City Dads Request Board To Probe Books, Operations

The city library board was requested by the city commissioners Monday night to investigate literature in and operation of the city library.

Following a stormy session of the commissioners, at which the library board made a report, the citizens committee made a report and numerous verbal clashes were staged by spectators and commission, board and committee members. Vice-Mayor E. S. Dunaway read a statement in which the probe was suggested.

Two-hundred or more Barttiss attended the session which was moved into the balcony when the regular commissions' room overflowed.

The meeting was the liveliest held by the board of city commissioners in years, those attending said.

Shouts of "insult," throw him out," "Communist," and other verbal darts were heard following a short talk by Robert Manuel, in which he criticized the committee and said the members were unqualified.

And, as Manuel continued, the shouts of the crowd for him to sit down rose.

Mayor Hudson at this point took over and gave Manuel a scathing denunciation and said "I won't listen another minute to such a discussion."

"WHO ARE YOU?" Mayor Hudson asked. "What right have you to challenge this group of respected citizens?" When Manuel hesitated the Mayor then asked—"Are you a Commie?"

Manuel said he wasn't a communist and, amid the shouts from the crowd, added that he hated communists and all their works and had to use them. He said "I believe in the constitution of the United States and in the Bill of Rights, without any personal reservations whatever." He then continued with a talk about "false fire alarms" which was drowned out.

The mayor, visibly angered at Manuel, formally ruled him out of order and told him to sit down.

THE CROWD APPEARED at first to be stunned at Manuel's charge against the committee members, but at realization of what he had said they fairly raised the roof of Civic Center.

Members of the committee are Mrs. Charles Warren, chairman; Mrs. George Wills, Mrs. Russie Smyser, Mrs. Ruby Seibert, Mrs. Dora M. Seibert, Mrs. M. J. Kipwain, Mrs. Frank Sissons and W. D. McGlinchey.

The mayor, pioneer attorney and judge in Oklahoma since Territorial days and veteran of many courtroom battles, previously had ruled another spectator out of order.

ANTHONY ANDREWS, who didn't identify himself, got to his feet and wanted to know what other commissioners thought of a subject which had been discussed relative to who appointed the citizens committee.

The mayor and Russell Davis, chairman of the library board, had held the discussion and it was decided that both the mayor and board chairman had agreed that Mrs. Warren would serve with a committee of others or "any other citizen who was interested in the library."

AT THE OUTSET DAVIS said he thought Mayor Hudson appointed the committee and Mayor Hudson said he thought Davis appointed it.

But, it was at the point of agreement on the status and origin of the committee that Andrews spoke up and was promptly ruled out of order.

Following Davis' report in writing, in which certain phases of the library work was outlined, Mrs. Wills made her report.

In substance, she said that the committee had not been satisfied with the results of the meeting of March 1 and the members wished to pursue their work further.

LATER SHE CHARGED that an effort had been made to prevail upon the librarian to remove "Russia Today" which she charged was a "Red" propaganda sheet, from the library. She said the request was denied.

She went further and stated the stand of the committee on Russian literature or propaganda—that the committee members did not feel that the children of Bartlesville could be exposed to such material in order to rid the library of any and all so-called "subversive" literature.

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All the city commissioners were present, with City Attorney Alton Rowland, City Clerk Eva Sanderson and City Manager Don Purling also in attendance. All the library board members were present with the exception of Mrs. Darlene Essary who was reported out of town.

Following Mrs. Wills talk O. E. Crees arose and said, people wanted full information on re-
ports that subversive literature was being handed out at the city library.

"WE DON'T WANT A white-wash of this," he added.

Dick Kane, library board member, answered that no white-wash was intended. He said the board could only consider facts, and not rumors.

Then Mrs. Wills t'en took the floor and said the survey had been made at the Tulsa library and that organization, she declared, reported they threw out such stuff as "Russia Today" as pure propaganda.

AT THIS POINT MANUEL leaped to his feet and made his startling accusations against the committee members.

Dan Jones arose and inquired as to the qualifications of the citizens committee members and Mayor Hudson cut this discussion short by informing Jones that this was not the question at issue.

At this point in the heated session the Mayor took over, to make a speech about himself, other commissioners, city managers and the library board.

HE CRITICIZED HIMSELF for being derelict, as he called it, in not paying more attention in the past to the library, and in criticizing himself he went further and included other commissioners who had served in the past few years, and city managers.

"We have been derelict in our duties and we blame ourselves," he added.

In addition, he said, the library board for years has not functioned: that it met only once a year, allowed some bills, transacted other routine matters, and adjourned for another year.

At this juncture, Vice-Mayor E. S. Dunaway read the statement in which the library board was requested to make an investigation of all the charges and report back to the city commissioners in April.

