

Deerfield Public Library  
Committee of the Whole  
Northern Illinois University Public Opinion Lab Telephone Survey Results  
May 26, 2010

1) Call to Order and Attendance

Mr. Abosch called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m.

Board members attending: Ken Abosch-President, Marla Bark Dembitz, Mary Courtney, Sunday Mueller, Jeff Rivlin. Staff: Mary Pergander-Library Director, Carol Dolin-Business Manager.

Presenters: Mindy Schneiderman, Julie Gommel Bailey of Northern Illinois University Public Opinion Lab.

2) Introduction

Ms. Pergander welcomed attendees and introduced Ms. Schneiderman, Associate Director of the NIU Public Opinion Lab and Ms. Bailey, Research Associate on the project.

3) Report

Ms. Bailey outlined the survey objectives, methodology, response rates, and respondent demographics. She then highlighted major themes of the survey and categorized responses by different groups of respondents, answered questions, and offered her conclusions:

- The survey included responses from 403 Deerfield residents, age 18 and older. Both Library users and non-users were included in the sample.
- Respondents answered questions about their level of awareness of the building improvements under consideration by the Board and their support for the proposed project options.
- The majority of respondents (71%) expressed the support for the general idea of building improvements, but support declined markedly as project magnitude and cost increased.
  - 76% indicated support for minimal improvements in Option 1
  - 53% indicated support for Option 2
  - 42% support Option 3
  - 55% *strongly opposed* Option 4, building a new library on the current site
  - 20% of respondents opposed all building improvement options
- Respondents indicated the level of support for a referendum to fund building improvements with ranges of tax increase to a household with a value of \$550,000:
  - 45% indicated support for \$75-\$100 per year
  - 61% indicated support for \$50-\$75 per year
  - 81% indicated support for \$25-\$50 per year
- According to the survey, respondents' sources of information about the Library are: Browsing (83%), D-Tales (80%), Deerfield Review (56%). The Library website is visited by 40% of respondents. Use of Browsing and the Library website have increased significantly since 2003 when 68% of respondents used Browsing and 15% visited the Library website. As an information source, Browsing is preferred by 52%.
- The survey indicated that a significant majority (89%) of respondents have a Library Card and (82%) use the Library. Use is higher among households with children (91%) than among households with no children (78%)
- The majority (93%) of respondents that are users of the Library are satisfied with materials, services, and programs.

4) Conclusions

- Responses were similar from all quadrants of Deerfield
- Support appears to be somewhat, but not significantly, higher among higher income, more educated respondents

- Support for building improvements exists, especially for basic improvements, but the timing is poor
- The current economic environment reduces the likelihood that residents would support a significant tax increase
- According to the survey, garnering adequate support for Option 3 or 4 is unlikely at this time
- If the Library chooses to move forward with the project, it should focus on non-users, lower income, and less educated residents to build a bigger base of support for any chosen option. These are all underrepresented among supporters currently.
- The most effective communications are those that arrive on household doorsteps, namely Browsing, D-Tales, and the Deerfield Review

#### 5) Board questions and response

- What comparisons can be drawn between this survey and the one conducted in 2003?
  - Use of the Library is very similar
  - Population is very similar
  - Satisfaction could not be compared
  - While the question was not exactly the same, it appears as if support for a referendum is lower now than it was in 2003. This could be due in part to the economic environment and could improve should the economy turn around
- In your opinion, is there any advantage to pursuing a referendum in a general or primary election?
  - There can be, depending on your support base. When voter turnout is low, as is possible in a primary election, a significant group supporting or opposing a referendum has a greater effect on the outcome. When a referendum is introduced during a primary election, it can have the effect of bringing out more voters, which would neutralize this effect.

#### 6) Next steps

- A Special Board Meeting will be held on June 2 at 7:00 p.m. to make a decision about which option to pursue
- Board members should closely read the report, especially the verbatim responses in Appendix D, and be prepared to discuss the timing and preferred option. Consider whether the timing affects the option chosen.
- Ms. Pergander will select a Public Relations firm by early next week to lead a strategic campaign in advance of the June Open Houses and leading into the fall
- The Trustee Communication Committee, Mr. Abosch, and Ms. Pergander will meet with the leadership of the CIG, and representatives of the chosen PR firm on June 2 at 5:00 p.m. Karen Kleckner will be invited to participate in this meeting. The objective will be to create a lean and agile group to develop the message to be distributed by the CIG. This strategic campaign group must be efficient and effective.
- Mr. Abosch and Ms. Pergander will meet with the Village leadership when a decision has been made about which option to pursue, if any.
- Preparations need to be made for Open Houses on June 26 and June 29
- Impromptu tours of the Library begin Thursday evening and will be held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at 7:05 p.m.

#### 7) Other items

- Ms. Pergander received notification that the Village is seeking grant money for HVAC and lighting in buildings throughout the Village. This would be a great opportunity to secure funding that would not have to be paid back. It is unclear whether these funds could be used to purchase a system that could support an expansion at a later date. Ms. Pergander will investigate and report back to the Board.

8) Adjournment

- Ms. Courtney moved to adjourn at 8:10 p.m. Mr. Rivlin seconded. The meeting adjourned.