



Central Rappahannock Regional
Library

INSPIRING LIFELONG LEARNING
FOR EVERYONE IN OUR COMMUNITY

Proudly serving Fredericksburg, Stafford, Spotsylvania, and Westmoreland

LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES

September 14, 2020

Meeting held electronically via telephone conference call/live-stream
due to COVID-19 restrictions.

ATTENDEES

BOARD MEMBERS: Cheryl Miller (Chair), Kimberly Young (Vice Chair), Martha Hutzel (Secretary-Treasurer), Meg Bohmke, Kerry Devine, Xavier Richardson, Diana Risavi, David Ross

LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION: Rebecca Purdy, Chris Glover, Kathy Roberts

Cheryl Miller called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm and read the following statement:

This Meeting is being held electronically by live stream, pursuant to Fredericksburg City Council Ordinance 20-05, An Ordinance to Address Continuity of City Government during the Pendency of a Pandemic Disaster.

The Board members participating are: Cheryl Miller, Kimberly Young, Xavier Richardson, Martha Hutzel, Meg Bohmke, Kerry Devine, Diana Risavi, and David Ross. CRRL staff participating are: Rebecca Purdy, Chris Glover, and Kathy Roberts.

Members of the public have been invited to access this meeting via livestream on the CRRL website, where a link is provided to submit written comments. Each public comment that has been received will be read aloud during the Public Comment period in the agenda.

*(Cheryl Miller read aloud the Policy for Public Participation at Board Meetings):
The Library Board welcomes citizen participation concerning library service and provides an opportunity for such involvement during regular meetings of the Board. Citizens may request to address the Board at the appropriate time allowed on the agenda for public comment.*



librarypoint.org

540-372-1144

Comment is limited to three (3) minutes per citizen, and if a leader or representative of an organization they are limited to five (5) minutes. Board members may ask questions of the speakers. Citizens offering comment must be residents of or own property within the CRRL service area. Comment must be on legitimate matters of library business. Opportunity for citizen comment should be used to improve the delivery of library service in a positive way. No citizen may engage in political statements, personal attacks on members of the Library Board, staff, or any other person; nor is any person entitled to use abusive language or discuss matters outside the purview of the authority of the Library Board.

Matters brought before the Board will be taken under advisement to allow time for due deliberation. Action on such matters is not taken at the time of presentation to the Board. Speakers will be notified of the Board's decision within seventy-five (75) days. If a matter requires a longer period of time for resolution, the speaker will be notified of the interim status. Written statements may be submitted for consideration by the Board.

Documents to be discussed during this meeting are available for public view at:
librarypoint.org/board-of-trustees.

The minutes from the June 8, 2020 Board meeting were approved.

Cheryl Miller shared that Spotsylvania County had reappointed David Ross to the Library Board.

Cheryl Miller reminded the Board that they had received the Director's report in advance and that it had been posted on our website as part of the Board documentation. She asked Martha Hutzel to share a few highlights and any additional information.

Martha Hutzel said that she is very proud of the hard work and innovations that the staff has continually shown throughout the pandemic. She shared that since launching curbside pickup on June 24, we have processed approximately 33,800 holds and almost 143,000 items have been checked in. The annual audit will begin the week of September 21 and she hopes that all of the board members have had a chance to review the reopening plan document that was sent late last week and is happy to answer questions about that at this time. Martha Hutzel shared that Spotsylvania County Schools has purchased the necessary platform that allows CRRL to easily provide access to our eBooks and eAudio to all of their students. This will give students access even if they do not have a library card. She added that Fredericksburg, Stafford and Spotsylvania are all accessing this offer.

Martha Hutzel referred the Board to the Reopening Plan document and said the plan includes restarting building access. She wanted to see if the public officials on the Board had any concerns from a community perspective about proceeding with the proposed dates. Dates proposed included September 16 - increased access to resources including classroom carryouts, teacher resources, research services, and fax, scanning and copying assistance; October 1 - Chromebooks and hotspots available for checkout;

October 28 - soft opening for limited building access at two branches; November 11 - limited building access at all branches.

Meg Bohmke said she wasn't sure what other elected officials are hearing but she and her fellow supervisors in Stafford are hearing that people are very concerned that the library is not open yet with schools now in session. Several weeks ago, she forwarded research on a number of libraries - Fairfax, Henrico, Hanover, Prince William, and others that had implemented some version of a reopening plan. She said that none are open all day and they are all doing something different, but people at least have the opportunity to go into the library to conduct needed business. She stated that we need to open the library sooner than the proposed dates.

