



Central Rappahannock Regional  
**Library**  
INSPIRING LIFELONG LEARNING

# Library Trustee Manual



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# Library Board

The email group [library.board@crrl.org](mailto:library.board@crrl.org) includes all Library Board members plus Martha Hutzel as Secretary-Treasurer, Rebecca Purdy as Deputy Director, and Laura Baxter-Christopher as Executive Assistant.

	Jurisdiction and Term	Phone/Email
<b>Kerry Devine</b> 800 Mercer Street Fredericksburg, VA 22401	Fredericksburg Term 1: Feb. 2019 - Feb. 2023 Term 2: Feb. 2023- Feb. 2027	(540) 809-9762 kerry.devine@crrl.org
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## Library Contacts

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# Library Board By-Laws

- A. Pursuant to the requirements of the general Code of Virginia, the Library Board of the Central Rappahannock Regional Library shall consist of the number of members designated by the library agreement and not less than 5. They shall be appointed by the governing body, in accordance with State Code, with reference to their fitness for such office. All members shall be appointed for terms of four years. Vacancies shall be filled for unexpired terms as soon as possible in the manner in which members of the Board are regularly chosen. A member shall not receive a salary or other compensation for services as a member, but necessary expenses actually incurred may be paid from the library fund.
- B. Quarterly meetings shall be held on the second Monday of the third month of the quarter at such time and place as agreed to by the members.
- C. Special meetings may be held at any time at the call of the Chair or Secretary or at the call of any five members of the Board including at least one representative from each participating jurisdiction, provided that notice thereof be given to all members at least twenty-four hours in advance of the special meeting.
- D. A quorum at any meeting shall consist of one representative from each participating jurisdiction.
- E. The officers of the Board shall be a Chair, Vice Chair, and a Secretary-Treasurer. The term of office for the Chair and Vice Chair shall be for one year. They shall be elected at the first regular meeting in each fiscal year and shall remain in office until their successors are elected and qualified. The elected officers should be citizen representatives and every effort will be made to rotate the position throughout the jurisdictions. The Director shall serve as Secretary to the Library Board and pursuant to §42.1-41 the Director shall be designated as Treasurer of the Library Board.
- F. The duties of all officers shall be such as by custom and law devolve upon such officers in accordance with their names. The Chair shall be, ex officio, a member of any committee.
- G. The order of business at all regular meetings of the Board shall be as follows:
  - Call to Order
  - Public Comment
  - Director's Report
  - Consent Agenda
  - Old Business
  - New Business
  - Adjournment
- H. Robert's Rules of Order shall govern in the parliamentary procedure of the Board.
- I. The Director shall be the executive director of the policies adopted by the Board. Among her/his duties and responsibilities shall be the direction and supervision of all staff members in the performance of their duties, the submission to the Board of the regular

reports and recommendations of such policies and procedures as in the opinion of said Director will promote the efficiency of the library in its service to the people of the community.

- J. Amendments to these rules may be proposed at any regular meeting but may become effective only after a favorable vote at a regular meeting. Any of the foregoing rules may be temporarily suspended by a unanimous vote of all the members present at any meeting and the vote on such suspensions shall be taken by yeas and nays and entered in the official record.
- K. Individual Board members may participate in meetings of the Library Board by electronic communication as permitted by § 2.2-3708.3 This policy shall apply strictly and uniformly, without exception, to all members and without regard to the identity of the member requesting remote participation or the matters that will be considered or voted on at the meeting.
- Whenever an individual member wishes to participate from a remote location, the law requires a quorum of the Library Board to be physically assembled at the primary or central meeting location, and there must be arrangements for the voice of the remote participant to be heard by all persons at the meeting location.
  - A member who is unable to attend the meeting and wishes to participate in the meeting electronically must notify the Chair and the Secretary of the Library Board on or before the day of the meeting and include one of the following reasons:
    1. The member has a temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition that prevents the members physical attendance;
    2. A medical condition of a member of the member's family requires the member to provide care that prevents the member's physical attendance;
    3. The member's principal residence is more than 60 miles from the meeting location identified in the required notice of such meeting; or
    4. The member is unable to attend the meeting due to a personal matter and identifies with specificity the nature of the personal matter. However, the member may not use remote participation due to personal matters more than two meetings per calendar year.
  - Unless a member of the Library Board objects to the remote participation at the beginning of the meeting, it shall be deemed approved without action by the Board. If a member's participation from a remote location is challenged, then the Library Board shall vote whether to allow such participation. The Board may disapprove the remote participation, but only if it would violate FOIA or this policy. If the Board votes to disapprove the request, the disapproval must be recorded in the minutes with specificity.
  - For any approved requests, the reason that the member is unable to attend the meeting (numbers 1 through 4 above) and a general description of the remote location from which the member participates shall be recorded in the meeting minutes. If the reason for the electronic participation is due to a personal matter, the nature of the personal matter must be identified with specificity in the minutes.

L. This policy is adopted pursuant to the authorization of Va. Code § 2.2-3708.3 and is to strictly construed in conformance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (VFOIA), Va. Code §§ 2.2-3700—3715. This policy shall not govern an electronic meeting conducted to address a state of emergency declared by the Governor or the Board of Supervisors. Any meeting conducted by electronic communication means under such circumstances shall be governed by the provisions of Va. Code § 2.2-3708.2.

- Definitions:
  - “Board” means the Central Rappahannock Regional Library Board of Trustees or any committee, subcommittee, or other entity of the Library Board of Trustees.
  - “Member” means any member of the [BOARD].
  - “All-virtual public meeting”, means a public meeting conducted by the [BOARD] using electronic communication means during which all members of the public body who participate do so remotely rather than being assembled in one physical location, and to which public access is provided through electronic communication means, as defined by Va. Code § 2.2-3701.
  - “Meeting” means a meeting as defined by Va. Code § 2.2-3701.
  - “Notify” or “notifies,” for purposes of this policy, means written notice, including, but not limited to, email or letter, but does not include text messages or messages exchanged on social media.
- An all-virtual public meeting may be held under the following circumstances:
  - It is impracticable or unsafe to assemble a quorum of the Library Board in a single location, but a state of emergency has not been declared by the Governor or Board of Supervisors; or
  - Other circumstances warrant the holding of an all-virtual public meeting, including, but not limited to, the convenience of an all-virtual meeting; and
  - The Library Board has not had more than two all-virtual public meetings, or more than 25 percent of its meetings rounded up to the next whole number, whichever is greater, during the calendar year; and
  - The Library Board’s last meeting was not an all-virtual public meeting.
- The Library Board may schedule its all-virtual public meetings at the same time and using the same procedures used by the Library Board to set its meetings calendar for the calendar year; or if the Library wishes to have an all-virtual public meeting on a date not scheduled in advance on its meetings calendar, and an all-virtual public meeting is authorized under Section 3 above, the Library Board Chair may schedule an all-virtual public meeting provided that any such meeting comports with VFOIA notice requirements.
- The following applies to any all-virtual public meeting of the Library Board that is scheduled in conformance with this Policy:
  - The meeting notice indicates that the public meeting will be all-virtual and the Library Board will not change the method by which the Library Board chooses to meet without providing a new meeting notice that comports with VFOIA;

- Public access is provided by electronic communication means that allows the public to hear all participating members of the Library Board;
- Audio-visual technology, if available, is used to allow the public to see the members of the Library Board;
- A phone number, email address, or other live contact information is provided to the public to alert the Library Board if electronic transmission of the meeting fails for the public, and if such transmission fails, the Library Board takes a recess until public access is restored;
- A copy of the proposed agenda and all agenda packets (unless exempt) are made available to the public electronically at the same time such materials are provided to the Library Board;
- The public is afforded the opportunity to comment through electronic means, including written comments, at meetings where public comment is customarily received; and
- There are no more than two members of the Library Board together in one physical location.
- Minutes are taken as required by VFOIA and must include the fact that the meeting was held by electronic communication means and the type of electronic communication means used.
- If the Board goes into closed session, transmission of the meeting will be suspended until the public body resumes to certify the closed meeting in open session.
- This Policy shall be applied strictly and uniformly, without exception, to the entire membership, and without regard to the matters that will be considered or voted on at the meeting.



# General Duties

The Central Rappahannock Regional Library Board of Trustees is designated as a governing board by the Library of Virginia and the Board is responsible for all governance policies both internal and external. The Library Director is responsible for all operational policies that detail the specifics of day-to-day operations.

## GENERAL DUTIES OF THE LIBRARY BOARD

1. To secure adequate funds.
2. To hire a highly qualified and dynamic Library Director.
3. To determine library policies.
4. To adopt, seek support of, and monitor the library budget.
5. To work actively for the improvement of all libraries by supporting library legislation in the state and nation.
6. To become familiar with state and national library standards.
7. To attend Board meetings regularly.
8. To support the library's service program in their daily contacts with the public at large.

## GENERAL DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR

1. To administer the library.
2. To be technical advisor to the Board.
3. To hire and supervise library staff.
4. To direct the activities of the staff.
5. To prepare the budget in consultation with the Board.
6. To administer funds and keep financial records of the library.
7. To select and purchase books, library materials and supplies.
8. To prepare and release all library publicity.
9. To stimulate growth of library services and activities.
10. To keep the Board informed about changes in library legislation.
11. To attend Library Board meetings.

# Areas for Board Support

- **Staff and Salaries**

A dedicated, highly trained and fairly compensated staff is essential for the provision of quality public service, outstanding customer service and the presentation of quality, educational classes and events for all ages. However, past reductions to the CRRL budget have reduced staffing to the minimum level of [state standards](#), and greatly impacted the ability to give staff adequate raises. In the past 5 years (FY20-FY24), CRRL employees have received an average increase of just 3.0%. By comparison, local government employees of Stafford, Spotsylvania, and Fredericksburg had average increases of 4.6%, 3.64%, 4.03% respectively. In FY20, CRRL's overall local operating budget was reduced by \$200,000; it was further reduced by just over \$600,000 in FY21 causing a total local budget deficit of 6.52% across those 2 years. To manage other existing costs, CRRL had to reduce the salary line item by more than \$750,000. In response, the library conducted a thorough evaluation of current staffing models and then adopted a minimal staffing model, balancing the salary budget while ensuring CRRL still provided outstanding customer service to our communities. Additionally, like many organizations, CRRL has experienced tremendous turnover since 2020 with staff leaving the system to retire, stay-at-home or pursue new careers and opportunities. This resulted in more vacancies than could be filled at one time with limited staff to conduct the hiring process and resulted in a seemingly never-ending cycle of hiring and training that leveled off at the end of 2022. While CRRL is now successfully staffed to a minimal level, additional positions are needed in order to serve customers in their communities, such as through mobile library services. Additionally, attendance at children's Grow a Reader classes (storytimes) that for ideal learning conditions would have attendance no higher than 30, at some locations now see over 100 attendees. This is unique to CRRL as libraries in Virginia and throughout the nation have seen a concerted drop in program attendance and is a testament to how much the community values CRRL. Offering fair and competitive salaries and expanding our positions to allow for additional outreach to our communities is a priority for the coming years.

- **Adequate Collections**

The inability to purchase more materials has contributed to slowdowns of circulation at library branches and longer hold lists for digital items. Since the 2020 census, the population of CRRL's service area has grown by 3.3%. After

years of cuts to local funding, the library's collection has been unable to keep pace with the population growth, especially when the demand for digital is factored in.

The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic drove demand up for digital versions of library materials such as audiobooks, ebooks, and streaming video, while demand for print materials continues as well. Library customers have now come to expect that their public library will provide both physical and digital copies of popular items. These digital copies are more expensive than their physical counterparts and often require repurchasing after a certain time period or number of checkouts, further stretching the limited collections budget. Due to the higher price, the Library cannot maintain its typical print ratio of 1 copy to every 4 holds, and popular titles on our primary eMaterials platform frequently exceed a 1:13 copy-to-holds ratio.

In order to address these needs, it is CRRL's goal to increase the collection to a minimum of 15% of the total budget devoted to collection development; the materials budget is currently 8.2% of CRRL's total operating budget.

- **Branch Development**

CRRL currently operates 10 library locations throughout the region with the most recent branch (Spotsylvania Towne Centre) opening in 2018 and IdeaSpace in 2020. By 2050, the population of CRRL's service area is expected to increase nearly 50%. In order to meet the demands for services that will come with increased population, the library is working with local jurisdictions to plan for future locations. CRRL previously identified the Massaponax and Livingston/Lake Anna areas of Spotsylvania and the Courthouse area in Stafford as locations for the next branches. In the meantime, CRRL is reaching these communities in innovative ways that bridge gaps in service until new branches are built. There are two satellite branches in Spotsylvania, one in the Berkeley district and one in Livingston. CRRL also operates a youth services Library on the Go programming van that visits communities in the City of Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania, and Stafford with limited access to physical branches due to economic factors. CRRL will launch a second Library on the Go vehicle in Westmoreland County in late 2024; this van will visit community partners in more rural areas of the county to bring library services to residents who are unable to visit library branches due to distance or other factors. Library Administration Center provides book storage to allow for optimal use of high value real estate in all of our branches for material delivery to customers.

- **Technology**

It is imperative that CRRL make available innovative technologies so that every member of the community has access to global information resources and unique technological experiences to promote employment, cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities, thus providing for an open exchange of ideas and an equal access to information. For area residents who don't have computers or high-speed internet access, CRRL provides computers, printers, copiers and wireless access to apply for jobs, file taxes, complete homework, access local government services, and for a variety of other tasks where technology is required. Maker Labs, including 3D printing and other cutting edge technologies, are vital to today's workforce development and the development of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) skills. CRRL's eMaterials collection, which was launched more than twenty years ago, is seeing increased demand as eBooks and eReaders continue to increase dramatically in popularity. In addition to the library's current offerings of streaming audio and video, and eMagazines, CRRL is always exploring new delivery systems for making digital media available to the public, as well as monitoring the use and demand for these collections.

