the City (the public) and the PMUA (presumably the public also). However, at a minimum it should be required reading for everyone holding public office, most specifically the members of the City Council. It is equally improbable that if the Council were to read the Agreement that the majority would understand the somewhat weighty language .To insure their understanding they could be given an examination regarding the content of the Agreement. In anticipation of several failures those who failed could be tutored and in more understandable language. The more difficult portion of the tutor's challenge would be to explain how the money was intended to flow back and forth between the City and the PMUA. This is the portion that has been flagrantly abused since the outset. Putting that not insignificant issue aside, we will consider only the provision which deals with PMUA services as they relate to the City. The Agreement says that the Library, and other City operated properties DO NOT PAY THE PMUA for the PMUA services to those properties. The question as to why the City has been paying for these exempted services, which is yet another travesty in the litany of travesties associated with the PMUA? It can be explained in 1 of 3 ways: Incompetence, Political Cronyism, Both of these. Whatever the reason(s) the bottom line is theft of public funds and more significantly the reduction in services of one of the last pillars of cultural prominence in Plainfield, its Library. Bill Kruse

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Anonymous [October 19, 2014 at 2:09 PM](#)

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September (41)

The Mayor was told no job for John Stewart So he found money from other departments \$100,000.? and a new office and gave John a job anyway. I think the Library is much more important to support than Jonh Stewart.So why doesn't the council make the mayor use the money from Johns line item go to the Library?

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Bernice October 19, 2014 at 3:26 PM

An administrative appointment is the mayor's prerogative. I do not think the council can "make" the mayor do what you suggest.

Anonymous October 19, 2014 at 4:40 PM

The Council said "Yes" to the Chief of Staff position, and then they said "No" after Stewart was hired. Of course that was after Democratic boss Jerry Green decided to paint the Mapp administration as free-spenders, and the Council as something less than free-thinkers.

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ABOUT ME



B BERNICE

I have been reporting on Plainfield for

more than 30 years,

first at the Plainfield Today weekly,

then at the Courier News and after

retirement on the Plainfield

Plaintalker blog and its successor,

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