



Contact:
Suzanne M. Thinnes
Communications Manager
4400 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
412.578.2458 (office)
412.688.8609 (cell)

For Immediate Release

Library Board Assures Transparency and Refutes Allegations

Board and elected officials to meet about funding solutions

Public comment period to be held in conjunction with December board meeting

PITTSBURGH, November 18, 2009 – A letter released today by officials of Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh to elected officials assures that the Library remains committed to providing information and an on-going dialogue with the community about funding and sustainability issues.

“The foremost concern of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Board of Trustees and staff is to provide for the best possible library service to the Pittsburgh region – in the present and well into the future,” said Board Chair Jacqui Fiske Lazo. “To that end we are working hard with our elected officials to find long-term funding solutions for the Library.”

After speaking with Ms. Lazo, Senator Jay Costa, also a member of the Board of Trustees, announced his intention to call a full meeting of elected officials next Monday, November 23. “The Library Board is willing to consider delaying the implementation of parts of its approved Action Plan, including the decision to close branches. There are two key funding issues. One is that the Library have the dollars it needs to operate in the short-term if it does delay closings. The second is that long-term dedicated funding be secured to carry the Library well into the future. It’s important that all public officials come to the table with the Library board and staff, so we can work on a solution together.”

In the letter, addressed to a number of local elected officials, the Library responded to five requests and refuted allegations that it has failed to operate transparently. A copy of the letter follows this release.

The letter states that any delay in the implementation of the Action Plan would require approval by the full Board of Trustees at the December 14 meeting. The Library has repeatedly said that such a delay would require both short-term “stop-gap” funding as well as a real prospect for long-term sustainable funding.

The Library also maintains that it has been and continues to be committed to meeting with both community members and public officials and lists in the letter specific examples of past and scheduled meetings.

The letter’s request for financial information was proactively addressed by the Library when it released detailed budget information and projections on its Web site on November 4. The Library’s primary funder, the Allegheny Regional Asset District (RAD) is in the process of conducting a special audit of the Library’s projections. The Library continues to work to provide detailed information to RAD and will release such information to the public as it is available, including costs of branch operations slated for closure.

In response to holding the December 14 Board meeting in the public, the Board has agreed to host a public forum in conjunction with this meeting. Details of the forum will be released through the Library’s Communications Office on or before December 1.

###

About Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

To Engage our Community in Literacy and Learning

Established as a public trust in 1895, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh serves the citizens of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County with a distinguished history of leadership among the country's great public libraries. Through its 19 neighborhood locations, including Main Library and the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh is the region's most visited asset, with 2.6 million visitors in 2008. Each year the Library provides valuable resources, programs, classes and training opportunities that engage the community in literacy, and life-long learning.

About Libraries *for* LIFE

Sustaining our Future

In 2009 Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh began a community dialogue to engage the citizen's of the region in a community process to protect the long-term sustainability of the City's library system.