# Conflict of Interest Policy

**Adopted by the Board of Trustees on August 14, 2017**

## **ARTICLE I**

### **Introduction**

The Board of Trustees affirms that the Board members and officers of Central Rappahannock Regional Library (CRRL) have an obligation to exercise their authority and to carry out the duties of their respective positions for the benefit of CRRL and not their own private benefit. Board and committee members (for committees with voting authority) and key employees (to be collectively known as the individual) should avoid placing themselves in positions in which their personal interests are, or may be, or may be perceived to be, in conflict with the interests of CRRL. Where a potential conflict of interest exists, it shall be the responsibility of the person involved or any other person with knowledge, to notify the Board of Trustees of the circumstances resulting in the potential conflict so that the Board of Trustees can provide such guidance and take such action as it shall deem appropriate.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **Definitions of Areas of Potential Conflict**

Areas that could potentially be conflicts of interest include the following:

1. Financial Interests. An interested person, as defined by the IRS, has a "financial interest" if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:
  - a) An ownership or investment interest more than 35% in any business, firm, or entity with which CRRL has a transaction or arrangement;
  - b) A compensation arrangement with CRRL or with any entity or individual with which CRRL has a transaction or arrangement.
  - c) A potential ownership or investment interest in more than 35%, or compensation arrangement with, any business, firm, entity, or individual with which CRRL is negotiating a business, financial, or compensation arrangement (specifically including but not limited to the purchase or sale of any property or any property right or interest).
  - d) Representation of CRRL by the interested person in any transaction or activity in which the individual, directly or indirectly, has a material financial interest more than 35%.
  - e) Any other circumstance in which the interested person may financially profit, directly or indirectly, from any action or decision by CRRL in which he or she participates, or of which he or she has any knowledge.

### 2. Inside Information

Disclosure or use by the individual of confidential information about CRRL, its activities or intentions, for the personal profit or advantage of the individual or any person.

"Confidential Information" means any information and data relating to CRRL which is confidential or proprietary information of CRRL, including but not limited to: financial statements, tax returns; member, customer and supplier lists; personnel data; management and strategic reports; and other reports, summaries, analyses, compilations, and studies of or containing such information and data. Confidential Information does not mean and will not include any information or data relating to CRRL which: (a) now is or hereafter becomes generally available to the public other than as a result of disclosure by the individual, or (b) hereafter is disclosed to the individual by a source other than CRRL, without violation of any law or confidentiality obligation to a third party."

### 3. Gifts, Loans, and Favors.

Acceptance of gifts, loans, or favors from a firm or individual which does or seeks to do business with, or is a competitor of CRRL under circumstances which imply reasonably that such action is intended to influence the individual in the performance of his or her duties.

### 4. Other Influence

Actions which arise out of the circumstances of the individual that may be perceived as attempting to influence business or other decisions of CRRL that will, or may appear to, directly or indirectly, benefit the individual.

## **ARTICLE III Procedures**

An individual with an actual or potential conflict of interest must disclose the existence of the actual or potential conflict of interest to the Board of Trustees, together with all material facts related to the actual or potential conflict of interest. After disclosure of the actual or potential conflict of interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, the interested person shall leave the Board meeting and recuse himself or herself from any discussion involving conflict of interest and from any vote of whether there is a conflict of interest. The determination of whether a conflict of interest exists shall be made by the Board of Trustees or the Executive Committee. If an officer or trustee of CRRL becomes aware that a transaction or decision in which a conflict may exist is being discussed or is planned for the future, he or she shall make known to the Board of Trustees the facts of his or her relationship to the transaction before CRRL initiates any action with regard to the transaction.

## **ARTICLE IV Review of Potential or Actual Conflict**

The Library Director shall review initially and annually all transactions that may arise or do exist between CRRL and individuals with actual or potential conflicts of interest. The Director shall transmit her recommendations concerning the appropriateness of any such transactions

to the full Board of Trustees, which shall determine whether or not to proceed with such transaction.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **Disclosure**

Upon adoption of this Conflict of Interest Policy, all officers and Board members shall complete a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form prior to their further participation in the affairs of CRRL. Subsequently appointed Board members shall complete a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form prior to their first participation in the affairs of CRRL. Disclosure Forms shall be updated annually, or sooner, if changed circumstances require disclosure.

In addition, persons subject to this policy are expected to update the Disclosure Form at any time during the year that the information requested on the form changes. Disclosures should be submitted to the Director, who will be the Conflict of Interest Officer, and will administer this policy. Actual or potential conflicts of a material nature shall be reported to the Director of CRRL.

# Budget Information

The current [library budget](#) can be found on our website [librarypoint.org](http://librarypoint.org).



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# What Does a Trustee Do?

## Know

- the mission and needs of the library in relation to the community
- library services and resources available
- information needs and interests of the community
- services and the role of the Library of Virginia
- library trends, standards, and developments
- local government structure, people, and operation
- how to work effectively in a group
- your duties and responsibilities as a Board member
- your fellow Board members

## Attend

- Board and committee meetings
- conferences of the Virginia Library Association
- Library of Virginia Trustee Workshops

## Approve

- governing policies of the library
- annual budget request

## Support

- your library and library Director
- goals and objectives
- future growth and priorities
- the community and citizens you represent
- library legislation

## Act

- to secure adequate and stable funding for the library
- to promote your library in the community
- to make yourself, the Board, and the library viable to the community
- to develop good personal relations with representatives of government

## Remember

- The Library Board acts only as a whole unless it specifically authorizes you to act on behalf of the library.
- The Board does not run the operations of the library.

*Excerpted from the Virginia Public Library Trustee Handbook, Library of Virginia*

# Relationship between the Library Board and the Director

It is critical to the progress of the library that the Board and Director work together toward common goals in a climate that fosters a free and open exchange of viewpoints. The expectations, roles, and responsibilities of each should be clearly delineated and understood.

When hiring a new Director in accordance with the library's written personnel policies, there is generally an initial evaluation period that allows the Board and the Director time to develop a working relationship. During this time either party may reconsider the arrangement.

1. Hire with enthusiasm after an appropriate search.
2. Before hiring, be clear about your expectations of the Director and your goals for the library.
3. Reveal any areas of concern.

The relationship between the Library Board and the Director will flourish if the Board follows these guidelines:

1. Support the Director (new or continuing) in pursuit of goals and objectives.
2. Handle problems as they arise while sticking to the goal of excellence in library management.
3. Provide mutual support in the differing roles of the Board and the Director.
4. Treat the Director as a team member and leader of the library, a participant in decision making and the professional advisor and resource.
5. Expect adequate reporting from the Director.
6. Encourage the Director to be involved in professional activities and ensure financial support for this participation.
7. Support the Director in his or her position as administrator and stay out of the day-to-day operation of the library. Encourage the Director to feel free to talk with the Board members about issues and concerns.
8. Promote the library in the community, including praise for the Director. Introduce the Director and aim for visibility for the Board, Director, and library.
9. Encourage the Director to be knowledgeable about trends in library services and to implement where appropriate.
10. Maintain a professional relationship with the Director. Pass on the good that trustees hear about their libraries and share the successes.
11. Pay the Director a competitive and progressive salary.

*Excerpted from the Virginia Public Library Trustee Handbook, Library of Virginia*

# Golden Rules for Board Members

Leave the actual management of the library to the library Director. It is the library Director's responsibility to employ the staff, and supervise day-to-day operations.

1. After a policy or rule is adopted by a majority vote of the Library Board, do not criticize or re-voice your opposition publicly.
2. Respect confidential information. Do not divulge information regarding future Board actions or plans until such action is officially taken.
3. Observe publicity and information policies of the Board and library. Do not give information individually but refer requests to the library Director to interpret policies.
4. Treat staff members and library Director in an objective manner. Under no circumstances listen to grievances of staff members or treat individual problems on your own. The library Director is in charge of the staff and has administrative control up to the point where a grievance is presented to the Library Board as a whole.
5. All instruction to the library Director must be approved by a quorum of the Board at a regular meeting. Even the Chair should abide by this rule.
6. Do not hold Board meetings without the library Director.
7. Complaints from the public are the library Director's responsibility. Continued dissatisfaction and problems should be taken up at a Board meeting only if policy revision is necessary or legal ramifications are involved.
8. Assume your full responsibility as a Board member. If you are unable to attend meetings regularly and complete work delegated to you, resign so that an active member can be appointed.

*Excerpted from the Virginia Public Library Trustee Handbook, Library of Virginia*

# Board Self-Evaluation

Successful board teams pay attention to the process of how they operate. Just as they evaluate the progress of their library, they must also assess the operation of the board team and determine how they can do the job better.

**It's up to the Library Board to hold itself accountable for good performance.** To do that correctly, our Board should take the time every year to formally evaluate Board performance. The purpose of the evaluation is not to find fault with Board members or the full Board, but to examine strengths and weaknesses. The formal self-evaluation should be followed with a plan to improve Board performance.

## **Does our Board prepare to do its job by:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. conducting a thorough orientation for all new Board members?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2. integrating new members into the team as quickly as possible? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3. participating in continuing education?                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 4. performing an annual self-evaluation of Board operations?     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 5. touring facilities on an occasional basis?                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

## **Does our Board ensure good meetings by:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. limiting most meetings to two hours or less?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2. providing a comfortable meeting room conducive to business?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3. convening and adjourning on time?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 4. having the Board chairperson lead the meetings?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 5. sticking to the prepared agenda?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 6. ensuring the Board has enough information to make decisions?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 7. working for consensus on issues?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 8. discussing issues cordially, avoiding personal attack?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 9. following a business-like system of parliamentary rules?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 10. including the director as a resource for all deliberations?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 11. confining all discussion to policy issues and avoiding management issues?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 12. allowing/encouraging all Board members to participate in discussion and not letting one or two persons dominate? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

**Do individual Board members:**

1. attend at least 75% of all Board meetings and committee meetings to which they're assigned? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No
2. come to meetings prepared? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No
3. come to meetings on time? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No
4. feel free to express even dissenting viewpoints? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No
5. see themselves as part of a team effort? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No
6. act as advocates for the library? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No
7. know their responsibility as Board members of the library? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No
8. attempt to exercise authority only during official meetings of the Board? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No
9. represent the broad interest of the library and all constituents, not special interests? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No
10. understand that the most effective way to govern is to delegate management to the Director? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

In which of the major categories above does our Board show real strengths? In which of the major categories above does our Board need improvement?

*Excerpted from the Virginia Public Library Trustee Handbook, Library of Virginia*

# Email: Use, Access & Retention

The use of email in the business place has become routine and is a preferred mode of communication. For state and local government officials and employees, the application of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) relating to access to records and the Virginia Public Records Act (the PRA) relating to the retention of records comes into play.

Government officials and employees frequently ask two key questions about the use of email-**"Can the public and media access my email under FOIA?"** and **"Do I have to save my email?"**

This document will attempt to answer these questions and provide guidance about the use and management of email by state and local governments.

## **The nature of email**

Email generally refers to any communication that requires an electronic device for storage and/or transmission.<sup>1</sup> Email is a medium for correspondence -- essentially, email is the "envelope" for the communication. For purposes of FOIA & the PRA, e-mail provides a medium for communication, much like a telephone or the U.S. Mail provides a means of communication. The fact that a communication is sent via e-mail is not alone conclusive of whether that email must be accessible to the public under FOIA or retained pursuant to the PRA; one must look at the text and substance of the communication to determine whether it is indeed a public record.

## **The Virginia Freedom of Information Act**

FOIA addresses access to public records. Section 2.2-3701 of the Code of Virginia defines public records for purposes of FOIA to include "all writings and recordings that consist of letters, words or numbers, or their equivalent, set down by handwriting, typewriting, printing, photostating, photography, magnetic impulse, optical or magneto-optical form, mechanical or electronic recording or other form of data compilation, however stored, regardless of physical form or characteristics, prepared or owned by, or in the possession of a public body or its officers, employees or agents in the transaction of public business."

Clearly an email would fall under this broad definition of a public record, because it applies to all writings and recordings...set down by...mechanical or electronic recording...however stored, regardless of physical form or characteristics. As noted above, e-mail is just the medium, or the envelope, used to convey the communication. Just as a letter sent via U.S. Mail from one public official to another concerning public business would be a public record under FOIA, so would that same communication sent via email.

FOIA requires that unless subject to a statutory exemption, all public records must be open to inspection and copying. Therefore, an email relating to public business would be

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<sup>1</sup> Library of Virginia, Electronic Records Guidelines (effective June 10, 2002).

accessible just like any other public record, and may be withheld from public disclosure only if a particular exemption applies to the content of the email.

### **The Virginia Public Records Act**

While FOIA governs access to records held by state and local government, the PRA governs how long a government entity must retain certain records. The PRA defines "public record" for purposes of records retention, and like FOIA, the definition is fairly broad and would include email as a public record. Section 42.1-77 defines a public record to include recorded information that documents a transaction or activity by or with any public officer, agency or employee of the state government or its political subdivisions. Regardless of physical form or characteristic, the recorded information is a public record if it is produced, collected, received or retained in pursuance of law or in connection with the transaction of public business.

The PRA sets forth different retention schedules for different types of records. Several factors shape how long a record needs to be held. Many records are only kept for so long as business requires them to be kept, although if a record has historical significance or is created by an agency head or director, it may need to be kept longer. For example, certain records are required to be maintained permanently, such as records from standing committees of the General Assembly, annual reports of state agencies, and correspondence of agency directors. Other records need only be kept so long as they are administratively necessary, such as reminders of events like blood drives or fund raisers, courtesy copies of correspondence, or messages received from a listserv. Along the continuum, other records may be required to be retained for 30 days to ten years, depending on their content. After the retention time has expired for a particular document, then that record may be destroyed pursuant to the guidelines set forth by the Library of Virginia.<sup>2</sup>

In providing guidance for adhering to the PRA, the Library of Virginia notes that email should be treated the same as paper correspondence. Again, email is only the medium, or the envelope, by which the correspondence is sent; the retention schedule for a particular email will depend on its content and should be preserved the same as its paper equivalent. Both incoming and outgoing email should be retained, along with any attachments sent via email.

