

Staunton Public Library
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
December 16, 2021

Call to Order, Attendance, and Presiding Officer's Remarks:

The meeting, held was called to order at 4:32 pm by Josh Howard.

Roll was called:

Board Members Present – Randolph Bertin, Virginia Trovato, Josh Howard, Cass Cannon
Others Present – Library Director Sarah Skrobis, Friends representative Kennon Bowen.
Absent – Mark Peterson

A quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes:

Josh made a motion to approve the minutes of the 21 October Meeting, which was seconded, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Talking Book Center report

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

- Purchased fundraising software and sent a fundraising appeal. Initial reports are encouraging.
- Presentation from Dan Layman of Community Foundation (investments, grants, etc).
- New initiative: patrons can request books to keep (one per month).
- Offices filled at present, but would like to develop a “backlog” of candidates.

Friends of Staunton Public Library report

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

- Annual meeting in October held, with a new slate of officers elected.
- Book sale made \$4706, but the workload was heavy so changes are likely.
- Membership levels and fees have been updated.
- Guest speaker Mary Evans Lott made some presentations.

Kennon is becoming President of the Friends so the Library Advisory Board will get a new liaison.

Director's Report

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

- Distributed about 1000 covid tests since program started. In past two days, gave out over 200 kits! VDH supply chain is experiencing some bumps and we will likely have short supply. It has been a struggle to get people to understand curbside service (many from out of the service area!). Providing test kits is on top of all other library duties.
- Curbside service is trending upward.
- Regarding material checkouts, Staunton is doing double Waynesboro, and running even with ALL Augusta branches.
- A library circulation substitute position was closed out where we didn't find a suitable candidate; plan to re-advertise in the new year.
- Have four candidates for technical services librarian. Salary is higher paying than cohorts, but it is a big job for insufficient pay.
- New computers were ordered/purchased! They should arrive in January.
- If you know anyone with a library degree who wants to relocate to Staunton, forward their name.

Additional Q&A Regarding Library Operations:

Q: None

Old Business

1) Remote meeting procedure – review of status. Official opinion is that we are a public body and must meet any FOIA requests, so it would be good to adopt a remote access policy.

Q: Randolph asked whether we have the technology to enable access? Sarah replied, “Yes.”

Randolph moved that we adopt the Member Remote Participation Policy as presented. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

New Business

1) Overview of Virginia book challenges – Challenges continue to increase around the country and around Virginia. Staunton Public Library has a policy in place to address challenges. We do receive public praise for inclusive and various titles. Sarah reviewed why electronic materials are difficult to address (“ownership vs accessibility”). Cass listened to Tuesday meeting about challenges – this doesn't appear to be grassroots, but more of an organized outside effort from “above”.

2) FY 2023 budget – Minimal changes proposed (due to lots of uncertainty). In the absence of renovation, the library is proposing to city management the acquisition of a bookmobile. This could help get books out into communities that don't have as much regular access, and could be used in conjunction with regular programs. It would help bridge community divide, provide additional services (printing, wifi, etc). Typical stop might be several hours. Josh reported that

his experience with JMRL is lots of people would time arrival with the service and get maximum usage. Lots of people lack access or expertise to access digital resources. Virginia asked whether there “is there an existing service” like this, and Sarah said that public schools have one. It was suggested that a public/private venture could be explored for financing this.

Gypsy Hill place called to request a home bound service, which, unfortunately, we don’t have the resources to provide. They plan to send an email to the library with their request, which can be forwarded to city staff. Anyone else with similar desire should be encouraged to request such a service. Josh inquired whether there is any possibility of working with our partners (Valley Libraries) on something like this. Sarah replied that it would be complicated (due to vehicle ownership, maintenance, shared use, etc.). Josh asked what vehicles exist? Sarah mentioned that Augusta has a van, but it doesn’t have a lift (ugh!). Cass asked whether volunteer could be enlisted for this kind of service, and Sarah responded that it could be explored, but there are some liability issues involved.

Randolph asked whether building repairs come out of library budget, and Sarah replied, “No, the city is responsible for building maintenance.”

Adjournment:

Virginia moved to adjourn the meeting, which concluded at 5:19 PM.

The next Library Board meeting is scheduled for 20 January at 4:30 PM at the library.

Respectfully submitted,
Randolph Bertin