

Rockbridge Regional Library System
Board of Trustees Meeting – December 7, 2023

The Board of Trustees met at the Lexington Branch of the Rockbridge Regional Library on December 7, 2023 at 4:15 PM.

Members present included Thomas Bell, Melanie Forde, Tom Goodale, Gail Heslep, Bret Kampf, Margaret Kirkby, Bob Kramer, Sherri Wheeler, Jessica Whipple, and McKinley Williams. Staff members present were Julie Goyette, Director, and Janice Burguières, Recording Secretary.

Ms. Whipple, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:15 PM.

Ms. Heslep made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Goodale seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Kirkby made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 2, 2023 meeting as presented. Mr. Kampf seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mission Moment

Katie Ramsey, System Manager and Digital Resources Cataloging, discussed her participation in recent leadership training. Katie has had an interest in leadership for the past 2-3 years. She has been taking online classes offered by Library Journal. The classes she has enjoyed the most have dealt with developing a leadership style, supervising and evaluating staff, and development and implementation of strategic plans. Katie is also returning to committee work with the Virginia Library Association. Mrs. Goyette noted that it is great to have the opportunity to work on succession planning with someone from within the library system.

Mr. Goodale asked for clarification on Library Journal and if it was an accredited organization. Mrs. Goyette indicated that it is an accredited program. Mr. Goodale asked what the classes entailed. Ms. Ramsey explained the components of the weekly classes. Each class involves a personal reflection, reviewing resources, and researching resources on a given topic.

Public comment

No public attended.

Questions regarding the Board packet

Ms. Kirkby noted that “ebook circulation” was listed twice on the Participation/Circulation/Usage report. She also asked for an explanation of the term “in house use.” Mrs. Goyette explained that this term referred to materials that were taken off the shelves by patrons, used in the library, and left on tables, in chairs, etc. She was also asked for an explanation of the term “deposit station delivered items.” Mrs. Goyette explained that there are shelves placed in central locations in rural communities (e.g. post offices) where free books and materials are left for individuals to take. Mr. Bell asked if the little red cart in the Buena Vista Library counted as one of those stations. Mrs. Goyette stated that she would look into that possibility.

Discussion

Ms. Whipple informed the Board that it was not necessary for the Board to approve the Five Year Plan at the November meeting. Once the plan was approved it would be submitted to the Library of Virginia.

Mr. Kramer suggested replacing the term “group discussions” to “focus group discussions” to clarify with whom the discussions were held. Under Focus Area 1, he recommended clarifying the “regular operating hours” as “pre-Covid operating hours.”

Mr. Goodale asked how the Library compares to the spectrum of other libraries across Virginia. Mrs. Goyette explained that most libraries offer many of the same services. Rockbridge Regional Library Staff work to keep our services relevant to a variety of patrons.

Mr. Bell stated that we have members of our community who come to the library to ask for directions or receive help filling out job applications. These may be services that aren’t offered in larger systems. Mrs. Goyette added that the demographics for our rural system are very different from larger systems and this impacts the services that we offer. Mr. Williams asked if the goal of each branch was to meet the specific needs of the community it serves. Mrs. Goyette stated that this is the goal of our library system.

Mrs. Wheeler described the table in the Buena Vista library that contained free items for patrons to take as needed.

Ms. Kirkby inquired as to how the people in the focus groups were chosen. Mrs. Goyette stated that she asked the staff to recommend patrons who frequently visited the library, focusing on a wide range of ages and backgrounds.

Ms. Forde asked about the disaster training listed on page 10 of the plan. Mrs. Goyette explained that this is a blanket term that refers to floods, hurricanes, fires, active shooter, power outage, etc. It could be any event that would call for the library to be prepared to aid members of the community.

Ms. Whipple asked if the library reports back to the Library of Virginia on the Five Year Plan and if we have to explain how we worked toward our goal. Mrs. Goyette answered yes and stated that we add our accomplishments to the annual updates even if those updates don’t match the specifics of the stated goal.

Mrs. Goyette suggested changing Focus 1Ac to “Inform the four jurisdictions about the importance of the library to communities across the region.” The annual update for this point would be more specific about speaking regularly at council and supervisors meetings to update those bodies on the need for funding.

Mr. Kramer suggested amending Focus 2Aa to “Update security plan and train all staff.” Mrs. Goyette informed the board that the security plan is in the process of being updated and security measures put in place for the branches.

Ms. Forde inquired about the amount of money that is kept on hand and the impact that could have on safety. Mrs. Goyette stated that money is secured. She also reported that staff has been told to hand over any funds if demanded to do so.

In regards to Focus 2Ac, Ms. Kirkby asked about renovations to the patron bathrooms. Mrs. Goyette stated that the goal is to renovate the bathrooms, making one a family restroom and the other for everyone's use.

For Focus 3, Mr. Kramer suggested including a reference to the acquisition and retention policy in this section, in order to illustrate that we have a policy to address this goal.

Mrs. Goyette informed the Board that it is increasingly difficult and expensive for the library to subscribe to the paper edition of the New York Times. The library is working to inform patrons about this issue.

Mr. Bell suggested changing the wording of Focus 4B to read, "Stay fiscally transparent and financially stable." Mrs. Goyette stated that putting the library's budget and audit on the website would make our financial process more transparent to the public.

For Focus 5, Mrs. Goyette will make the Board members more aware of training opportunities. Ms. Forde asked about the annual board evaluation. Mrs. Goyette stated that this is not something the library has done in the past. She indicated that the board would have to determine a set of criteria, then evaluate itself on those guidelines.

Mr. Kampf asked if there were any items from the previous five year plan that were over to the new plan that needed to be focused on. Mrs. Goyette stated that there are items from the previous plan that the library will continue to work on during the next five years.

Ms. Forde suggested several grammatical corrections in the five year plan document. On page three, she suggested changing the last sentence in the first paragraph to read, "The region encompasses 1146 square miles." On page 5 she recommended deleting the word "to" in the first paragraph. She asked about the difference between patrons and visitors. Mrs. Goyette defined patrons as individuals who have library cards and visitors as those who do not.

Ms. Whipple pointed out the need for consistency when capitalizing the term "five year plan." She also recommended being more specific about the demographics of our community. Mrs. Goyette stated that she can add wording to describe the age and educational level of the communities we serve. Ms. Forde asked how the library knows how many questions they answer each year. Mrs. Goyette informed the board that the library tracks the questions using a program called Gimlet.

Mr. Goodale made a motion to approve the Five Year Plan with the amendments discussed. Ms. Forde seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

2024 Meeting Dates and locations

Mr. Bell expressed a concern that the November meeting date would be close to Thanksgiving. Mrs. Goyette responded saying that Thanksgiving falls late in 2024 which means the meeting would be the week prior to Thanksgiving.

Ms. Forde made a motion to approve the meeting dates and locations. Mr. Bell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bell shared information about the staff in the Buena Vista Children's Library noticing leaking water from the boiler at St. John's UMC social hall while providing a program. Staff were able to inform church staff before extensive damage to the boiler occurred. Mr. Bell came quickly to help the staff as he lives close by.

Adjournment

Ms. Heslep moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Kramer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be held at the Lexington Branch of the library on January 25, 2023 at 4:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Burguires
Recording Secretary