### **Tips for using and managing e-mail**

All e-mails related to public business are subject to the provisions of FOIA and the PRA, and should be managed in the same manner as all other public records.

There is a tendency with e-mail to hit the delete button as soon as you are finished with a particular message. However, consideration must be given to whether that particular email

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<sup>2</sup> PRA is administered by the Library of Virginia. For more details on retention schedules for particular types of records or for a particular agency, or for information regarding the proper disposal of records, please contact the Library of Virginia. Records retention information and contact information is also available on the Library's website at <http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwedo/records/index.htm>.



must be retained for purposes of the PRA -- you can't automatically delete your email, just as you can't automatically throw away paper correspondence and records.

FOIA governs access to records. The PRA dictates how long you are required to keep certain records. If a government entity keeps an email (or any other record) for longer than its retention schedule requires, that email will still be subject to FOIA if requested. Conversely, if a government entity properly disposes of a record pursuant to a retention schedule, and a subsequent FOIA request is made for that record, FOIA does not require the government entity to recreate the record.

Email is often used as a substitute for a telephone call, and is quite informal. However, email creates a record of that communication that must be retained pursuant to the PRA and will be available upon request to the public under FOIA. Consider the consequence of choice to use email instead of the telephone -- it may not be in your best interest to be as informal on email as you are on the telephone.

The Library of Virginia discourages the practice of maintaining permanent records solely in electronic format, without a paper or microfilm backup.<sup>3</sup> For records that do not need to be maintained permanently, these emails can be printed out and stored in a traditional, paper file (and the electronic copy can be deleted) or electronic folders can be created on the computer to organize emails based on functions, subjects or activities. The Library of Virginia suggests that these folders are assigned to your home directory on the computer, and not on the network. By way of example, at the FOIA Council we print a copy of all of the FOIA questions that we receive via email, along with our corresponding response, and file the paper copy in a chronological file. After we have printed a copy to retain for our records, we delete the email off of the computer.

Public officials and employees should not commingle personal and official emails. Private e-mails do not need to be retained; e-mails relating to the transaction of public business do. From an email management perspective, it is probably not a good idea to mix personal and official business in the same email. Official emails that need to be retained should be maintained with other public records that relate to the same content.

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<sup>3</sup> Library of Virginia, Electronic Records Guidelines (effective June 10, 2002).

# Access to Public Meetings under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act

## I. STATUTORY GUIDANCE

The Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is largely a procedural act, and the provisions relating to meetings set forth the procedures that a public body must follow in conducting an open meeting and convening in a closed meeting. This outline breaks down the procedural requirements, such as what is required in posting a notice and certifying a closed meeting, and provides practical advice for conducting meetings that comply with FOIA. Appendix A sets forth in detail the requirements for making a motion to convene a closed meeting. Appendix B describes commonly used meeting exemptions of general applicability.

## II. OPEN MEETINGS GENERALLY

### **WHAT IS A MEETING UNDER FOIA?**

A “meeting” is defined as “meetings including work sessions, when sitting physically, or through telephonic or video equipment pursuant to §2.2-3708.2, as a body or entity, or as an informal assemblage of (i) **as many as three members** or (ii) a quorum, if less than three, of the constituent membership, wherever held, with or without minutes being taken, whether or not votes are cast, of any public body” **where the business of the public body is being discussed or transacted.** (Emphasis added.)<sup>4</sup>

### **WHAT IS NOT A MEETING UNDER FOIA?**

1. The gathering of employees of a public body;
2. The gathering or attendance of two or more members of a public body at any place or function where no part of the purpose of such gathering or attendance is the discussion or transaction of any public business, the gathering or attendance was not called or prearranged with any purpose of discussing or transacting any business of the public body, **and** the public business is not discussed; or
3. The gathering or attendance of two or more members of a public body at a public forum, candidate appearance, or debate, the purpose of which is to inform the electorate and not to transact public business or to hold discussions relating to the transaction of public business, even though the performance of the members individually or collectively in the conduct of public business may be a topic of

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<sup>4</sup> Statutory reference: § 2.2-3701. FOIA Council Opinions AO-4-00, AO-20-01, AO-40-01, AO-46-01, AO-02-02, AO-06-02, AO-13-03, AO-15-04, AO-20-04, AO-11-05, AO-02-06, AO-10-07, AO-12-08, AO-03-09, AO-05-11, AO-07-14.

discussion or debate at such public meeting.<sup>5</sup>

### ***MAY A PUBLIC BODY CONDUCT A MEETING BY CONFERENCE CALL OR OTHER ELECTRONIC METHOD?***

Maybe. Prior to July 1, 2007, no **local** governing body or any other type of local public body was permitted to conduct a meeting through telephonic, video, electronic or other communication means where the members are not physically assembled to discuss or transact public business. However, **state** public bodies may conduct such meetings under specified circumstances. Since July 1, 2007, all public bodies (state, local and regional) may also allow participation by their members via teleconference or other electronic means under certain limited circumstances.<sup>6</sup>

### ***IF IT IS A MEETING, WHAT DOES FOIA REQUIRE?***

If it is a meeting under FOIA, the law requires that:

1. Notice of the meeting be given;
2. The meeting must be open to the public; **and**
3. Minutes of the meeting must be taken and preserved.<sup>7</sup>

### ***WHAT IS SUFFICIENT NOTICE?***

Notice must contain the **date, time, and location** of the meeting.

### ***WHERE TO POST THE NOTICE?***

As of July 1, 2017, FOIA requires that all public bodies post notices in three locations:

1. On its official public government website, if any;
2. In a prominent public location at which notices are regularly posted; and
3. At the office of the clerk of the public body or, in the case of a public body that has no clerk, at the office of the chief administrator.

State public bodies must also post notice on a central, publicly available electronic calendar maintained by the Commonwealth. Publication of meeting notices by electronic means by other public bodies shall be encouraged.<sup>8</sup>

### ***WHO ELSE IS ENTITLED TO NOTICE OF MEETINGS?***

Any person who annually files a written request for notification with a public body is entitled to receive direct notification of all meetings of that public body. If the person requesting notice does not object, the public body may provide the notice electronically. The request for notice shall include the requester's name, address,

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<sup>5</sup> Statutory references: §§ 2.2-3701. FOIA Council Opinions AO-4-00, AO-10-00, AO-46-01, AO-02-02, AO-13-03, AO-12-04, AO-12-08, AO-05-11, AO-07-14.

<sup>6</sup> Statutory reference: § 2.2-3708.2 (formerly §§ 2.2-3708 and 2.2-3708.1). FOIA Advisory Opinions AO-1-01, AO-16-02, AO-21-04, AO-12-08, AO-07-09.

<sup>7</sup> Statutory references: §§ 2.2-3700, 2.2-3707. FOIA Council Opinions AO-40-01, AO-06-02, AO-17-02, AO-13-03, AO-15-04.

<sup>8</sup> Statutory reference: § 2.2-3707(C). FOIA Council Opinions AO-18-01, AO-43-01, AO-08-07, AO-03-09.

zip code, daytime telephone number, electronic mail address, if available, and organization, if any.<sup>9</sup>

### **WHEN TO POST THE NOTICE?**

For **regular meetings**: The notice must be posted **at least three working days prior to the meeting**.

For **special, emergency, or continued meetings**: Notice, reasonable under the circumstance, of special, emergency, or continued meetings must be given at the same time as the notice provided members of the public body conducting the meeting. FOIA defines an emergency as "an unforeseen circumstance rendering the notice required by FOIA impossible or impracticable and which circumstance requires immediate action."<sup>10</sup>

### **MAY THE PUBLIC OR MEDIA RECORD THE MEETING?**

Yes. Any person may photograph, film, record, or otherwise reproduce any portion of a meeting required to be open.<sup>11</sup>

### **MAY A PUBLIC BODY RESTRICT THE USE OF RECORDING DEVICES?**

Yes. The public body conducting the meeting may adopt rules governing the placement and use of equipment necessary for broadcasting, photographing, filming, or recording a meeting to prevent interference with the proceedings. However, public bodies are not permitted to conduct meetings required to be open in any building or facility where such recording devices are prohibited.<sup>12</sup>

### **WHEN MUST AGENDA MATERIALS BE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC/MEDIA?**

At least one copy of the proposed agenda and all agenda packets and, unless exempt, all materials furnished to members of a public body for a meeting shall be made available for public inspection at the same time such documents are furnished to the members of the public body. The proposed agendas for meetings of state public bodies where at least one member has been appointed by the Governor shall state whether or not public comment will be received at the meeting and, if so, the approximate point during the meeting when public comment will be received.<sup>13</sup>

### **ARE THERE ANY EXCEPTIONS FOR TAKING MINUTES?**

Yes. Minutes are required to be taken only at open meetings; minutes are not required to be taken during closed meetings. Minutes are also not required to be taken at deliberations of:

1. Standing and other committees of the General Assembly;
2. Legislative interim study commissions and committees, including the Virginia Code Commission;

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<sup>9</sup> Statutory reference: § 2.2-3707(E). FOIA Council Opinions AO-3-01, AO-13-03, AO-23-03, AO-08-07.

<sup>10</sup> Statutory references: §§ 2.2-3701, 2.2-3707(C),(D). FOIA Council Opinions AO-13-00, AO-3-01, AO-18-01, AO-06-02, AO-08-07.

<sup>11</sup> Statutory reference: § 2.2-3707(G). FOIA Council Opinions AO-03-03, AO-10-05.

<sup>12</sup> Statutory reference: § 2.2-3707(G). FOIA Council Opinions AO-03-03, AO-10-05.

<sup>13</sup> Statutory reference: § 2.2-3707(F). FOIA Council Opinions AO-3-01, AO-35-01, AO-23-03, AO-05-12.

3. Study committees or commissions appointed by the Governor; or
4. Study commissions or study committees, or any other committees or subcommittees appointed by the governing body or school board of a county, city or town, except where the membership of the commission, committee or subcommittee includes a majority of the members of the governing body.<sup>14</sup>

***WHAT DO MINUTES HAVE TO LOOK LIKE?***

Minutes are required (except as noted above) of all open meetings, and must include: the date, time, and location of the meeting; the members of the public body present and absent; a summary of matters discussed; and a record of any votes taken. In addition, motions to enter into a closed meeting and certification after a closed meeting must be recorded in the minutes.<sup>15</sup>

***ARE MINUTES PUBLIC RECORDS UNDER FOIA?***

Yes. Minutes, including draft minutes, and all other records of open meetings, including audio or audio/visual recordings, are public records and must be released upon request.<sup>16</sup>

***IS THERE AN AFFIRMATIVE OBLIGATION TO POST MINUTES?***

Yes, but **only for state agencies in the executive branch.**

All boards, commissions, councils, and other public bodies created in the executive branch of state government and subject to FOIA must post minutes of their meetings on their official public government website and on a central electronic calendar maintained by the Commonwealth. Draft minutes of meetings must be posted as soon as possible but no later than 10 working days after the conclusion of the meeting. Final approved meeting minutes must be posted within three working days of final approval of the minutes.<sup>17</sup>

***MUST ALL VOTES OF A PUBLIC BODY TAKE PLACE IN AN OPEN MEETING?***

Yes. Any and all votes taken to authorize the transaction of any public business must be taken and recorded in an open meeting. A public body may not vote by secret or written ballot.<sup>18</sup>

***IS IT A FOIA VIOLATION TO POLL MEMBERS OF A PUBLIC BODY?***

No. Nothing in FOIA prohibits separately contacting the membership, or any part thereof, of any public body for the purpose of ascertaining a member's position with respect to the transaction of public business. Such contact may be done in person,

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<sup>14</sup> Statutory reference: § 2.2-3707(H). FOIA Council Opinion AO-08-07.

<sup>15</sup> 12 Statutory references: §§ 2.2-3707(H), 2.2-3712(A),(D). FOIA Council Opinions AO-25-04, AO-01-06, AO-05-15.

<sup>16</sup> Statutory reference: § 2.2-3707(H). FOIA Council Opinions AO-13-03, AO-25-04.

<sup>17</sup> Statutory reference: § 2.2-3707.1.

<sup>18</sup> Statutory reference: § 2.2-3710(A). FOIA Council Opinions AO-9-00, AO-15-02, AO-01-03, AO-13-03, AO-01-05, AO-05-09, AO-07-09, AO-02-17.

by telephone, or by electronic communication, provided the contact is done on a basis that does not constitute a meeting as defined in FOIA.<sup>19</sup>

### **III. CLOSED MEETING PROCEDURES**

#### ***WHAT DOES A PUBLIC BODY HAVE TO DO TO CLOSE A MEETING?***

In order to conduct a closed meeting, the public body must take an affirmative recorded vote in an open meeting approving a motion that:

1. Identifies the subject matter for the closed meeting;
2. States the purpose of the closed meeting; **and**
3. Makes specific reference to the applicable exemption from the open meeting requirements.

The motion must be set forth in detail in the minutes of the open meeting.

**A general reference to the provisions of FOIA, the authorized exemptions from open meeting requirements, or the subject matter of the closed meeting is not sufficient to satisfy the requirements for holding a closed meeting.**<sup>20</sup>

#### ***WHAT MAY BE DISCUSSED DURING A CLOSED MEETING?***

A public body holding a closed meeting must restrict its discussions during the closed meeting to those matters **specifically exempted** from the provisions of FOIA and **identified in the motion.**<sup>21</sup>

#### ***AT THE END OF A CLOSED MEETING, WHAT DOES THE PUBLIC BODY HAVE TO DO?***

At the conclusion of any closed meeting, the public body holding the meeting must immediately reconvene in an open meeting and take a roll call or other recorded vote certifying that to the best of each member's knowledge:

1. Only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under this chapter, **and**
2. Only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the meeting by the public body.

