



Central Rappahannock Regional
Library

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FOR EVERYONE IN OUR COMMUNITY

Proudly serving Fredericksburg, Stafford, Spotsylvania, and Westmoreland

LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES

June 12, 2023

4:30 p.m.

Cooper Branch

ATTENDEES

BOARD MEMBERS: Diana Risavi (Chair), Xavier Richardson (Vice Chair), Martha Hutzal (Secretary-Treasurer), Kerry Devine, Lori Hayes, Cheryl Miller, Monica Gary, and Mary Becelia

LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION: Rebecca Purdy, Chris Glover, Sean Bonney, and Erin Kenderish

Diana Risavi called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m.

Risavi announced that Mary Becelia was attending virtually from Seattle, Washington on a pre-planned family vacation and that Xavier Richardson was attending virtually from Spotsylvania, Virginia due to meeting scheduling conflicts not allowing sufficient drive time.

There was no public comment.

Martha Hutzal presented the Director's Report. Hutzal shared that the circulation of physical materials is up 36% over last quarter and the circulation of e-materials is up almost 16% over last quarter. Overall circulation also increased by more than 87,000 items from last quarter.

Hutzal shared the current budget projection for the end of FY23 with an estimated overage of \$379,774. This is in part due to the costs of the Strategic Plan and increased costs of furniture and equipment, both of which will be covered by the fund balance. There were also increased costs of computers and supplies this year, and 27 rather than 26 pay periods this fiscal year, which happens around once a decade and was an oversight when planning the FY23 budget. Almost \$200,000 of the overage is

salaries and benefits. Hutzel stated this clearly illustrates the need for the requested increases in the budget.

Lori Hayes raised a question about the fund balance and how much is in it, which is currently about \$1.8 mil. Hayes also questioned the purpose of the fund balance? Hutzel replied it is around 16% of the budget as per the recommendation of the auditors. The fund balance helps cover any late sent city and county payments or overages.

Cheryl Miller asked about IdeaSpace's budget use and where it comes from in the budget and if it was included in the overage. Hutzel provided a brief overview of IdeaSpace's budget and its users, which included the information that after this upcoming fiscal year, FY24, CRRL would be responsible for funding the space itself. There was some concern raised about the potential impact of small businesses using the space and taking advantage of the equipment. It was asked if there was a way to capture usage statistics- Hutzel suggested the potential for an after-use survey for IdeaSpace users.

Hutzel also informed the board on the updated FOIA section of the CRRL website that reflects the additional information required by the Code of Virginia changes that will go into effect on July 1.

Risavi directed the Board's attention to the next order of business and asked if there were any members wishing to pull an item from the Consent Agenda. Kerry Devine moved to approve the current Consent Agenda, and Cheryl Miller seconded. The motion was unanimous.

Old Business

Risavi asked Hutzel to present the updated FY24 Budget. Hutzel informed the board that the FY24 budget requests to the localities were cut quite significantly (except for Westmoreland). These cuts came after they were asked by Spotsylvania to reduce their request. In an effort to do so, the total budget was trimmed \$318,000. The library is entering the new fiscal year with just a 4.86% overall increase in funding from FY23 during a time of continued inflation and rising costs. Hutzel noted that the FY24 funding is *the same as their original approved funding for FY20*, despite an 18% increase in inflation from 2019 to 2023 and the funding from Spotsylvania and Stafford has actually *decreased* during that time period (Spotsylvania: by 2.56% and Stafford: by 2.22%) while Fredericksburg's allocation for CRRL has remained static. Meanwhile, increases to the general fund revenues of each of those localities between FY20 and FY23 range from 17% to 21%.

Hutzel stated since FY20, CRRL has been asked repeatedly to make do with less funding. As such, here is how she recommends proceeding in FY24:

Salaries - CRRL remains committed to providing staff with a 5% cost-of-living increase on July 1. This is significantly less than what government employees in several of our funding localities are receiving and barely surpasses the current rate of inflation (4.6%).

Benefits - The health insurance increase was much more than anticipated - 13%. In response, the health plans offered to employees were changed and there was an increase in their contributions for FY24. Unfortunately, this move affects employees' take home pay, further reducing the impact of their cost-of-living raise. All expanded benefits were removed to reduce the budget line item.

Books & Materials - CRRL's circulation, especially eMaterials, continues to increase and customer demands remain high as do the costs. Hold lists for many materials are extensive and customers are increasingly frustrated by having to wait months for a title. However, when the budget request was reduced, there was a cut to the requested increase to Books & Materials to \$80,000 (a \$20,000 reduction).

Despite the adjustments mentioned above, the FY24 budget expenditures outstrip the expected revenue. Every line item has been examined thoroughly and staff have made several additional operational adjustments.

- There are several frozen full-time vacancies
- No longer filling one "seat" on the customer services desk at Fredericksburg, Howell, Porter, Salem Church, so that department at those branches will operate with less staff
- At the Fredericksburg branch the computer lab was moved into a more visible and open space so that there is no longer a need to have an employee monitor that space and there will be resulting salary savings there as well
- Reduced hours in the 3 localities that did not fully fund the budget requests - Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania, and Stafford. The suggested service reductions will be equal to the percentage of cuts from each of the 3 localities.
 - This would mean closing Fredericksburg and Salem Church each 4 hours per week and Porter 3 hours per week for a total annual savings of \$181,000.
 - Branches are staffed by customer demand, Fredericksburg Branch offers public services across 5 floors and also houses the Virginiana collection as well as the Law library, so its staffing picture is similar to Salem Church. The result is a similar cost-savings since both localities reduced our funding requests by 6%.
 - Stafford's cost savings is less because they funded the request at a higher level, with a cut of 4%.