In the meantime, he said, the reports submitted Monday evening will be taken under consideration.

LIBRARY BOARD MEMBER Kane requested that the board be given specific instances on charges and solicited the help of committee members or any citizen of the community.

Mrs. M. J. Klewan, one of the targets of Manuel's denunciation, said that committee members had found subversive literature "very easily" at the library. Anthony Andrews then brought another hot retort from the mayor when he demanded that the minutes of the meeting be kept.

"What meeting?" queried the mayor.

"This meeting," said Andrews.

"The city clerk has been keeping minutes of these meetings for years and she's keeping these," and with that the mayor adjourned the meeting.
Library Board Report

TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY OF BARTLESVILLE, OKLAHOMA:

Pursuant to the request of the Board of Commissioners, the Board of Directors of the Bartlesville Public Library held a called meeting on Wednesday evening, March 1, 1950, in the Commissioners’ room at the Civic Center, attended by a Committee, consisting of Mrs. Charles S. Warren, Mrs. George Wills, Mrs. W. H. McGinley, Mrs. Frank Sisson, Mrs. M. J. Kilman, Mrs. J. M. Ribble, Mrs. Essie Smyser, and representing persons who appeared at the February 23, 1950, meeting of the Board of City Commissioners in connection with the conduct of the City Library, and by other interested citizens.

THE COMMITTEE representing these appearing in connection with the affairs of the City Library at the February 23rd meeting, presented a copy of a proposal worked out by the Committee, a copy of which is appended hereto, which served as a basis for the discussion which followed.

The provisions of the statute governing the administration of public libraries maintained by city funds, being Chapter 4, Title 65, Oklahoma Statutes Annotated, were outlined by a member of the Library Board. It was pointed out that under the terms of the statute, the Board of Directors of the City Library, appointed by and responsible to the Board of City Commissioners, is charged with the non-delegable duty of administering the library funds, of employing a head librarian, and of determining the library's contents through selection of books and periodicals acquired.

WITH RESPECT to the Committee's suggestion that an appraisal, on a form similar to the Oklahoma University School of Library Science form hereto attached, of newly purchased books, and books to be acquired in the future, be made, it is the position of the Library Board that all publications purchased are appraised by, or on behalf of, the Board, prior to acquisition, and that there are neither funds nor personnel available to the Board for the type of appraisal suggested by the Committee. Effective as of March 1, 1950, a list of books and periodicals acquired for the library will be kept on file at the library, and lists of current acquisitions will be furnish periodically to the local newspapers for publication, for the convenience of any citizen or group of citizens desiring to make an independent appraisal thereof. The Library Board will be pleased to consider such independent appraisals, and any policy suggestions resulting therefrom, when presented to the Board at any of its regular meetings. Effective as of March 1, 1950, the Library Board as a whole will constitute its committee on selections.

Some of the members of the Committee expressed a personal preference for certain magazines not presently available in the Library, over certain periodicals on the current subscription list. It is the position of the Library Board that since it is not possible, within the limits of the funds available, to maintain in the library all periodicals desired by all citizens or groups of citizens in the community, the Board’s responsibility requires the selection of a representative balanced list of reputable publications. One of the citizens present at the meeting, who was not a member of the Committee, expressed the view that the Board's criteria of selection should be limited neither by the community’s reading habits as reflected by local newspaper sales nor by the personal preferences of any citizen or group of citizens, but that instead should reflect a reasonable balance as between conflicting views on controversial subjects. That statement fairly reflects the views of the Library Board.

THE LIBRARY BOARD is in agreement with the view of the Committee that all members of the community should have an opportunity to present to the Board suggestions with respect to administration of the City Library. Effective immediately, prior public announcements of the time and place of all regular quarterly meetings of the Board will be made, and all interested persons desiring to present matters to the Board at such meetings will be afforded an opportunity to do so.

No other criticisms which in the opinion of the Board affect the operation of the City Library, were presented by the Committee, or by other citizens present at the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Board of Directors of the Bartlesville Public Library
By Russell W. Davis, President
Committee Report

This committee of citizens, appointed by Mayor Hudson, met with members of the library board, Wednesday, March 1, and submitted the statement hereto attached:

In the discussion which followed the reading of the statement to the board, we believe the board members and these citizens arrived at a mutual understanding of the duties and responsibilities placed upon all of us by this commission.