The vote must be included in the minutes of the open meeting.

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<sup>19</sup> 16 Statutory reference: § 2.2-3710(B). FOIA Council Opinions AO-08-02, AO-15-02, AO-01-03, AO-07-09.

<sup>20</sup> Statutory reference: § 2.2-3712(A). FOIA Council Opinions AO-8-00, AO-19-00, AO-14-01, AO-38-01, AO-45-01, AO-08-02, AO-17-02, AO-02-04, AO-24-04, AO-01-05, AO-06-07, AO-13-07, AO-04-08, AO-13-09, AO-03-13, AO-02-16, AO-03-17.

<sup>21</sup> Statutory reference: § 2.2-3712(C). FOIA Council Opinions AO-8-00, AO-13-07, AO-13-09, AO-02-16.

Any member of the public body who believes that there was a departure from the requirements of (1) or (2) above must state so prior to the vote and indicate the substance of the departure that, in his judgment, has taken place. This statement must also be recorded in the minutes of the open meeting.<sup>22</sup>

### **WHEN DO DECISIONS MADE IN A CLOSED MEETING BECOME OFFICIAL ACTIONS OF THE PUBLIC BODY?**

Decisions become official when the public body reconvenes in an open meeting, reasonably identifies the substance of the decision, and takes a recorded vote on the resolution, ordinance, rule, contract, regulation, or motion agreed to in the closed meeting. Otherwise, no resolution, ordinance, rule, contract, regulation, or motion adopted, passed, or agreed to in the closed meeting is effective.

Public officers improperly selected due to the failure of the public body to comply with the other provisions of § 2.2-3711 will become de facto officers and, as such, their official actions are valid until they obtain notice of the legal defect in their election.<sup>23</sup>

### **CAN THERE BE A CLOSED MEETING WITHOUT FIRST HAVING AN OPEN MEETING?**

No. A closed meeting can take place only within the context of an open meeting, even if the closed meeting is the only agenda item. A closed meeting motion must be made and voted upon in an open meeting. After the conclusion of the closed meeting, the members of the public body must reconvene in an open meeting to vote to certify that they restricted their discussion during the closed meeting to those matters specifically exempted from the provisions of FOIA and identified in the motion. Because votes must be taken at open meetings, public bodies must convene in open meeting both before and after any closed meeting.<sup>24</sup>

## **APPENDIX A**

### **How To Make A Motion To Convene A Closed Meeting**

#### **The Requirements**

Section 2.2-3712(A) states that *[n]o closed meeting shall be held unless the public body proposing to convene such meeting has taken an affirmative recorded vote in an open meeting approving a motion that **(i) identifies the subject matter, (ii) states the purpose of the meeting and (iii) makes specific reference to the applicable exemption from open meeting requirements.*** (Emphasis added.)

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<sup>22</sup>Statutory references: § 2.2-3712(D),(E). FOIA Council Opinions AO-8-00, AO-17-02, AO-02-04, AO-06-07, AO-04-08, AO-02-16, AO-03-17.

<sup>23</sup> Statutory references: §§ 2.2-3711(B),(C), 2.2-3712(H). FOIA Council Opinions AO-23-01, AO-38-01, AO-15-02, AO-01-03, AO-13-03, AO-24-04, AO-01-05, AO-13-09.

<sup>24</sup> FOIA Council Opinions AO-02-04, AO-06-07, AO-08-07, AO-13-09, AO-02-10.

FOIA Council opinions have held that a motion that lacks any of these three elements is insufficient under the law and would constitute a procedural violation.<sup>25</sup> Here's a step-by-step look at how to put together a motion that meets all three requirements:

**1. Identify the subject matter:**

- The identification of the subject goes beyond a general reference to the exemption, and provides the public with information as to specifically why the closed meeting will be held. The subject matter describes the particular fact, scenario, or circumstances that will be discussed by the public body during the closed meeting.
- The specificity required for identification of the subject must be determined on a case-by-case basis. It involves balancing FOIA's policy of affording citizens every opportunity to witness the operations of government with the need of the public body to hold certain discussions in private. The identification of the subject need not be so specific as to defeat the reason for holding a closed meeting in the first place.
- Examples of identification of the subject: discussion of candidates for the appointment of a new city manager; discussion of the appropriate disciplinary action to take against a high school student for violation of school policy; discussion of probable litigation relating to highway construction.<sup>26</sup>

**2. State the purpose:**

- The purpose refers to the general, statutorily allowed meeting exemptions set forth at § 2.2-3711(A). Section 2.2-3711(A) states that *public bodies may only hold closed meetings for the following purposes* (emphasis added) and then sets forth the exemptions.
- Examples of purposes: personnel matters; student admissions or discipline; consultation with legal counsel.

**3. Make specific reference to the applicable exemption:**

- All of the meetings exemptions can be found at § 2.2-3711(A). It is not enough to cite this general Code provision, because § 2.2-3711(A) includes 44 different exemptions. Instead, the citation must be as specific as possible.
- Examples of specific Code references: § 2.2-3711(A)(1); § 2.2-3711(A)(2); § 2.2-3711(A)(7).

**Putting It All Together**

Based upon the analysis above, here are three examples of motions to go into closed session that satisfy the minimum requirements of § 2.2-2712(A). It is always appropriate to include more information, and any motion should be tailored with additional facts describing the particular scenario being addressed by the public body.

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<sup>25</sup> FOIA Advisory Opinions AO-14-01, AO-38-01, AO-45-01, AO-08-02, AO-24-04, AO-01-05, AO-06-07, AO-04-08, AO-13-09, AO-02-10, AO-03-13, AO-02-16.

<sup>26</sup>Example of probable litigation taken from FOIA Advisory Opinion AO-14-01.



1. I move that (insert name of public body) convene in closed session to discuss the candidates being considered for the appointment of a new city manager pursuant to the personnel exemption at § 2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Code of Virginia.
2. I move that (insert name of public body) convene in closed session to discuss the appropriate disciplinary action to take against an individual high school student for violation of school policy pursuant to the scholastic exemption at § 2.2-3711(A)(2) of the Code of Virginia.
3. I move that (insert name of public body) convene in closed session to meet with legal counsel about probable litigation relating to highway construction pursuant to the consultation with legal counsel exemption at § 2.2-3711(A)(7) of the Code of Virginia.

Remember, the appropriateness of any given motion is fact-based, and no “fill-in-the-blank” model motion will work in all situations. When drafting a motion, go down the checklist and ensure that you have included all three elements. Keep in mind the balancing required to keep citizens informed of the workings of a public body while maintaining the integrity of the closed session. Please do not hesitate to contact the FOIA Council to discuss these requirements or the sufficiency of a specific motion.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Meeting Exemptions Of General Applicability**

As of July 2011, FOIA contains more than 40 open meeting exemptions. Although many of these exemptions apply to specific agencies or to very content-specific discussions, there are several open meeting exemptions of general applicability that may be used by virtually all public bodies. The open meeting exemptions of general applicability are listed below, with the corresponding statutory citation, as a reference tool.

**§ 2.2-3711(A)(1): Personnel.** Provides an exemption for:

Discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body; and evaluation of performance of departments or schools of public institutions of higher education where such evaluation will necessarily involve discussion of the performance of specific individuals. Any teacher shall be permitted to be present during a closed meeting in which there is a discussion or consideration of a disciplinary matter that involves the teacher and some student and the student involved in the matter is present, provided the teacher makes a written request to be present to the presiding officer of the appropriate board. Nothing in this subdivision, however, shall be construed to authorize a closed meeting by a local governing body or an elected school board to discuss compensation matters that affect the membership of such body or board collectively.

**§ 2.2-3711(A)(2): Students.** Provides an exemption for:

Discussion or consideration of admission or disciplinary matters or any other matters that would involve the disclosure of information contained in a scholastic

record concerning any student of any public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth or any state school system. However, any such student, legal counsel and, if the student is a minor, the student's parents or legal guardians shall be permitted to be present during the taking of testimony or presentation of evidence at a closed meeting, if such student, parents, or guardians so request in writing and such request is submitted to the presiding officer of the appropriate board.

**§ 2.2-3711(A)(3): Acquisition & disposition of property.** Provides an exemption for: Discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body.

**§ 2.2-3711(A)(4): Privacy.** Provides an exemption for: The protection of the privacy of individuals in personal matters not related to public business.

**§ 2.2-3711(A)(5): Prospective business.** Provides an exemption for: Discussion concerning a prospective business or industry or the expansion of an existing business or industry where no previous announcement has been made of the business' or industry's interest in locating or expanding its facilities in the community.

**§ 2.2-3711(A)(6): Investment of public funds.** Provides an exemption for: Discussion or consideration of the investment of public funds where competition or bargaining is involved, where, if made public initially, the financial interest of the governmental unit would be adversely affected.

**§ 2.2-3711(A)(7): Legal advice or briefings regarding actual or probable litigation.** Provides an exemption for: Consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body. For the purposes of this subdivision, "probable litigation" means litigation that has been specifically threatened or on which the public body or its legal counsel has a reasonable basis to believe will be commenced by or against a known party. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to permit the closure of a meeting merely because an attorney representing the public body is in attendance or is consulted on a matter.

**§ 2.2-3711(A)(8): Legal advice regarding specific legal matters.** Provides an exemption for: Consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to permit the closure of a meeting merely because an attorney representing the public body is in attendance or is consulted on a matter.

**§ 2.2-3711(A)(12): Tests & exams.** Provides an exemption for:

Discussion or consideration of tests, examinations, or other records excluded from this chapter pursuant to subdivision 4 of § 2.2-3705.1.

**§ 2.2-3711(A)(16): Medical.** Provides an exemption for:

Discussion or consideration of medical and mental health records excluded from this chapter pursuant to subdivision 1 of § 2.2-3705.5.

**§ 2.2-3711(A)(19): Public safety.** Provides an exemption for:

Discussion of plans to protect public safety as it relates to terrorist activity or specific cybersecurity threats or vulnerabilities and briefings by staff members, legal counsel, or law-enforcement or emergency service officials concerning actions taken to respond to such matters or a related threat to public safety; discussion of information subject to the exclusion in subdivision 2 or 14 of § 2.2-3705.2, where discussion in an open meeting would jeopardize the safety of any person or the security of any facility, building, structure, information technology system, or software program; or discussion of reports or plans related to the security of any governmental facility, building or structure, or the safety of persons using such facility, building or structure.

**§ 2.2-3711(A)(29). Contracts.** Provides an exemption for:

Discussion of the award of a public contract involving the expenditure of public funds, including interviews of bidders or offerors, and discussion of the terms or scope of such contract, where discussion in an open session would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body.

**§ 2.2-3711(A)(39). Economic development.** Provides an exemption for:

Discussion or consideration of information subject to the exclusion in subdivision 3 of §2.2-3705.6 related to economic development.

*Last updated July 2018*

# Electronic Meetings under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act

## FOIA - Electronic Meetings Guide VIRGINIA FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

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## ELECTRONIC MEETINGS UNDER THE VIRGINIA FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

### I. Introduction

Prior to September 1, 2022, the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) concerning electronic meetings<sup>27</sup> were found in § 2.2-3708.2 of the Code of Virginia. As of September 1, 2022, the FOIA provisions concerning electronic meetings are found in § 2.2-3708.2 and new § 2.2-3708.3. These two Code sections separate electronic meetings into two general categories:

1. Electronic meetings held other than during a declared state of emergency, which includes both remote participation by individual members and all-virtual public meetings (in new § 2.2-3708.3); and
2. Electronic meetings held during a declared state of emergency (in § 2.2-3708.2).

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<sup>27</sup> The phrase "electronic meeting" is used herein to refer to all types of meetings conducted using electronic communications, but it is not a defined term under FOIA.

Note that electronic meetings held during a declared state of emergency are also addressed in the State Budget.<sup>28</sup> The procedures for holding electronic meetings under a declared state of emergency as of September 1, 2022, are substantively identical to the same procedures prior to September 1, 2022. However, the procedures for individual members using remote participation are similar but not identical to the equivalent provisions prior to September 1, 2022. Specifically, the provisions that allow remote participation by individual members of public bodies are largely the same regarding participation due to personal matters, a member's medical condition or disability, or the need to provide medical care for a family member. However, the provision allowing remote participation for a member whose principal residence is 60 miles or more from the meeting location, which was previously available only to regional public bodies, may be used by all public bodies as of September 1, 2022. The procedures for all-virtual public meetings are new. Unless otherwise specified, this guide is written to correspond to the law effective as of September 1, 2022.

**Note:** Annual report and public comment form no longer required

As of September 1, 2022, there is no equivalent to the provisions of former subsection D of § 2.2- 3708.2, which allowed certain electronic meetings to be conducted by state-level public bodies. That subsection included the requirement for public bodies to report their experiences with electronic meetings to the FOIA Council and to make available to the public a public comment form so that members of the public could comment regarding their experiences with electronic meetings. The annual report and availability of the public comment form are no longer required as of September 1, 2022.

**Note:** Public participation and public comment

Former subsection E of § 2.2-3708.2 provided that "[n]othing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the use of interactive audio or video means to expand public participation." As amended effective September 1, 2022, subsection A of § 2.2-3708.3 explicitly encourages public bodies to

1. Provide public access, both in person and through electronic communication means, to public meetings; and
2. Provide avenues for public comment at public meetings when public comment is customarily received, which may include public comments made in person or by electronic communication means or other methods.