Martha responded that while schools are open they are open virtually and CRRL has an enormous amount of material available virtually as well.

David Ross asked who has the authority to decide when and how the library reopens to customers. He shared that he has two school aged children, one in public school preparing to transition from virtual learning to a hybrid model physically attending school two days per week, and one in private school attending school full-time. He asked if the Director or the Board has the authority to reopen and reiterated that the public is not happy that the library remains closed.

Martha Hutzel explained the library is not closed and that we are processing thousands of physical materials through curbside pickup as well as circulating eMaterials.

Kerry Devine said that while residents in the city are anxious for the library to reopen, most are very understanding given the concerns with COVID-19. She added that if the branches can open sooner than anticipated, that would be wonderful but only if and when it's safe for the public.

Dave Ross repeated his question regarding who has the authority to decide on reopening.

Martha Hutzel responded that it would be the Library Director's decision, not the Board's decision. She shared that there are multiple CDC and Virginia Health Department requirements that the Library must adhere to. Of specific concern are the additional cleaning requirements that include cleaning the bathrooms every two hours and she is hopeful that the jurisdictions will be able to help with this. She explained that currently the Library branches are cleaned only twice a week.

David Ross asked Martha to provide Board Members with written verification that reopening decisions fall under the authority of the Library Director rather than the Board. He asked if opening the library on the days when it is already being cleaned might be an option. Martha Hutzel responded that the

current schedule of cleaning the branches once in the evening would not meet the requirement to clean every two hours that the public is in the branch.

Cheryl Miller asked Martha if any of these concerns might be addressed with CARES Act funding. Martha Hutzel responded that while the Library has requested CARES Act funding, the reopening plan is not contingent upon receiving that funding.

David Ross reiterated that waiting until November 11 to reopen branches to the public would not be a good decision.

Martha Hutzel responded that while we want to reopen to the public as soon as possible, the current COVID positivity rate is 8.2% and thus it is not safe to do so at this time.

Meg Bohmke said that northern Virginia libraries have been open since July 1 and that that area has a higher rate of COVID than our area. She added that Stafford is considering moving to a hybrid plan for schools in two weeks combining virtual and in-person learning.

Martha Hutzel responded that Arlington and Falls Church Libraries are not open. Prince William is offering limited, appointment-only access and utilizing curbside pickup. She stated that Richmond city actually reopened then closed again because of COVID cases and now will not reopen until the area has a 5% or lower COVID positivity rate for two weeks. Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library in Christiansburg also had to close again after reopening. She said that in preparing to reopen, CRRL has installed plexiglass in five branches thus far and is working on the remaining five branches. She said additional security guards will need to be hired in order to enforce rules and procedures. She anticipates that when CRRL reopens its branches, it will be for limited hours and that if we can do so safely and before the proposed dates, we will. She reminded the board that CRRL opened curbside pickup and returns a week earlier than expected.

Kerry Devine added that Stafford County Schools are looking at a very limited reopening for K-2 only, not for the entire district.

Meg Bohmke said that the Stafford County Board of Supervisors decided two weeks ago to allocate approximately \$30,000 in CARES Act funding for the Library, but if the library does not reopen it is likely that Stafford will not want to allocate that money to the Library. Meg Bohmke asked Cheryl Miller what CARES Act info she was referring to in her previous inquiry to Martha.

Cheryl Miller stated that she was referring to the CARES Act funding request that was given to all jurisdictions. She suggested that Martha provide the CARES Act funding update at this time instead of waiting until the Board took up New Business later in the agenda.

Martha Hutzal announced that CRRL applied for CARES Act reimbursements following instructions from the jurisdictional Budget Managers. Thus far only Westmoreland County has assured us that we will receive any funds. The submitted request was apportioned based on the percentages that each jurisdiction contributes to the library's operating budget. We had to purchase PPE and other items to operate safely and provide services. Thus far we have not heard from Fredericksburg or Spotsylvania. Stafford has informed us that their Board felt that all jurisdictions should be on the same page with supporting the Library and indicated that a discussion here might lead to providing funding. Martha Hutzal said that the requested amounts were: Stafford, \$35,051; Spotsylvania, \$28,633; Fredericksburg, \$9,063 and Westmoreland, \$2,842; and September 30 is the cutoff date.