There were questions raised about Spotsylvania Towne Centre and Snow and if they could be closed at all for money recoupment. Hayes and Gary suggested that there should be a special meeting. There was talk of keeping COLA as the priority, and also untying the closing requirements until localities can figure this out. Hutzler reminded the board that there needs to be a vote on the budget tonight. Risavi suggested 4 separate budget motions, tying each vote to how much money each locality would need to

provide to avoid closures- there was hesitation on backing locality boards into corners with approved dollar amounts.

Kerry Devine moved to approve the FY24 Budget. Cheryl Miller seconded the motion, which was approved 5 to 2.

Xavier Richardson moved to approve closing of the Fredericksburg Branch Tuesday mornings 9:00-1:00 to recoup underfunding throughout the year, unless the \$72,000 is funded. Cheryl Miller seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

There was brief discussion of “Robert’s Rules of Order” and one of the board members stated, “If my vote is yes, then it’s to be able to bring it up at the next meeting”

Xavier Richardson moved to approve closing of the Salem Church Branch Thursday mornings 9:00-1:00 to recoup underfunding throughout the year, unless the \$78,000 is funded. Lori Hayes seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. Hayes reiterated that there needs to be people's usage of the branches counted on potential closings of Spotsylvania Towne Centre or Snow instead of Salem Church. Hutzel and Purdy reminded Hayes that this would potentially need to be a full day at the smaller branches, and full time positions would still be paid, which wouldn’t recoup the funding.

Lori Hayes moved to approve closing of the Porter Branch on Wednesday evenings 5:00-8:00 to recoup underfunding throughout the year, unless the \$32,000 is funded. Kerry Devine seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Ravisi announced the adoption of these motions.

Hutzel presented on Board Meeting recording methods. Hutzel researched whether other library systems in Virginia recorded their meetings and learned that 15 systems do not record either audio or video; 7 systems record audio only, including Loudoun and Prince William, some for the minutes only with a few posting them to their websites; 6 systems do both audio and video including Jefferson-Madison Regional, Richmond and Falls Church Library Systems. This is a reflection of a little less than a third of the systems contacted. Gary suggested focusing on audio recordings. Hayes floated the idea of only having the meetings at a regular place to accommodate technology needs. Gary commented that video recording isn’t conducive to peace keeping or transparency. Other board members were not in favor of recording

Monica Gary motioned to defer staff drafting a proposed recordings bylaw that was to be presented at the September meeting to be discussed at the December meeting instead. Kerry Devine seconded, which was approved 6 to 1.

Rivasi asked for any updates in the library agreements. There was no voting at this time, only discussion. Westmoreland County will not discuss any updates unless 2 seats on the board for the county were included. Devine stated that Fredericksburg’s discussion was a nonstarter and didn’t feel a need to change anything. Spotsylvania wanted the localities to have a say in funding- grants and donations would

be subtracted from the county's funding which disincentivized the library seeking out grants and having control over how budget cuts would be implemented (i.e. hours). Gary would like for the county administrators to look at the library agreement again for a potential new draft of the library agreements, and will potentially look at starting this in the new year.

New Business

Rivasi welcomed discussion on Board Member Alternates, with a vote planned in September at the next meeting. Hayes would like to see alternates, especially for board members (not necessarily a surrogate to the board member), to make sure there is still representation in all of the meetings. Devine pointed out that alternates aren't included in the bylaws, and wanted to know if this would also include alternates for the citizen members or just elected officials. Gary pointed out the need for alternates in regard to personal life moments that are unavoidable for board members. Hutzel commented that the only system in the state that has alternates is Jefferson-Madison Regional Library because it is written into their library agreement/bylaws. Rivasi pointed out that this was a membership provision, and would have to be added to the MOU to be discussed, but the localities could make an amendment to the agreement possibly.

Xavier Richardson and Mary Becelia left the meeting before adjournment at 6:35 p.m.

Rivasi welcomed discussion on the number of annual Board meetings. Voting is planned for the upcoming meeting in December. There was favorable discussion on the addition of more meetings. Devine asked about the legality of adding more meetings, and Ravasi clarified that there would have to be a bylaw added, and also the process to add/amend bylaws. Hayes spoke in favor of extra meetings, and also work sessions.

Rivasi welcomed discussion on a potential addition of Board Member comment periods to each Board meeting. Ravasi would like to have it be a point of the agenda, nested with the public comment section. After public comment, board members would be able to make comments as well.

Hutzel directed the Board's attention to the FY25 Budget Goals and invited the Board to reach out with any questions. The proposed FY25 budget will be presented at the September meeting.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for September 11, 2023, at 4:30 p.m. at the Porter branch.

Lori Hayes moved to adjourn the meeting. Monica Gary seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 p.m.