If members of a public body are physically assembled at one location but wish to allow members of the public to listen or provide comment electronically, there are no restrictions on doing so. In other words, the heightened procedural requirements that apply to members of the public body do not apply to the public or other persons such as employees and guest presenters. Public bodies may use electronic means to increase public access even if no members are participating electronically (such as by broadcasting via radio or television or online even when a meeting is held entirely in person). The

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<sup>28</sup> State Budget Item 4-0.01 (g) (originally added to address the COVID-19 pandemic); 2020 Session Acts of Assembly, c. 1289; 2020 Special Session I Acts of Assembly, c. 56; 2021 Special Session I Acts of Assembly, c. 552; 2022 Special Session I Acts of Assembly, c. 2.

specific requirements and limitations on electronic participation described in this guide apply only to the members of the public body holding a public meeting.

**Note:** Member participation and monitoring meetings electronically

So long as all of the appropriate procedural requirements are met, a member participating in a meeting using electronic communication may participate in discussions, make motions, vote, join in closed meetings, and otherwise participate fully as if such member was physically present. If the procedural requirements are not met, however, then the member may only monitor the meeting (i.e., listen or watch, depending on the technology used) and cannot otherwise participate.

If a member is monitoring a meeting but not participating, as a matter of best practices, it is suggested that the chair of the public body make a statement to inform the public and the other members, such as:

"Please observe that [member name] could not attend today's meeting, but is [listening/watching] the meeting [by speakerphone, videoconference, or whatever electronic communication means is being utilized]. However, [member name] is only monitoring the meeting. [He/she] is not counted as present and cannot make motions, vote, or otherwise participate."

**Definitions (§ 2.2-3701)**

The definitions included below are specifically relevant to meetings conducted using electronic communications, but keep in mind that the other definitions in § 2.2-3701 also apply to electronic meetings as appropriate.

The definition of "electronic communication" was amended in 2018<sup>29</sup> and subsequently is applicable to all of the types of electronic participation allowed under §§ 2.2-3708.2 and 2.2- 3708.3:

"Electronic communication" means the use of technology having electrical, digital, magnetic, wireless, optical, electromagnetic, or similar capabilities to transmit or receive information.

This definition is meant to be broad enough to include all of the different types of technology that might be used for electronic communication, whether audio-only (such as telephone or radio technology), visual-only (such as text messaging or email), or both (such as television and many online virtual meeting platforms).

The following two definitions are effective as of September 1, 2022.<sup>30</sup> These definitions distinguish between meetings where a public body has assembled a quorum in one physical location but one or more members is participating by electronic communication and meetings where there is no quorum physically assembled in one location and all of the members are participating using electronic communication:

"All-virtual public meeting" means a public meeting (i) conducted by a public body, other than those excepted pursuant to subsection C of § 2.2-3708.3, using

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<sup>29</sup> 2018 Acts of Assembly, c. 54

<sup>30</sup> 2022 Acts of Assembly, c. 597.

electronic communication means, (ii) during which all members of the public body who participate do so remotely rather than being assembled in one physical location, and (iii) to which public access is provided through electronic communication means.

"Remote participation" means participation by an individual member of a public body by electronic communication means in a public meeting where a quorum of the public body is otherwise physically assembled.

The procedural requirements and limitations applicable to the various types of electronic meetings are described in the rest of this guide.

Please do not hesitate to contact the FOIA Council with any questions you may have concerning the requirements for conducting meetings using electronic communications.

**Toll-Free Telephone: 1-866-448-4100**

**Email: [foiacouncil@dls.virginia.gov](mailto:foiacouncil@dls.virginia.gov)**

## **II. Remote participation and all-virtual public meetings (§ 2.2-3708.3)**

### **A. Policy requirement**

Subsection D of § 2.2-3708.3 requires that public bodies adopt a participation policy before using the provisions for remote participation or all-virtual public meetings. Note that no policy is required for meetings conducted under § 2.2-3708.2 during a declared state of emergency. This policy requirement is similar but not identical to the policy requirement in former subsection C of § 2.2-3708.2 prior to September 1, 2022—public bodies that adopted policies prior to that date may need to adopt new versions of their policies to stay in compliance! The public body must adopt the policy by recorded vote at a public meeting and the policy must "be applied strictly and uniformly, without exception, to the entire membership and without regard to the identity of the member requesting remote participation or the matters that will be considered or voted on at the meeting." The policy must also do the following:

1. Describe the circumstances under which an all-virtual public meeting and remote participation will be allowed and the process the public body will use for making requests to use remote participation, approving or denying such requests, and creating a record of such requests; and
2. Fix the number of times remote participation for personal matters or all-virtual public meetings can be used per calendar year, not to exceed the limitations set forth in subdivisions B 4 and C 9.

The public body may set forth more restrictive limitations regarding the circumstances under which remote participation is allowed than the statutory limits set forth in FOIA, but it may not expand such participation beyond those statutory limits. The referenced subdivisions B 4 and C 9 of § 2.2-3708.3 set out the numerical limitation on remote participation due to personal matters and all-virtual public meetings, respectively, both of which are limited to two meetings per calendar year or 25 percent of the meetings held per calendar year rounded up to the next whole number, whichever is greater. Additionally, an all-virtual public meeting may not be held consecutively with another all-virtual public meeting.

**Note:** Count participation separately for different types of meetings and for meetings of different public bodies

First, note that the limits on remote participation due to personal matters are separate from the limits on all-virtual public meetings and should be counted separately. For example, if an individual member had already reached his limit on participation due to personal matters, but the public body scheduled an all-virtual public meeting, the member could still participate in the all virtual public meeting because these numerical limits are counted separately for the different types of electronic meetings. Public bodies may set lower numerical limits on such meetings by policy, but they may not exceed the statutory limits of two meetings per calendar year or 25 percent of the meetings held per calendar year rounded up to the next whole number, whichever is greater. Note also that these statutory numerical limits apply only to remote participation due to personal matters and to all-virtual public meetings, not to other types of remote participation allowed under FOIA. In other words, members can use the other types of remote participation (due to medical condition or disability, providing medical care for a family member, or due to the distance of the member's principal residence from the meeting location) an unlimited number of times, unless the public body chooses to adopt a policy that places a numerical limit on those types of remote participation.

Second, public bodies may also adopt such a participation policy on behalf of any committee, subcommittee, or other entity that it creates. Keep in mind that such committees, subcommittees, and other entities are public bodies in their own right as defined in § 2.2-3701.5<sup>31</sup> Because they are separate public bodies, meetings of such committees, subcommittees, and other entities are counted separately from meetings of the public body that created them when determining whether a member has reached the numerical limit for remote participation due to personal matters and whether the limit regarding all-virtual public meetings has been reached (both regarding number and consecutive meetings). For example, if a member had reached the limit on participation due to personal matters in meetings of the main public body, he could still participate remotely due to personal matters in meetings of any committee, subcommittee, or other entity on which he serves (presuming he has not reached the limit for that committee, subcommittee, or other entity as well). Note again that public bodies may also set lower numerical limits on such meetings of their committees, subcommittees, or other entities, just as they can for the main public body, but they may not exceed the statutory limits.

**Note:** Public bodies may adopt a policy on electronic participation and members may use it at the same public meeting

If a member wishes to participate remotely but the public body has not yet adopted a policy on doing so prior to the meeting, it is still an option. So long as a quorum of the public body is assembled physically in one location first, that quorum may vote to adopt a participation policy as required by law during the public meeting. Then, after the policy has been adopted, the public body may allow the other member(s) to participate remotely for the rest of the meeting.

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<sup>31</sup> The definition of "public body" includes, among other entities, "any committee, subcommittee, or other entity however designated, of the public body created to perform delegated functions of the public body or to advise the public body."



### Sample policy language

In order to facilitate compliance with this requirement, the FOIA Council has prepared sample language that public bodies may use in crafting their own policies. This sample language is based on the language of the statute itself and includes both the basic policy statement and the limitations set forth in the law.

#### *Sample language:*

It is the policy of [the public body] that individual [public body] members may participate in meetings of [the public body] by electronic communication as permitted by § 2.2-3708.3 of the Code of Virginia. [If the public body wishes to add any additional limitations on the circumstances under which members may participate by electronic communications, include them here.] This policy shall apply to the entire membership and without regard to the identity of the member requesting remote participation or the matters that will be considered or voted on at the meeting.

Whenever an individual member wishes to participate from a remote location, the law requires a quorum of [the public body] to be physically assembled at the primary or central meeting location.

When such individual participation is due to a personal matter, such participation is limited by law to two meetings per calendar year or 25 percent of the meetings held per calendar year rounded up to the next whole number, whichever is greater. [If the public body wishes to add any additional limitations on such remote participation, include them here.] Further, it is the policy of [the public body] that [the public body] may hold all virtual public meetings pursuant to subsection C of § 2.2-3708.3. Such all-virtual public meetings are also limited by law to two meetings per calendar year or 25 percent of the meetings held per calendar year rounded up to the next whole number, whichever is greater. Additionally, an all-virtual public meeting may not be held consecutively with another all-virtual public meeting. [If the public body wishes to add any additional limitations on such all-virtual public meetings, include them here.]

Policy must include processes on making requests, approving or denying requests, and recording requests

As part of the policy requirement, each public body must adopt three processes: one for making requests to use remote participation, one for approving or denying such requests, and one for creating a record of such requests. There are several possible mechanisms a public body might use; so long as the processes adopted do not violate the express provisions of § 2.2-3708.3, each public body may choose whichever processes it prefers. As an example, a public body might adopt a policy as follows:

- That the member notifies staff to make the request and staff then notifies the chair (since the chair must be notified of requests for remote participation, but as a practical matter, most public bodies rely on staff to make the technical arrangements for members to participate remotely);
- That approval is automatic unless a member's participation would violate FOIA, and, if such participation is challenged, then the matter would be put to a vote; and
- That the request is recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

*Sample language:*

Requests for remote participation or that [the public body] conduct an all-virtual public meeting shall be conveyed to ["staff" or "the clerk or chief administrator for the public body"] who shall then relay such requests to the chair of the public body.

Individual participation from a remote location shall be approved unless such participation would violate this policy or the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (§ 2.2-3700 et seq. of the Code of Virginia). If a member's participation from a remote location is challenged, then [the public body] shall vote whether to allow such participation.

The request for remote participation or that [the public body] conduct an all-virtual public meeting shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. If [the public body] votes to disapprove of the member's participation because such participation would violate this policy, such disapproval shall be recorded in the minutes with specificity. The minutes shall include other information as required by §§ 2.2-3707 and 2.2-3708.3 depending on the type of remote participation or all-virtual public meeting.

Additional limitations and other provisions are optional

Additional policy provisions may be included as each public body sees fit, so long as they do not violate the express provisions of FOIA. It is up to each public body to decide for itself whether to adopt any such additional policy provisions.

**B. Remote participation by individual members of public bodies**

When a meeting is scheduled to be held in person, there are four circumstances set out in subsection B of § 2.2-3708.3 where individual members of a public body may participate from a remote location instead of participating in person. In order to use these provisions, the public body must first adopt a policy on electronic participation as described above and the member must notify the chair of the public body of one of the following four reasons for remote participation:

1. The member has a temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition that prevents the member's physical attendance;
2. A medical condition of a member of the member's family requires the member to provide care that prevents the member's physical attendance;
3. The member's principal residence is more than 60 miles from the meeting location identified in the required notice for such meeting; or
4. The member is unable to attend the meeting due to a personal matter and identifies with specificity the nature of the personal matter. However, the member may not use remote participation due to personal matters more than two meetings per calendar year or 25 percent of the meetings held per calendar year rounded up to the next whole number, whichever is greater.

**Reminder:** As stated previously, the limitation to two meetings per calendar year or 25 percent of the meetings held per calendar year does not apply to the first three types of remote participation (member's disability or medical condition, need to provide medical

care for a family member, or principal residence distance from the meeting location), it only applies when the member participates remotely due to a personal matter.

#### Minutes requirements

- If an individual member remotely participates in a meeting, a general description of the remote location must be included in the minutes (it does not need to be an exact address— for example, the minutes might read that "[Member] participated from his home in [locality]" or that "[Member] participated from her office in [locality]."). The remote location does not have to be open to the public.
- If a member remotely participates due to a (i) temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition that prevented the member's physical attendance or (ii) family member's medical condition that required the member to provide care for such family member, thereby preventing the member's physical attendance, that fact must be included in the minutes. While the fact that a disability or medical condition prevents the member's physical attendance must be recorded in the minutes, it is not required to identify the specific disability or medical condition.
- If a member remotely participates because the member's principal residence is more than 60 miles from the meeting location, the minutes must include that fact.
- If a member remotely participates due to a personal matter, the minutes must include the specific nature of the personal matter cited by the member.
- As stated above, if remote participation by a member is disapproved because it would violate the participation policy adopted by the public body, such disapproval must be recorded in the minutes with specificity. Note that even if remote participation is disapproved, the member may continue to monitor the meeting from the remote location but may not participate and may not be counted as present at the meeting.

#### Examples of disability or medical condition that prevents physical attendance:

- Temporary hospitalization or confinement to home;
- Contagious illness; or
- Any temporary or permanent physical disability that physically prevents travel to the meeting location.

