

Staunton Public Library
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
February 16, 2021

Call to Order, Attendance, and Recognition of Quorum:

The meeting, held at Staunton Public Library, was called to order at 4:30 pm by Josh Howard.

Roll was called (in the form of member introductions):

Board Members Present – Randolph Bertin, Virginia Trovato, Josh Howard, Cass Cannon, Mark Peterson, Jason Clarke.

Others Present – Library Director Sarah Skrobis, Friends representative Kennon Bowen, Council Liaison Steve Claffey.

Absent – None

A quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes:

Virginia Trovato made a motion to approve the minutes of the 16 December 2021 Meeting, which was seconded. Steve Claffey offered a correction for the spelling of Dan Layman, and the corrected minutes were approved unanimously.

Talking Book Center report

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

- Supervisor position hours were increased to full time.
- The mixed funding basis of TBC was described; funding requests have gone out to various entities in the service area; the process is ongoing (most have responded).
- Work with new fundraising software continues.
- TBC is the first Virginia organization to partner with the bureau of printing and engraving to distribute a currency reader for visually impaired (a sample reader was passed around).
- Publicity for TBC being organized, Cass volunteered to assist.

Q: Do users of TBC have to be in our service area to access resources? A: Yes. TBC operates under a National Coverage model. In VA, outside designated service areas, citizens are served by Richmond.

Friends of Staunton Public Library report

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

- At the first meeting of the year, there was a great deal of enthusiasm and ideas.
- The Friends will likely join the 21st century and move its newsletter to digital format.

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

Director's Report

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

- The library returned to curbside for three weeks in January. The goal is to guarantee a minimum service level during periods of significant disruption. Staff appreciated rollback (very helpful for morale). In the first two years of the pandemic, staff reported only one case; in January we had five or six (all vaccinated). One staff member did quit on the spot. Library staff are among the lowest paid in the city even though they perform high level of work. There is also resentment growing due to minimum wage increase and people at higher levels aren't making much more.
- The Library promoted Grace Wisman from a Page position to fill the vacant Circulation Assistant Position.
- Hired a new page: Christine Anderson.
- Technology services librarian has been hired and will be starting in April.
- One position under re-advertisement. There was not an adequate pool of candidates under prior notice (person needs to be available "on call").
- New equipment: two telescopes. This acquisition was entirely citizen initiated and funded. An individual raised funds and purchased equipment for stargazing, rewired battery power, created instruction book, etc. Telescopes can be checked out on a first come first served basis (no holds). Making sure staff has understanding of equipment before beginning checkout.
- New equipment: 11 brand new computers were delivered this week, purchased with ARPA funds from Federal government. Software installation is in progress. Old computers connected to servers at City Hall, and were experiencing technical difficulties. New computers should become available in the next several weeks. All hardware is "self contained". The equipment includes touch screen monitors (most would be surprised how many patrons don't understand use of mouse and keyboard).
- Series of programs: Virtual YA groups (final program tonight!), Children's Art show downstairs, and Adult winter reading.
- No updates on Covid test kits from VA dept of health. The program has been suspended due to lack of available kits. While this was a successful venture, servicing the high demand was taking away from our ability to meet basic library services. It was suggested that Covid test kit information be removed from the library website banner.
- There is an upcoming upgrade to our computer circulation database, which will require going "offline"/shutdown for several hours. No library is satisfied with their system. In our case, the entire catalog must be re-indexed!! Searching may be spotty during transition.
- An update to the Long Range Plan is getting underway. Library staff is meeting with a consultant from the Library of Virginia. Existing community data will be used and additional community input will be acquired.

Q: Will there be an age limit for telescope check-out? A [Sarah]: An Adult library card will be required.

Q [Josh]: What can be done with regard to salary compression? A [Sarah]: replied that this is a city wide issue, not library specific, and can't be addressed directly by the library.

Q [Josh]: Has there been any update on Waynesboro library director? A [Sarah]: Position is unfilled.

Old Business

None

New Business

1) Randolph raised the issue of the Library having an unfunded, unscheduled project (originating in 2014) listed on the city of Staunton Capital Improvement Project [CIP] plan (eight million dollar est. cost). The question was asked whether the library would be more likely to have capital improvements approved if they were lower cost, independent projects. Councilman Claffey gave an overview of CIP process and agreed that "breaking up" a large project into several more manageable ones could be beneficial.

Kennon asked why Sarah not part of the CIP committee. Steve suggested talking to Phil Trayer. Cass asked whether public input is part of the CIP budget. Yes, and that process has been completed for this budget cycle.

Virginia asked whether the Bookmobile would be a capital expense. Sarah answered that she submitted a proposal as part of the regular budget process.

Josh pointed out that the 2014 study is likely out of date, and asked who would do the work of creating a capital improvement plan. Sarah stated that we would need professional help, and added that there have not been federal funds for libraries in 25 years. Kennon asked if any grants might be available, and was answered that someone would have to look into this. Jason Clark inquired about capital campaign fundraising, and Sarah explained that the Staunton Library Foundation raised significant funds for the original building renovation, and would very likely play a significant role in any future projects of a similar nature.

Adjournment:

Cass moved to adjourn the meeting, which concluded at 5:43 PM.

The next Library Board meeting is scheduled for 17 March at 4:30 PM at the library.

Respectfully submitted,
Randolph Bertin