

Staunton Public Library
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
March 17, 2021

Call to Order, Attendance, and Recognition of Quorum:

The meeting, held at Staunton Public Library, was called to order at 4:32 pm by Cass Cannon, filling in for Josh Howard.

Roll was called:

Board Members Present – Randolph Bertin, Virginia Trovato, Cass Cannon, Jason Clarke
Others Present – Library Director Sarah Skrobis, Council Liaison Steve Claffey, Friends representative Joy Ingram
Absent – Board Members Josh Howard and Mark Peterson

A quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes:

Virginia Trovato made a motion to approve the minutes of the 17 February 2022 Meeting, which was seconded. Virginia offered a correction for a typo in the meeting date, and the corrected minutes were approved unanimously.

Special Meeting

Virginia made a motion to hold a Special Meeting of the Library Advisory Board to conduct a tour of the library and discuss possibilities for future Library renovation on 2 April from 9 – 11 am. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Randolph made a motion to cancel the April 21 regular Advisory Board meeting due to unavailability of the Library Director. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Sarah discussed the possibility of having a staff member appear at the beginning of regular meetings to introduce themselves and discuss their jobs.

Talking Book Center report

Virginia presented an update on the TBC, highlighting the following items:

- Primarily focused on strategic planning process (five year outlook).
- Seven of the currency readers have been sent out.
- Planning to participate at the non-profit fair on April 7 at the Blackburn Inn (sponsored by Chamber of Commerce).
- Recruiting for board members, preferably outside Staunton (Waynesboro, Rockbridge, Highland).

Friends of Staunton Public Library report

Sarah provided an update on the Friends, highlighting the following items:

- Enthusiastic about resuming acceptance of donations at the library twice a week (through volunteers in the parking lot).
- Discussing holding lunch music outside this year.

Q [Jason]: Is there a vetting process for Volunteers? A [Sarah]: anyone working with children has to go through background check, other volunteers fill out an application.

Director's Report

Sarah recapped the past month's activities at the library:

- New Technology services librarian Carrie Whitlock started today, coming from Augusta County Library.
- The new telescopes are circulating. We've had great publicity (newspaper and television). High demand has led to a reconfiguration allowing holds to be placed. The library plans to hold an information session on stargazing and use of the telescopes.

[At this point in the meeting, Board member Randolph Bertin departed]

- Preparation continues on new public computers currently located in the large meeting room, with set-up assistance from the city IT department; significant customization is required for library use. Print and patron management software remains to be installed before they can be made available for use, hopefully next week – 6 computers on first floor, 1 on ground floor, for now; several computers to be held back temporarily to see if there are further Covid surge concerns before the library returns to its "full furniture" configuration.
- Curbside service is being extended this week as we have more light in the evenings.
- The library will begin outdoor programming in May and may collaborate with Augusta Library for monthly visits to the farmers market.
- The Spring reader challenge is a pilot of the Beanstack app, available from the Library of Virginia. Families and individuals can read and earn badges and prizes.
- The Summer reading challenge plans are to be more experiential, with the idea of making memories rather than winning plastic toy prizes; the staff is considering a potential partnership with Parks and Rec for a pool party for participants.

Old Business

The Capital Improvement Plan discussion will continue at the April meeting. Councilman Claffey is supportive of the plan to divide the old renovation plan into smaller, targeted projects.

Q: [Virginia] - Is there any update for the sprinter van request which was sent to the Council?

A: [Sarah and Councilman Claffey]: Budget presentation is March 24 to Council. We will see what is in it at the time. There are many asks and limited resources.

The final budget vote is scheduled for April 28. The full budget calendar is available on the city of Staunton website.

New Business

1) Cass attended two United for Libraries webinars. She shared that it was very helpful to hear other viewpoints and organizational relationships. Key take-aways include:

- Face time with staff, particularly for board members who started during Covid. Sarah affirmed plans to introduce staff members at both Library Board and Friends meetings.
- Committees may be a helpful tool for moving strategic plans forward.
- It is useful to have a running list of activities at the library that board members can draw on for sharing with the community.
- It was recommended to make appeals directly to suppliers (cars, office supplies, etc.). Sarah said the Community Foundation currently occasionally announces surplus items from other non-profits.
- Naming rights for fundraising.
- Beneficial to have a political champion to serve as a connection to the city and Council.
- Amazon Smile Program

Q [Cass]: Do we participate in the Smile Program? A [Sarah]: Yes, it is directed to the Talking Book Center. Past donation amounts have been limited; it is also possible to link a Kroger card to TBC.

United for Libraries has other events coming up. Cass will send announcements to the board.

2) Sarah shared Strategic Planning Process Overview

A Library of Virginia consultant met with Staunton Library staff and they have lots of resources for strategic planning. Our plan expired at the end of 2021. We are currently working on a new five-year plan. Library staff will draft and present the plan to the board and likely City Council. It has been difficult to plan for five years out with all that has happened and is still happening around the pandemic. However, the staff has started the process to gather feedback on values, which Sarah sent to the Board by email earlier in the month.

Another tool is called "Planning for Library Excellence" which is a set of standards with a one to three star system covering 16 different areas. The Library Management team is looking at where Staunton Library operates based on this framework. The priority is to get library at least to one star level across the board. Some standards will never be three stars because they may not align with community needs. For example, publicity documents that are in multiple languages are not a current priority for Staunton.

The Library staff are also working on a brief community survey and using the data that has already been collected from previous City of Staunton surveys.

Now that Sarah has a full team they will focus on the Strategic plan between now and June when it is due to the Library of Virginia.

Q [Cass]: What kind of information do you expect to get from patron survey? A [Sarah]: Several premade surveys are available through the Library of Virginia that ask about resources people use, and their preferences, etc.

Joy Ingram, President-elect of the Friends was introduced to the Library Advisory Board. Sarah explained some of the history of the connection between the Friends and the Advisory board. Joy is also included on the most recent email.

Councilman Claffey mentioned that Council and city staff are available to help with publicity for the Friends and other Library events (e.g. Friends of the Library month potentially for October).

Adjournment:

Jason moved to adjourn the meeting, which concluded at 5:23 PM.

The next Library Board meeting is a special meeting scheduled for April 2, from 9-11am.
The next regular Library Board meeting is scheduled for 19 May at 4:30 PM at the library.

Respectfully submitted,
Randolph Bertin
Virginia Trovato