#### Examples of personal matters that may prevent physical attendance:

- Flat tire or other mechanical failure on the way to the meeting;
- Traffic congestion or stoppage;
- Personal, family, or business emergency;
- Blizzard, flood, or other severe weather conditions that prevent travel to the meeting location;
- Business trip;
- Family trip; or
- Scheduling conflict

### **C. All-virtual public meetings**

The provisions for all-virtual public meetings under subsection C of § 2.2-3708.3 may be used by all public bodies except "local governing bodies, local school boards, planning

commissions, architectural review boards, zoning appeals boards, and boards with the authority to deny, revoke, or suspend a professional or occupational license." In order to do so, a public body must comply with the other meetings requirements of FOIA, must adopt a policy as previously described, and must comply with the following 10 additional statutory requirements:

1. An indication of whether the meeting will be an in-person or all-virtual public meeting is included in the required meeting notice along with a statement notifying the public that the method by which a public body chooses to meet shall not be changed unless the public body provides a new meeting notice in accordance with the provisions of § 2.2-3707;
2. Public access to the all-virtual public meeting is provided via electronic communication means;
3. The electronic communication means used allows the public to hear all members of the public body participating in the all-virtual public meeting and, when audio-visual technology is available, to see the members of the public body as well;
4. A phone number or other live contact information is provided to alert the public body if the audio or video transmission of the meeting provided by the public body fails, the public body monitors such designated means of communication during the meeting, and the public body takes a recess until public access is restored if the transmission fails for the public;
5. A copy of the proposed agenda and all agenda packets and, unless exempt, all materials furnished to members of a public body for a meeting is made available to the public in electronic format at the same time that such materials are provided to members of the public body;
6. The public is afforded the opportunity to comment through electronic means, including by way of written comments, at those public meetings when public comment is customarily received;
7. No more than two members of the public body are together in any one remote location unless that remote location is open to the public to physically access it;
8. If a closed session is held during an all-virtual public meeting, transmission of the meeting to the public resumes before the public body votes to certify the closed meeting as required by subsection D of § 2.2-3712;
9. The public body does not convene an all-virtual public meeting (i) more than two times per calendar year or 25 percent of the meetings held per calendar year rounded up to the next whole number, whichever is greater, or (ii) consecutively with another all-virtual public meeting; and
10. Minutes of all-virtual public meetings held by electronic communication means are taken as required by § 2.2-3707 and include the fact that the meeting was held by electronic communication means and the type of electronic communication means by which the meeting was held. If a member's participation from a remote location pursuant to these requirements is disapproved because such participation would violate the policy adopted pursuant to subsection D of § 2.2-3708.3, such disapproval shall be recorded in the minutes with specificity.

See the Appendix for Best Practices Recommendations for All-Virtual Public Meetings on public comment and the use of video by members.

### **III. Electronic meetings conducted under a declared state of emergency (§ 2.2-3708.2 and State Budget Item 4-0.01 (g))**

There are currently two different procedures for conducting electronic meetings during a declared state of emergency, one in FOIA as described in subsection III A below, the other in the State Budget as described in subsection III B below. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the state of emergency provisions in FOIA had only been used to address short-duration emergencies such as acute weather conditions that required immediate responses (hurricanes, tornadoes, snowstorms, etc.). In 2020, those provisions allowed meetings only to address the declared state of emergency, and not for any other purposes. Because of the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic and the requirements for quarantine and social distancing in effect at that time, the existing provisions were deemed inadequate as they did not allow public bodies to use electronic meetings for any other purposes, i.e., conducting normal business. The State Budget provisions described below were enacted in 2020 to provide a mechanism for public bodies to conduct such other public business during the ongoing state of emergency.<sup>32</sup> In 2021, the FOIA provisions addressing electronic meetings during a state of emergency were amended to reflect the experiences of public bodies, citizens, and the media when using electronic meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic and to account for such longer-duration states of emergency in the future.<sup>33</sup> Note that in addition to differing procedural requirements, the FOIA provisions allow for electronic meetings during a state of emergency declared both by the Governor and by localities, whereas the Budget provisions only address a state of emergency declared by the Governor. However, the Budget provisions are applicable to common interest community governing boards as well as public bodies subject to FOIA, whereas the FOIA provisions are applicable only to public bodies. Both sets of provisions remain in the law as of September 1, 2022, so public bodies may use either one as appropriate to the circumstance.

#### **A. Electronic meetings conducted during a state of emergency declared by the Governor or a locality under § 2.2-3708.2**

Pursuant to § 2.2-3708.2, any public body may meet by electronic communication means without a quorum of the public body physically assembled at one location when the Governor has declared a state of emergency in accordance with § 44-146.17 or the locality in which the public body is located has declared a local state of emergency pursuant to § 44-146.21 under the following conditions listed in subdivision A 3 of § 2.2-3708.2:

- The catastrophic nature of the declared emergency makes it impracticable or unsafe to assemble a quorum in a single location; and
- The purpose of the meeting is to provide for the continuity of operations of the public body or the discharge of its lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities.

In addition, the public body must:

- Give public notice using the best available method given the nature of the emergency, which notice shall be given contemporaneously with the notice provided to members of the public body conducting the meeting;

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<sup>32</sup> See n. 2, *supra*

<sup>33</sup> 2021 Special Session I, c. 490.

- Make arrangements for public access to such meeting through electronic communication means, including videoconferencing if already used by the public body;
- Provide the public with the opportunity to comment at those meetings of the public body when public comment is customarily received; and
- Otherwise comply with the provisions of FOIA

#### Minutes requirements

The minutes must include the nature of the emergency, the fact that the meeting was held by electronic communication means, and the type of electronic communication means by which the meeting was held.

#### Limitation on duration

The provisions of subdivision A 3 of § 2.2-3708.2 are applicable only for the duration of the emergency declared pursuant to § 44-146.17 or 44-146.21.

**Note:** No policy required

The requirements to adopt a policy as required for remote participation and all-virtual public meetings do not apply to meetings held under a declared state of emergency.

### **B. Electronic meetings conducted during a state of emergency declared by the Governor under State Budget Item 4-0.01 (g)**

Pursuant to State Budget Item 4-0.01 (g), any public body may meet by electronic communication means without a quorum of the public body physically assembled at one location when the Governor has declared a state of emergency in accordance with § 44-146.17, subject to the following procedures and conditions:

- The nature of the declared emergency makes it impracticable or unsafe for the public body to assemble in a single location;
- The purpose of meeting is to discuss or transact the business statutorily required or necessary to continue operations of the public body and the discharge of its lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities; and
- The public body makes available a recording or transcript of the meeting on its website in accordance with the timeframes established in §§ 2.2-3707 and 2.2-3707.1
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In addition, the public body must:

- Give notice to the public using the best available method given the nature of the emergency, which notice shall be given contemporaneously with the notice provided to members of the public body conducting the meeting;
- Make arrangements for public access to such meeting through electronic means, including, to the extent practicable, videoconferencing technology. If the means of communication allows, provide the public with an opportunity to comment;
- Otherwise comply with the provisions of § 2.2-3708.2; and
- State in the minutes the nature of the emergency, the fact that the meeting was held by electronic communication means, and the type of electronic communication means by which the meeting was held.

**Note:** This budget item also provides for electronic meetings to be held by governing boards of common interest communities such as condominium unit and property owners' associations. Such governing boards are not public bodies subject to FOIA but are subject to their own laws concerning access to records and meetings. Because the FOIA Council is limited to providing guidance regarding FOIA, provisions in State Budget Item 4-0.01 (g) that are specific to common interest communities have been omitted from this guide. Please direct any inquiries regarding records and meetings of common interest communities to the Office of the Common Interest Community Ombudsman within the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation as follows:

PHONE (804) 367-2941  
FAX (866) 490-2723  
EMAIL CIOmbudsman@dpor.virginia.gov

## **Appendix: Best Practices Recommendations for All-Virtual Public Meetings**

The second enactment clause of HB 444 (Bennett Parker, 2022) directed the FOIA Council to convene a work group to study best practices for all-virtual public meetings as follows:

That the Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council shall convene a work group, no later than May 1, 2022, to develop recommendations for best practices for public bodies holding all-virtual public meetings, including but not limited to how to take public comment virtually and the proper use of video by public body members. Such recommendations must be completed by August 1, 2022. The work group shall include representatives of the Virginia Association of Counties, the Virginia Municipal League, the Virginia Coalition for Open Government, and the Virginia Press Association and such other stakeholders the Council deem appropriate.

The work group met twice in May 2022 to consider these and other issues. The participants included representatives of the Virginia Association of Counties, the Virginia Municipal League, the Virginia Coalition for Open Government, the Virginia Press Association, the Virginia School Boards Association, the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation, the Department of Health Professions, the Department of Education, the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, and the Department of Criminal Justice Services. The following are the work group's recommendations as agreed by consensus.

### **I. Public Comment**

#### **A. Statutory Provisions**

- For all meetings conducted under FOIA, subsection F of § 2.2-3707 provides as follows: "The proposed agendas for meetings of state public bodies where at least one member has been appointed by the Governor shall state whether or not public comment will be received at the meeting and, if so, the approximate point during the meeting when public comment will be received."
- For all electronic meetings conducted under § 2.2-3708.3, subsection A provides as follows: "Public bodies are encouraged to (i) provide public access, both in person

and through electronic communication means, to public meetings and (ii) provide avenues for public comment at public meetings when public comment is customarily received, which may include public comments made in person or by electronic communication means or other methods."

- Among other requirements for conducting all-virtual meetings under subsection C of § 2.2-3708.3, subdivision C 6 provides the following requirement: "The public is afforded the opportunity to comment through electronic means, including by way of written comments, at those public meetings when public comment is customarily received;"
- Other laws may also have requirements for public comment that are specific to the type of public body and the type of meeting. For example, there are requirements to take public comment at certain meetings for local governing bodies in subsection D of § 15.2-1416, for school boards under § 22.1-79, and for governing boards of public institutions of higher education in § 23.1-307, etc.

## B. Best Practices Recommendations

### Before the meeting:

- Notice: State in the meeting notice whether public comment will be taken during the meeting and/or by other means such as submitting electronic written comments in advance.
- It is recommended that all public bodies accept written comments by email or other means. Public bodies should consider posting the comments to the public body's website, if it has one, and providing the comments to the members in advance of the meeting. You may want to set a deadline for receiving comments in advance in order to ensure there will be time for members to review them and to post them (but still allow comments to be submitted after the deadline; just note that they may not be posted before the meeting if they are received late).
- Public bodies may ask people to register in advance for logistical and planning purposes, but do not require registration in advance as a condition in order to speak because many commenters may not decide whether to comment until the meeting occurs.

### During the meeting:

- Have the body's chair, clerk, or chief administrator announce when and how public comment will be taken, including any time limits, whether speakers will be heard in any particular order, asking participants to mute their microphones when not speaking, etc.
- Ask the person making comments to give their name (including spelling) and whether the person represents an organization so everyone knows who is speaking (but it is not required by law).
- Time limits: It is recommended that each speaker be allowed an equal amount of time to speak and that the amount of time provided is reasonable under the circumstances and sufficient to allow meaningful comment. However, because the circumstances and logistics of each meeting may vary as to the number of speakers, total time available for public comment, etc., there is no specific length of time that would be appropriate for all situations.
- Written comments: Depending on the number and length of written comments received, you may want to either read the comments (if they are few and/or brief)



or summarize them (if they are many and/or lengthy) as appropriate to the circumstances. Written comments may be incorporated by reference, just make sure to keep copies if you do so.

Technical considerations:

- Waiting rooms: Based on prior experience, the work group recommends against using virtual waiting rooms where commenters must be pulled from one virtual "room" into another in order to speak because of the logistical difficulties and interruption to the flow of the meeting.
- Consider having a separate staff person who is not directly participating in the meeting handle technical duties such as recording the meeting, muting participants with open microphones who are not currently presenting or commenting, allowing and disabling screen sharing, etc.
- Screen sharing: Only staff and presenters should be allowed to share their screens in order to avoid the risk of someone else displaying inappropriate content.
- Chat functions: It is recommended not to use public written chat features for all-virtual meetings if the virtual meeting software will not capture it for recording and minutes purposes and also for the same reasons that screen sharing should be limited.

## **II. The Use of Video by Members**

A. Statutory Provision:

- Subdivision C 3 of § 2.2-3708.3 requires that "[t]he electronic communication means used allows the public to hear all members of the public body participating in the all-virtual public meeting and, when audio-visual technology is available, to see the members of the public body as well."

B. Best Practices:

*Note that in the course of discussing these recommendations for best practices, the work group concluded that most of them were applicable to all types of electronic participation in public meetings, although the details may vary depending on the type of meeting, the type of electronic participation, and the resources available to the public body. For example, a meeting held under the state of emergency provisions in § 2.2-3708.2 to address an acute weather emergency that requires immediate action may not allow time for many of the suggested actions, especially those that would take place before a meeting. The work group also recognized that staffing and technological resources vary significantly between different public bodies, which can affect each public body's ability to implement these recommendations. For these reasons, keep in mind that except for subdivision C 3 of § 2.2-3708.3 quoted above, these recommendations for best practices are not statutory requirements.*

Before the meeting:

- Consider checking with new members to ensure they are familiar with the virtual meeting technology being used by the public body, and if not, help them become familiar with its basic functions (how to log in, turn the microphone and camera on and off, etc.).
- Consider providing members who are not already familiar with participation in virtual meetings any additional tips for being on camera generally (be on time, dress and act appropriately, lighting and glare issues, whether and how to use a virtual background, etc.).

- Consider having members who have not participated electronically in previous meetings log in before the meeting starts to ensure that they do not have any connection problems or other technical issues. Leave enough time so that staff can help if there are any such problems. If there are no such issues, have the members log back out or turn off their cameras and mute their microphones until it is time to start the meeting.
- Before or at the start of a virtual meeting, remind the members that the FOIA provisions that apply to participation in all meetings also still apply to electronic participation in all virtual meetings. For example, whether a meeting is held in person or all-virtually, members should avoid the use of electronic communications in ways that would create a "meeting within a meeting" that is not visible to the public. This is especially true in all virtual meetings because the members are already communicating electronically and may have other means to do so that are not apparent to the public such as text chat functions that may be limited to certain participants and are not visible to those watching the meeting.
- Similarly to accepting public comments as described above, consider posting presentation materials to the public body's website, if any, and distributing them to the members in advance of the meeting (if the materials are available in advance).
- Consider the needs of persons with disabilities and compliance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S. Code § 12101 et seq.). For more information, see [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov).