Meg Bohmke asked if this funding would be for things already spent such as PPE, cleaning, or supplies; or would this funding be used for future needs.

Martha Hutzal responded, "both." She explained that CRRL was asked to submit receipts for COVID related expenses as well as provide anticipated needs going forward.

Meg Bohmke requested a breakdown of what percentage would be for past expenses and what percentage would be for future expenses.

Martha Hutzal responded that she did not have that information. She explained that some normal expenditures have been affected by COVID, such as CRRL's eResources, which have quadrupled in use, increasing the cost. Martha Hutzal said that expense is likely to remain as customers are now more familiar with these resources and likely to continue using them moving forward.

Meg Bohmke asked if that meant the funding would not be used for increased cleaning procedures and other preparations moving forward.

Martha responded that the funding, if received, would be applied to what was already spent as well as future needs. She stated that several small rural libraries have received in excess of \$100,000 in CARES Act Funding, which exceeds the total amount that CRRL has requested.

David Ross said that Spotsylvania County offices are open and staff are working in the offices and interacting with the public. He explained that the consensus among Spotsylvania government officials is that the CARES funding will be allocated if the library reopens, but may be not given to CRRL if the branches remain closed.

Kimberly Young said that in reviewing the reports and materials for this meeting and reading the updates coming out of the library, she recognizes how labor intensive the process has been for distributing

tens of thousands of holds to customers as well as processing over 100,000 returns. She said that while the branches are closed to the public, extensive work is taking place in the branches and materials are being processed for customers through holds, curbside pickup, and returns of physical items. She stated that we must recognize this has been a monumental task as we are dealing with a situation we have never faced before. She asked the board to consider that “reopening” does not mean the same thing to everyone. She said that she understands some members of the board and the public desire public access to the buildings but that is for the director to determine how to best to do that and acquire the CARES Act funding we need.

Kerry Devine thanked Kimberly Young for articulating the direction we need to be heading. She said that not all city buildings are open yet and the city wants the public to re-enter the library as safely as possible. She said she had COVID over the summer, was very sick for a month, and is not eager to be in large groups or crowded public spaces.

Cheryl Miller asked if any members wanted to put forward any kind of motion or suggestion moving forward.

Meg Bohmke referred to the Stafford Courthouse plan for public access to the building as a possible example for CRRL to follow. She said that while she appreciates Martha Hutzel being the Director, the Board Members are the elected officials and appointees that will be held accountable by the public. Meg Bohmke then made a motion for the Board to meet again in two weeks to further discuss reopening plans with perhaps three plans, though more or less would be fine, as well as a closing plan.

David Ross seconded the motion and a date was discussed with the members suggesting September 28 at 4:30pm via Google Meet.

Xavier Richardson suggested that before the Board approve a special meeting on September 28, discussion was needed in order to determine what content should be included in the proposed plans. He asked if there would be triggers or contingencies that would have the library buildings close again.

Meg Bohmke said that there is a new company in Stafford that can sterilize an entire building in 45 minutes if needed.

Xavier Richardson asked if the COVID positivity rate spikes, would we limit services at that point and possibly close again.

Kimberly Young stated that she agreed with Xavier Richardson and explained that at the University of Mary Washington, where she works, they are constantly reevaluating and that setting a threshold by which closure would be required is a reasonable request.

Martha Hutzel cited library systems in Richmond and Christiansburg that reopened only to have to close again when the positivity rate spiked. She said that any reopening plan must have a contingency plan to address a spike in COVID cases.

Meg Bohmke asked Martha Hutzel if she would utilize the relationships she has with other libraries in Virginia to see what has worked well. Martha Hutzel responded that she is already doing that. Martha Hutzel explained that she has access to a working spreadsheet that every library system across the state uses to update their status of operations; and she is in constant communication with other library directors.

Xavier Richardson asked if there were any specific items of information members wanted the staff to provide in the proposed plans for the September 28 special meeting. He added that with most schools meeting virtually, many students do not have access to printers and would that service be among others that we are not offering now but need to begin offering.

Martha Hutzel said that the library has offered free fax, printing and copying services for many years because we are aware the need is there, and that the staff are working out how to reopen those services in the safest manner possible.

Diana Risavi said that the disadvantaged population is most severely impacted by the libraries being closed.

Martha Hutzel referred the members to the proposed October 1 date of providing 30 chromebooks and hotspots available for checkout to help meet the needs of the disadvantaged.