Since the meeting we have been furnished with a copy of the city ordinance relative to the selection of library board members and their duties. We find that the city library board was set up in 1911, with six members. Of the original members, two were to serve terms of one year, two others were to serve terms of two years, while the remaining two were to serve three year terms. The ordinance thus provided that upon May 1 of each year, two new members might be named to the board. Due to the indifference of the public, and the unquestioned efficiency of the librarian in the past, the rotation of membership upon the library board, has been allowed to lapse. We believe it is in the best interest of the provision, and should be followed in the future, with due cognizance taken of the qualifications of the person recommended for positions upon the board.

This committee asked for and was furnished with a list of all publications added to the library during 1949, and with all newspapers and periodical now available in the library.

After studying the list of books purchased, and talking with the librarian and the library board members, we deem it advisable to ask the librarian or the library board members to make an appraisal of the book list. We believe that such a request would be an imposition upon them for the reason that the library staff is inadequate to carry this out. However, we would like to ask the library board, with the consent and approval of the mayor and the city commission, to delegate to this body the task of making this appraisal. The appraisal would be made in conformity with recommendations furnished by the University of Oklahoma school of library science. We have submitted to the library board a blank form, such as we propose to use for this work.

We learned from the library board that approximately 20 books on an average are purchased each month in our public library. It is our recommendation that appraisal sheets be kept and filed by the board on all future purchases.

This committee would like a further clarification of the members of the library board upon the subject of literature which is designed to create in the minds of the readers doubt or mistrust of the form of government established by the constitution of the United States of America, for the preservation of which the signers of that document pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor. We cannot subscribe to the untried theory that persons of immature years should have access to communist literature, in order to learn how the communist mind functions, and thereby build within themselves a strength of character sufficient to resist the communist approach.

Following to a logical conclusion these arguments, we would have our Christian ministers distributing at Sunday school, atheistic pamphlets in order that the children of the congregation might know how an atheist thinks, and thereby develop the strength of character to resist atheism.

While we recognize the tremendous dangers inherent in any censorship where adults are concerned, we believe that it is a well established principle of American jurisprudence, that restrictions and protective measures are often invoked where minors are concerned. We believe that persons who have not reached the age where they may be entrusted with the ballot, or who are not deemed qualified to operate a vehicle upon a public highway, are not qualified to resist the onslaught of communist propaganda presented to them from the communist point of view. This is not to say that factual matter concerning all religious and political creeds is not permissible.

Various types of entertainment are forbidden to minors, and it is in line with this principle, that we believe that literature which our own newspapers refuse to handle, is not suitable material to be placed in the hands of our children.

We would like to pursue this discussion further and to know definitely what conclusions the members of the library board have reached in this regard.
Vice-Mayor Dunaway's Statement

"These are times that try men's souls and men's minds as they have never before been tried in the annals of our history.

THE WHOLE WORLD is in a state of confusion, engaged in a titanic struggle between power-crazed totalitarian groups, on the one hand, and freedom-loving individuals, on the other in a struggle which ultimately will determine whether our government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall continue to exist, or be forever banished from the face of the earth, and be succeeded by feudalism, absolute monarchy, communism, fascism, nazism, or some other totalitarian or authoritarian form of government.

"Never before was there a time when our country was in greater need than now of loyal, patriotic, unselfish service. Never before was there a time when there was greater need of that eternal vigilance which is the price of liberty. Never was there a time when there was greater need for unity among our people, unity of thought and spirit, unity of purpose, and unity of action. Unfortunately, there are many in our midst who are disseminating the doctrines of dishonesty and disloyalty, sowing the seeds of discord and dissension, and advocating the destruction of our system of free enterprise and the very foundation of our freedom and liberty.

"NEVER, IN MY humble opinion, was there greater need for more of the sentiment expressed by Commodore Stephen Decatur, in his famous toast in 1816:

"'Our Country! In her intercourse with foreign nations may she always be in the right; but our country, right or wrong.'

"Never was there a time when there was greater need for more of the sentiment expressed by that great American statesman, Daniel Webster, in his address on the completion of the Bunker Hill Monument, when he said: 'Thank God! — I, 1850, — am an American.'

"Our Public Library, in my humble opinion, should be a place where our youth will be thoroughly indoctrinated with the principles of Americanism, and where they will be protected from the teachings of subversive doctrines.

THE LIBRARY BOARD, the City Manager, and perhaps, also, the City Commissioners, have not been as diligent as they might have been in seeing to it that the Library was kept up to a proper high standard. I believe that situation is going to be corrected.

"I believe that, under the circumstances, our Library Board should take a careful look into the conditions in our Library, and report to this Commission in the regular annual report of the Library Board which is due in April. The Board of City Commissioners has confidence in our Library Board, and we feel sure that between now and the time for the annual report, the Library Board will make such an investigation and report that will satisfy everybody concerned.

"In the meantime, the reports that have been submitted this evening will be taken under consideration."