#### During the meeting:

- Generally, using an audio-visual connection is preferred over an audio-only connection for all types of electronic participation. This is especially true for all-virtual meetings because there is no central meeting location where the public can be in the same place as the members to observe the meeting.
- When using an audio-visual connection, members should stay on video during the meeting unless there is a specific reason to turn the video off, but remember to mute their microphones when they are not speaking. This is especially true for all-virtual meetings in order to try to provide transparency similar to an in-person meeting for those watching, while simultaneously avoiding audio problems such as feedback, echoes, and inadvertent noises from open microphones.
- Consider taking steps to ensure that the public and other members are aware of which members are speaking or acting at any given time, especially if a member is using an audio only connection. For example, any members who are not on video should state their names before speaking so there is no confusion regarding who is talking. For members who are on video, if the technology allows it, display members' names along with the video. The same suggestions also apply to any other speakers or presenters who are not members.

# **Planning for Library Excellence: Standards for Virginia Public Libraries 2019**

The current [Planning for Library Excellence](#) manual can be found here on the Library of Virginia website.

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# Mission Statement

Inspiring lifelong learning for everyone in our community.

## **CRRL supports:**

- **Community collaboration**
- **Cultural enrichment**
- **Diversity and Inclusion**
- **Informed citizenry**
- **Ingenuity and Innovation**
- **Lifelong learning**
- **Print and digital literacy**
- **Student success**
- **Workforce development**

# The “Elevator” Pitch

Promoting the library in the community is easy with so many positive, impressive ways to describe the value CRRL offers. Pick the angle you feel most comfortable talking about, or that is most appropriate for a particular audience:

## **Something for Everyone**

Central Rappahannock Regional Library has **something for everyone** – early literacy classes, job search training, cutting edge maker technology, so much more. If you have an interest, the library has resources, training, and research to get you where you need to be.

## **Innovation**

Central Rappahannock Regional Library **innovates**, offering so much for checkout – video cameras, radon detectors, embroidery kits, pickle ball, wifi hotspots and chromebooks, and kits for little readers to learn core learning skills. There is much more than books at the library.

## **Partnership**

Central Rappahannock Regional Library **partners with the community** – over a hundred organizations to promote citizenship, our diverse culture and history, literacy, health, and business resources. If you are in a community group, or are looking for one, the library is a great place to start to make connections.

# Agreement to Form CRRL

## AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT, made this 13th day of July, 1993, by and among the City of Fredericksburg, the County of Spotsylvania, the County of Stafford, and the County of Westmoreland, all political subdivisions of the commonwealth of Virginia and hereinafter designated as participating localities, all of which are parties hereto.

WHEREAS, the parties hereto are members of the Central Rappahannock Regional Library, pursuant to an Agreement dated November 8, 1989 (1989 Agreement), and

WHEREAS, as members they have contracted to cooperate in providing public library services in each of their respective jurisdictions through their joint efforts, and

WHEREAS, those library services have included the operation of a headquarters facility in Fredericksburg, several branch facilities throughout the region, and bookmobile service to areas not otherwise serviced, and

WHEREAS, by said 1989 agreement Westmoreland County was intending to withdraw from the Regional System but is now desirous of continuing its association with the system, and

WHEREAS, the parties hereto are desirous of modifying the said 1989 Agreement to enable Westmoreland County to remain part of the system and have reached a modification agreement which is hereby reduced to writing.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants and agreements contained herein, the parties hereto do mutually agree to modify the said 1989 Agreement and to adopt the agreement herein set forth as the sole agreement relating to the matters contained herein as follows:

1. Authority for Regional Library

The Central Rappahannock Regional Library ("Library") shall hereafter operate according to the rules and regulations for regional libraries set forth in Section 42.1-33, et seq., of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended.

2. Board of Trustees/Membership

- a. Pursuant to Section 42.1 - 39 of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended, the Library shall be governed by a Board of Trustees ("Board") whose membership shall be as follows:

Two (2) members shall be appointed by the City of Fredericksburg, two by Spotsylvania County, two by Stafford County and one by Westmoreland County. All appointments shall be for terms of four (4) years.

b. All appointed Board members shall be residents of the jurisdiction which they represent and may be private citizens, members of the governing bodies, or employees of the governing bodies, as the governing bodies shall so designate, in conformity with Section 42.1 - 39 of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended.

### 3. Salaries and Expenses

No Board member shall receive a salary or other compensation for services, but necessary expenses may be reimbursed by the appointing jurisdiction in its sole discretion.

### 4. Removal

A Board member may be removed for misconduct or neglect of duty by the governing body making the appointment.

### 5. Powers and Duties

The Board shall elect officers and maintain current by-laws, rules, and regulations for the functioning of the Board and administration of the Library. The Board shall have control of the expenditure of all monies credited to the Library accounts.

### 6. Donations

The Board shall have the right to accept donations and bequests of money and personal, real, tangible, and intangible property for the establishment, maintenance, and expansion of the Library and endowments for the same and to perform all other lawful acts attendant with the receipt of property.

### 7. Contracts and Budget Authority

\_\_\_\_\_The Board shall have the authority to execute contracts with the Virginia State Library, participating localities, and other legal entities and to budget for and expend funds received for services, supplies, facility and vehicle maintenance, utilities, and other matters necessary and appropriate for the operation and administration of the Library and related services in the region. The Board shall have the authority to budget for and



expend any funds which it raises through its own efforts or receives by donation. The Board shall follow the appropriate provisions set forth in Section 42.1-33, et seq., of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended, with regard to the maintenance and operation of all Library facilities. The parties specifically agree there shall be no acquisition of real estate for, nor relocation of, the regional administrative, technical or services coordination facilities currently located in the City of Fredericksburg with funds contributed by any of the parties hereto without the prior written approval of the City of Fredericksburg, the County of Spotsylvania, and the County of Stafford. The parties further agree that Westmoreland County will not be requested to contribute to any renovation, capital improvement, or relocation of said regional administrative, technical or services coordination facilities during the County's participation in this Agreement.

#### 8. Local Funding

Expenses for the operation, maintenance and improvement of the Library shall be apportioned as follows:

a. The Board shall prepare and present to all participating localities a yearly revenue and expenditure budget in accordance with the formatting requirements of the member jurisdictions and generally in accordance with the Uniform Financial Reporting System of the Auditor of Public Accounts for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

b. The circulation figures used in the funding formulas set forth below shall be the actual annual Library circulation for the preceding calendar year. For the purposes of this Agreement, the term "circulation" shall be defined as the total number of items checked out from the headquarters Library and all other branches, bookmobiles, mail, nursing homes, jails, and other existing methods of circulation within the Library system.

c. The funding formula for the City of Fredericksburg, Stafford County, and Spotsylvania County shall be as follows:

City or County

Contribution = (Circulation) x (Total Local Budget minus Westmoreland's contribution)

where

Circulation = The percentage of total Library circulation attributed to residents of that city or county.

Total Local Budget = The difference between total Library operating revenues approved for the fiscal year and those received from Commonwealth of Virginia as regular operating revenues.

d. The base rate for Westmoreland County for fiscal year 1993-94 shall be One Hundred Sixteen Thousand Twenty Seven and no/100 Dollars.

e. From July 1, 1994, and each fiscal year thereafter the new base rate for Westmoreland County shall be as follows:

Contribution = & New Base Rate	(Base Rate from immediately preceding fiscal year) +	(Most recent calendar year's CPI%age of previous year's base rate) +	(Regional system's increase in salaries for employees working in Westmoreland Cty.)
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Each year the previous year's base rate will be increased by the Consumer Price Index for the most recent calendar year and salary increase for employees working in Westmoreland County for the new fiscal year to create Westmoreland County's contribution and the new base rate. In addition, each year, the current contribution being paid by Westmoreland County will be reviewed by the Library Board for comparison of all revenues realized by the Regional Library system due to Westmoreland's participation including the formula contribution paid by Westmoreland County for services, the state and federal aid to the system based upon Westmoreland's participation, any regular grant monies received by the system due to Westmoreland's participation and any other regular monies received by the system due to Westmoreland's participation with the costs to the system to provide the current services to Westmoreland County. In the event it is determined that Westmoreland's contribution from all sources does not cover the costs of the services being provided to Westmoreland County, then the base rate will be adjusted upward in the upcoming fiscal year to equal the cost of those services.

f. The City of Fredericksburg and Stafford as of this date have met the required completion date for Branch facilities described in paragraphs 10 and 11 below. In the event that Spotsylvania County fails to meet its deadline for the substantial completion of the branch facilities described in Paragraph 11 below, such county shall pay directly to the City of Fredericksburg an annual Library surcharge prorated monthly for any period less than a year that Spotsylvania fails to meet its deadline for the substantial completion of the branch facilities in addition to its jurisdictional share of the budget, such surcharge to end when Spotsylvania has completed its contracted for branch facilities.

Surcharge = (%age of year (Circulation) (Annualized project cost)  
deadline not met x x  
in months)

where

Circulation = The percentage of circulation of Wallace Library attributable to residents of the jurisdiction paying the surcharge.

Annualized = The total debt service cost to the City, during the preceding fiscal year, for project the design and construction of Project.  
cost

g. Each participating locality shall process the Library's funding request through its normal annual budget procedures, with appropriate notice of any public hearings being given to the Board. In the event a recommendation to appropriate funds at a level less than requested is being made or anticipated, the member jurisdiction shall provide the Board an opportunity to be heard.

h. In the event any participating locality chooses to appropriate funds at a level lower than requested, the Board shall have the right to reduce or freeze service levels, other than by imposing a book limit, within such jurisdiction proportionately in accordance with the funding reduction. The governing body of such jurisdiction shall make evaluation and indicate the particular areas of service it wishes reduced or frozen, but final decisions concerning service reductions shall rest solely with the Board.

i. The sums appropriated by each governing body shall be paid quarterly in advance by the disbursing officer of each jurisdiction to the fiscal agent of the Library as designated by the Board.

## 9. Branches and Regional Facilities

a. In the event of development of library branches, stations, or other fixed library collections in any participating locality (excluding the renovation of Wallace Library, which is specially funded according to the terms of this Agreement) other than the portion of the regional facility designated for administrative, technical or regional services coordination, the locality developing such branch, station, or other fixed Library collection shall assume the full cost of the construction, renovation, and major maintenance of the building or premises housing the collection, as well as the furnishings, utilities, and appropriate property insurance for said facilities. The Board and the respective locality may contract for the lease of each branch facility or incorporation of the same into the Library system.

b. Branch development shall be in response to and in compliance with the size, location and service level needs designated by the board to provide effectively for public library services for participating localities, subject to the financial resources available to each locality and the Board to fund such services.

c. The construction , relocation, or expansion of any regional facility designated for regional, administrative, technical, or other Library coordination services shall be funded equally by the City of Fredericksburg, Stafford County, and Spotsylvania County.

10. Renovation of Wallace Library

The City of Fredericksburg agreed to undertake and complete the renovation of Wallace Library by June 30, 1991. This obligation has been met. The renovated building shall house the City's branch library and the regional headquarters of the Library.

11. Construction of New Stafford and Spotsylvania Branches

a. Stafford County agreed to locate, design, and complete construction of an enlarged facility in the northern portion of the county within three (3) years of the execution of this Agreement. This obligation has been met.

b. Spotsylvania County agrees to locate, design, and complete construction of a new branch library facility consisting of at least 10,000 square feet within three (3) years after the City of Fredericksburg has completed its facility; which required completion date is February 1994.

12. Withdrawals from Library System

a. This agreement shall remain effective for all participating jurisdictions including the City of Fredericksburg, Stafford County, Spotsylvania County and Westmoreland County without any requirement for contract renewal.

b. No county or city participating in the Library hereby established shall withdraw therefrom without two years' notice in writing to the chief elected officials of the other participating localities. In the event of an adopted resolution of consent from the other participating localities, the two-year notice of withdrawal may be waived for any jurisdiction.

13. Extent of Agreement

No amendments, modification, or supplements to this Agreement shall be valid or effective unless the same shall be reduced to writing and signed by all of the parties hereto.

14. Original Agreements

This agreement and any and all subsequent modifications, amendments, or supplements shall be executed in as many counterparts as there are parties hereto, and each shall constitute a duplicate original.