David Ross said that in Spotsylvania, all students have been issued a Chromebook so that is not a need and that getting the doors open is a higher priority. Meg Bohmke added that Stafford has also provided Chromebooks and hotspots for all students.

Martha Hutzel responded that reopening the doors is a priority. She added that while students have access to Chromebooks, there are others in the community that do not have computers or access to the internet and that CRRL wants to provide those resources to non-students as well.

Kerry Devine said that providing Chromebooks and hotspots to adults is desperately needed as many are looking for jobs.

David Ross said that the Library should not gage its decision based on whether or not schools are open. He explained that with most schools offering only virtual learning, libraries are needed now more than ever and that we should consider opening to grades K-6 because the population ages 14 and under are at very low risk for the virus.

Martha Hutzel replied that CRRL has an extensive collection of eResources available to all students in the area and that when the Library reopens, it will be open to all ages, not just K-6 grade students.

At Cheryl Miller's request, Meg Bohmke repeated her motion for the Board to meet again in two weeks to further discuss reopening plans with perhaps three plans, though more or less would be fine, as

well as a closing plan. David Ross seconded the motion. Cheryl Miller conducted a roll call survey and all members agreed to a special meeting Monday, September 28, 4:30pm, via Google Meet (video meeting).

Cheryl Miller asked staff to share any written public comments that had been received. Kathy Roberts shared that public comments had been received.

Martha Hutzel presented the Fiscal Report and reminded the Board that the end-of-year numbers are not final until the audit is complete. Hutzel reported that the library has received all payments from the jurisdictions and the state, and returned \$200,000 as requested to Fredericksburg, Stafford, and Spotsylvania based on each jurisdiction's percentage of circulation.

On the expense page, Martha Hutzel noted that after adjusting for the budget amendments voted on at the last meeting, most expenses are hovering right around 100% spent; some just under and some just over. She explained that retirement and resignation payouts account for much of the excess spending this fiscal year at a cost of \$395,659, and that we knew this would be the case. June 30 marked the end of this policy and we do not anticipate such large payouts in the future. Martha Hutzel said that the number of CRRL staff has reduced by 71 employees since the closure due to retirements and resignations. Hutzel noted that the annual FY20 budget was only overspent by 2.2% of the approved budget but after returning \$200,000 to the localities in the last quarter and retirement payouts, the library experienced a loss this fiscal year in the amount of \$456,138.

Hutzel reminded the Board that at the beginning of the fiscal year part of the fund balance in the amount of \$198,197 was assigned. This portion was bequeathed to the library in a previous fiscal year. The assigned amount was spent in full this fiscal year on Fredericksburg branch and Ideaspace renovations.

Martha Hutzel noted that the Law Library fund is healthy and that the library has used Law Library funds to move and expand the Law Library on the third floor of the Fredericksburg Branch. Martha Hutzel directed the Board's attention to the Designated Accounts. She stated that the Vehicle Fund now has a healthy balance to enable the library to purchase another vehicle if necessary. Transfers from the Information Access fund to the Vehicle fund will cease after June 30, 2020. She stated that the Information Access Fund was nearly depleted with little hope of recovery due to lack of income as the library is still not collecting fines due to modified services because of COVID.

Martha Hutzel presented the Quarterly Circulation Reports. Hutzel noted that the circulation of physical materials decreased dramatically due to closure of the library buildings for nearly the entire quarter. She noted that eMaterials showed a corresponding dramatic increase. She reported that eAudiobooks were up 23%, eBooks were up 84%, eMagazines were up 15%, eVideos were up 202%, and eMaterials overall were up 72% over Q4 of FY19.

Martha Hutzel presented the Annual Circulation Reports. Hutzel noted that while overall circulation was down due to the COVID closure, circulation of eMaterials was up 40%.

Martha Hutzel presented the Special Use Statistics and reported that although the quarterly special use statistics were down across most categories due to the fact that we closed the entire quarter, staff training increased dramatically demonstrating employees' dedication to continuing education during the closure. Most of this training is provided to us free of charge from the Library of Virginia and other resources. The meeting rooms were used by the local Red Cross chapter for much-needed blood drives and for the primary election in June. The one hundred and twenty-eight classes were all presented virtually.

Hutzel said the COVID closure also affected the annual special use statistics with most categories showing a decrease for the year. However, she remarked there were several areas that had increased including public computer training, mobile app visits, and the number of community events CRRL staff attended. The number of classes and events were only down slightly over the previous year despite the closure.

Kimberly Young asked about the decrease in usage of librarypoint and CRRL mobile apps. Chris Glover explained that we moved from two systems to one, which accounts for the decrease in librarypoint; and mobile apps usage decreased due to the closure and customers not being able to check out physical items using their phones..

Cheryl Miller opened the floor to old business and asked Martha Hutzel about the annual climate survey.

Martha Hutzel responded that due to the impact of COVID-19 and the library closure, we have experienced severe staff changes, pay cuts, no COLA increase, layoffs (subs), and an increase in the staff contribution to health insurance due to budget cuts. She added that the impact of the \$1.4 million budget cut has led to staff morale issues and requiring staff to train for jobs they were not hired to do. She recommended that the Library NOT conduct a climate survey this year and wait until 2021.

Meg Bohmke stated that she asked this item to be added to the agenda. She shared that Stafford conducted a climate survey just after their County Administrator departed and they found it very helpful for the county. She asked David Ross to weigh in on the expense of such a survey and added that she estimated it cost Stafford approximately \$30,000.

David Ross responded that Spotsylvania was having issues with their Department of Social Services and had their Information Technology Department conduct a climate survey. He said the information provided by the survey was very helpful and has led to improvements. David Ross said that

Spotsylvania County can do a climate survey for CRRL at no charge. He added that it might be helpful to see how the employees are doing with the impact of COVID and that while there will likely be a number of complaints, the information might be helpful. He added that it might be important to conduct the survey now before there is a crisis.

Martha Hutzel responded that CRRL has the capacity to conduct this survey through Google Forms, a service the Library has already purchased. She said that last year's survey response rate was 50%, which is a fairly good rate. Martha Hutzel agreed that climate surveys are helpful and will do one at some point in the future. She said she believed this was a staff issue rather than a board issue.

Kimberly Young agreed that the climate survey is an operational issue and said that having Spotsylvania conduct the survey as a third party might be a conflict of interest.

Kerry Devine said that in her workplace they conduct surveys with staff and she understands the value, but she agreed with the concerns Martha expressed regarding the impact budget cuts and COVID have had on the staff; and she also agreed that this was an internal decision. She said that if a survey was conducted this year it should have an asterisk noting that this year is an anomaly.

Cheryl Miller opened the floor to new business announcing elections and calling for nominations for Chair. Kerry Devine nominated Cheryl Miller for Chair. Cheryl Miller said that the position should be rotated among the jurisdictions. Meg nominated Kimberly Young and Xavier Richardson for Chair. Xavier Richardson nominated Kimberly Young for Chair and declined to run for the position. A discussion followed regarding the Library Board bylaw pertaining to the election of Officers. Cheryl Miller conducted a roll call vote for Kimberly Young for Chair. The results of the roll call are as follows: Meg Bohmke - yes; Kerry Devine - yes; Xavier Richardson - yes; Diana Risavi - yes; David Ross - yes; Kimberly Young - yes; and Cheryl Miller - yes. Kimberly Young was elected as Chair unanimously..

Cheryl Miller called for nominations for Vice Chair. David Ross nominated Xavier Richardson for Vice Chair, which was the only nomination. Cheryl Miller conducted a roll call vote for Xavier Richardson for Vice-Chair. The results of the roll call are as follows: Meg Bohmke - yes; Kerry Devine - yes; Xavier Richardson - yes; Diana Risavi - yes; David Ross - yes; Kimberly Young - yes; and Cheryl Miller - yes. Xavier Richardson was elected as Vice-Chair unanimously.

Martha Hutzel presented the FY22 proposed budget request. She stated that the overall budget increase is 2.85% and includes a 1.5% COLA salary increase and includes the state mandated increase in minimum wage and a modest increase in the benefits line item based on the Virginia Bureau of Insurance Rates.

Cheryl Miller asked if any member wished to comment or discuss the proposed budget further. There were no comments.

Xavier Richardson moved to adopt the budget as presented, Kerry Devine seconded. The motion was passed. Ayes: 6 (Cheryl Miller, Kimberly Young, Kerry Devine, Xavier Richardson, Diana Risavi, David Ross), Nays 1 (Meg Bohmke).

The next Board meeting will be September 28 at 4:30pm.

Xavier Richardson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kerry Devine seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 P.M.