WITNESS, the following signatures and seals affixed hereto by the officers shown below pursuant to the authority of resolutions adopted by the several governing bodies, an attested copy of each being attached hereto, incorporated herein and made a part hereof:

CITY OF FREDERICKSBURG:

Marvin Bollinger (SEAL) Lawrence A. Davies (SEAL)  
City Manager Mayor

COUNTY OF SPOTSYLVANIA:

L. Kimball Payne III (SEAL) Jean W. Jones (SEAL)  
County Administrator Chairman, Board of Supervisors

COUNTY OF STAFFORD:

C.M. Williams, Jr. (SEAL) Lyle Ray Smith (SEAL)  
County Administrator Chairman, Board of Supervisors

COUNTY OF WESTMORELAND:

Norm Risavi (SEAL) William O. Sydnor (SEAL)  
County Administrator Chairman, Board of Supervisors

Approved as to form:

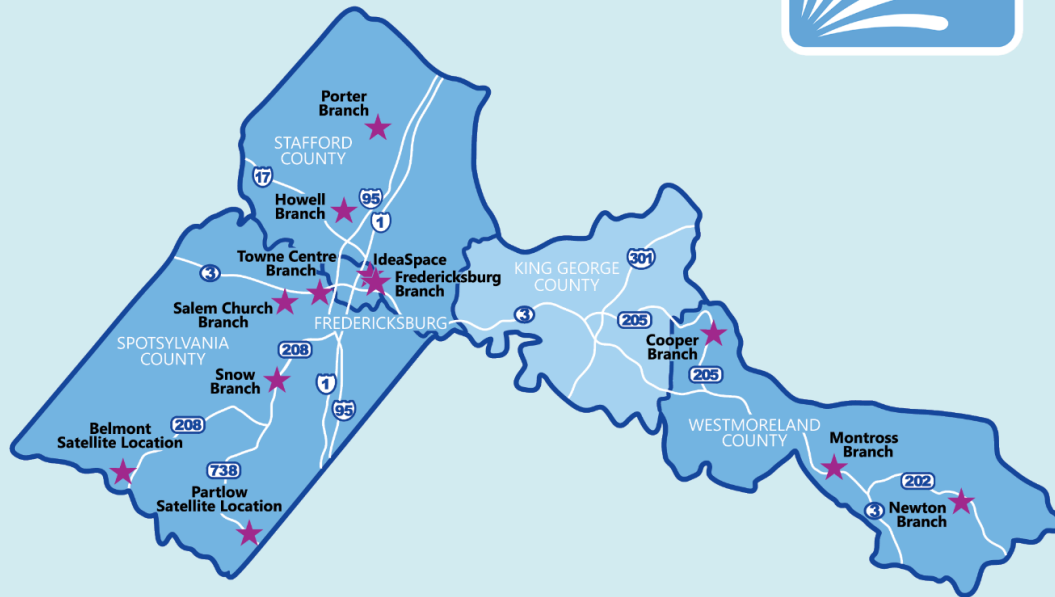
J.M. Pates  
Fredericksburg City Attorney

Alda L. White  
Stafford County Attorney

Larry W. Davis  
Spotsylvania County Attorney

(illegible signature)  
Westmoreland County Attorney

# Map of all CRRL Facilities



## FREDERICKSBURG

### Fredericksburg Branch

1201 Caroline St., 22401  
Monday-Thursday 9:00-8:00  
Friday, Saturday 9:00-5:30

### IdeaSpace: Making + Media

1616 Princess Anne St., 22401  
Monday-Thursday 2:00-8:00  
Saturday 12:00-5:00

## SPOTSYLVANIA

### Belmont Satellite Location

Belmont Ruritan Club and the  
Belmont Club of Women  
7124 Belmont Road, Mineral, 23117  
Mondays 4:00-7:00

### Partlow Satellite Location

Partlow Ruritan Club, 3229  
Partlow Road, Partlow, 22534  
Tuesdays 4:00-7:00

### Salem Church Branch

2607 Salem Church Rd., 22407  
Monday 9:00-8:00  
Tuesday, Wednesday 9:00-5:30  
Thursday 9:00-8:00  
Friday, Saturday 9:00-5:30

### Snow Branch

8740 Courthouse Rd., 22553  
Monday, Tuesday 9:00-8:00  
Wednesday-Saturday 9:00-5:30

### Towne Centre Branch

390 Spotsylvania Mall, 22407  
Monday 10:00-5:30  
Tuesday-Thursday 10:00-8:00  
Friday, Saturday 10:00-5:00

## STAFFORD

### Access Services at Howell Branch

806 Lyons Blvd., 22406  
Mondays-Thursdays 9:00-1:00  
Fridays by appointment

### Howell Branch

806 Lyons Blvd., 22406  
Monday-Thursday 9:00-8:00  
Friday-Saturday 9:00-5:30

### Porter Branch

2001 Parkway Blvd., 22554  
Monday-Thursday 9:00-8:00  
Friday, Saturday 9:00-5:30

## WESTMORELAND

### Cooper Branch

20 Washington Ave., 22443  
Monday, Friday, Saturday 9:00-1:00  
Tuesday, Wednesday 12:00-8:00  
Thursday 1:00-5:00

### Montross Branch

56 Polk St., 22520  
Monday, Thursday 12:00-8:00  
Tuesday, Saturday 1:00-5:00  
Wednesday, Friday 9:00-1:00

### Newton Branch

22 Coles Point Rd., 22469  
Monday 12:00-8:00  
Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday 9:00-1:00  
Wednesday 1:00-5:00  
Friday 9:00-5:00

# Facility Plan

Central Rappahannock Regional Library is a regional public library system serving the City of Fredericksburg and the Counties of Stafford, Spotsylvania, and Westmoreland. The library system consists of an administration center, nine branches, IdeaSpace, two satellite locations, book and service delivery to area assisted living facilities and childcare centers, and two Library on the Go outreach vehicles.

The Fredericksburg Branch, located at 1201 Caroline Street in the historic district in the City, is heavily used by residents from the City, Stafford, and Spotsylvania Counties. The branch serves as a destination point for the downtown area, bringing in citizens from across the region for the library collections, programming, and resources.

The Fredericksburg Branch, which was renovated in 1990, has recently undergone some additional improvements. The parking lot has been doubled in size and the 3rd floor, which was previously dedicated to administrative staff offices, opened as public use space in 2019. This space includes the law library, the adult non-fiction collection, study rooms and public meeting rooms. The adult fiction collection has moved to the 1st floor, freeing up the entire second floor for youth collections. In 2021, the second floor renovations included carpet replacement, paint and new shelving to provide a child and teen friendly space. In the fall of 2019, the two meeting rooms at the back of the theater were demolished allowing the theater to hold an additional sixty-seventy seats for a total of two hundred twenty five. At that time, two previous department offices on the lower level were converted into large public meeting rooms with capacities of thirty-eight and forty-five. In early 2024, two single person privacy pods will be purchased and installed on the 3rd floor. This will increase the total number of study rooms available in the branch to six.

It is probable that a City branch of 10,000 square feet in the Fall Hill Avenue corridor and/or a branch in Dixon Park area will be needed within the next 10 years to serve the growing population in the new areas of the City which do not offer easy access to the Fredericksburg Branch.

IdeaSpace is a 1680 square foot dedicated maker space in the heart of the Canal Quarter that opened in December 2020 for 29 evening and weekend hours per week. The facility includes a sound booth for audio/video recording, 3D printers, 3D scanner, laser cutter, sewing machines, serger, embroidery machine, drawing tablets, and video conversion equipment. Library staff provide access and training at no charge to the community. Also part of IdeaSpace is our Tech on the Go that can be checked out by anyone with a CRRL library card and provides access to cameras, lighting, recording and music equipment, cricuts, a green screen and more. IdeaSpace is a part of the Canal Quarter Creative Maker District and opens a new window for serving customers in downtown Fredericksburg.

Currently, Stafford County is served by the John Musante Porter Memorial Branch, a 23,000 square foot library located off Garrisonville Road in North Stafford; by the Howell Branch (opened October 2010), a 30,000 square foot facility off Plantation Drive in South Stafford; by the Fredericksburg Branch; and by Library on the Go outreach services. As the Porter Branch ages, some upgrades will be required. In 2017, Stafford County provided updated shelving for approximately three-quarters of the collection and completed several parking lot upgrades at the Porter Branch. In 2019, with the assistance of Stafford County, one meeting room and two study rooms were created by repurposing existing spaces. In 2020, Stafford County provided updated shelving for the rest of the Porter Branch collections. In early 2024, one privacy pod that seats two will be purchased using Finley Trust funds and installed at Porter Branch. This will increase the total number of study rooms available in the branch to three.

In May 2021, ionization filters were installed in the HVAC systems of Howell and Porter branches. Between 2020-present Stafford County has been updating furniture at the Howell Branch. Other recent improvements at Howell Branch between 2020-2022 include replacing worn vinyl flooring in several areas of the branch, refinishing doors in the public area and installing a new water heater. Stafford County improvements in 2023 include, replacing some of the security cameras that monitor the exterior of the property to Ring cameras at Howell Branch and installation of panic buttons at the public service desks at Howell and Porter Branches. The panic buttons are not yet live and still in the installation phase as of early 2024.

CRRL has worked with Stafford County staff to identify the Courthouse area as the next location for a library outlet, possibly to be placed in their Downtown Stafford community. In the long range plans it is anticipated that additional branches will need to be constructed in the northeastern and central areas of the county to serve these developing population centers.

Spotsylvania County is served by the expanded 26,000 square foot Salem Church Branch (completed in February 2009), the approximately 6,000 square foot Snow Branch located at Spotsylvania Courthouse, Library on the Go outreach services, and the Fredericksburg Branch. CRRL worked with Spotsylvania County to open a small 2,100 square foot branch in the Spotsylvania Towne Centre on August 8, 2018. Improvements by Spotsylvania include replacing the manual gate with an electric one in 2019 and replacing the lighting fixtures with LED in 2023. CRRL also provides a weekly satellite branch at the Belmont Ruritan Club and the Belmont Club for Women that provides internet access to a rural part of the county where service options are greatly limited. In 2019, CRRL started providing a similar satellite library service at the Partlow Ruritan Club in the Berkeley District. Recent improvements to the Salem Church Branch include updated lobby carpeting and vinyl flooring in 2019 as well as new vinyl flooring in the staff workroom & lunchroom in 2022 and the public kitchen and public single use restrooms in 2023. In spring of 2023, the



chiller was replaced in the new part of the building at Salem Church. In early 2024, one privacy pod that seats two will be purchased using Finley Trust funds and installed at Salem Church Branch. This will increase the total number of study rooms available in the branch to seven. Spotsylvania provided brand new carpeting for the entirety of Snow branch, completed in Winter 2018 and new paint for the entire branch completed in late 2016.

Spotsylvania County's planning department, working in conjunction with library staff, has included a 30,000 square foot minimum facility in Massaponax in their long range plan. Library staff have also identified the Chancellor or Salem District (western end of the county) as well as the Livingston/Lake Anna and/or Berkeley areas as needing fixed library facilities.

Westmoreland County is currently served by three locations. The Abraham and William Cooper Memorial Branch in Colonial Beach, a 4,700 square foot branch renovated in 2000. The town of Colonial Beach provided new carpeting throughout the branch in January 2023 and CRRL painted the interior. The 1,485 square foot Montross Branch in Montross, constructed in 2002. Westmoreland County installed new bathroom fixtures and flooring and carpeting throughout the branch in June 2022 and a new heating unit in December 2023. The Blake T. Newton Memorial Branch in Hague, 1,063 square feet renovated in 2001. Westmoreland County installed new bathroom fixtures and flooring and carpeting throughout the building in May 2022 and a new heater for the meeting room in Jan 2023. The three locations stagger their hours in such a way that residents of the County have at least one library branch available each day of the week, except for Sundays. In 2022 privacy pods were purchased for all Westmoreland Branches to provide a quiet, private space for teleconferencing meetings, telehealth appointments, online interviews and more. Cooper and Newton each have a one person pod and Montross a four person pod funded by a grant for rural libraries from the Library of Virginia and IMLS. The larger pod at Montross Branch provides a much needed meeting space for the community with the difference funded by CRRL.

The need for system-wide Library on the Go outreach efforts continues to grow. CRRL has received grants to help purchase two vehicles that will offer library materials, computers, and STEM and early literacy support to those communities who may not be able to get to a library branch or who may not feel comfortable doing so. One vehicle will be on the road in early 2023 and providing service to after school programs for at-risk students, to families living in motels and many other communities in Stafford County, Spotsylvania County, and the City of Fredericksburg. The second vehicle has been purchased to extend Library on the Go services to Westmoreland County and address the digital divide in this rural county by providing internet access, laptops and tablets, and printing/copying faxing as well as traditional library services and programming. The van will regularly visit schools and community gathering places around Westmoreland County, meeting residents where they are. Library on the Go also extends into rural Spotsylvania County, where satellite

locations are established one evening a week at the Belmont Community Center and the Partlow Ruritan Center. The satellite locations offer internet and computer access, printing, library materials, homework help, and events to residents who cannot easily get to a branch.

CRRL faces a critical space deficit based on state standards. As of 2023, CRRL is more than 25,000 sq. ft. below the lowest category of standard. By 2030 it is projected that that same space deficit will increase to 96,515 sq. ft.; it will be 129,905 sq. ft. by 2040. Despite the efforts of the jurisdictions to address the growing need for public service library space it has become apparent that the overall demand for infrastructure in the region sorely taxed the localities' resources. In response, CRRL has developed a new service model that creatively addresses the region's explosive growth, increasing demand for library materials, constantly changing technology and changing customer expectations and use patterns, for example Library on the Go and satellite branches.

The base level state standard dictates that planning for library facilities' development should be based on at least twenty-year population growth projections. Locations for new branches are determined by population centers, shopping and transportation patterns, ease of access to major roadways, and visibility. Ideally, branches are located on sites that would be commercially desirable to ensure optimum use as a community information center and gathering place. Library staff continue to work closely with planning officials for the procurement of possible sites for long range construction in areas that are developing and densely populated.

Criteria for the size and number of facilities are based on several factors. Following are some of the key guidelines for service facilities:

- Aggregate size of all buildings in the system should equal 0.6-1.0 square foot per person living in the jurisdiction served.
- Rural locations should offer a library facility within a 15-30 minute drive.
- Urban/suburban locations should be located in a 10-20 minute drive

# History

## **Capt. Wallace Wills a Library**

In 1907, Confederate Army Captain Casper Wistar Wallace died and left a bequest in his will to start a public library. The Wallace Library opened in 1910 in a small building adjacent to Fredericksburg City Hall. Another area pioneer in providing library service, Miss Anne E. Moncure, is known to have loaded up her station wagon with books and driven through Stafford County “checking out” her materials to local residents.

## **A Regional Library System**

In 1969, the Virginia State Library opened the Central Rappahannock Regional Library system as a model to demonstrate the value of public library service to the region. The City of Fredericksburg donated the old Lafayette School to be the demonstration library facility along with the 17,000 volumes that had comprised the Wallace Library collection. The state purchased an additional 29,000 volumes and provided two bookmobiles which traveled to Stafford, Spotsylvania, and Westmoreland Counties.

In 1971, the local jurisdictions voted to fund the demonstration library and develop a permanent regional library system in response to public enthusiasm for the project. One official noted that he had never gotten so many calls on an issue.

## **Community Forms a Book Brigade**

In 1972, the community rallied around the library again when during Hurricane Agnes, the Rappahannock River was expected to reach the back door of the Headquarters at 1201 Caroline Street. Hundreds of people hurried to the library to hand carry the entire collection to the second and third stories of the building. When the river crested inches from the library's back door, the town came back to transport the collection downstairs.

## **The Collection and Services Grow**

In the 1970s, under the leadership of Director Deborah Spiller, the library's collections and services expanded. The Regional Friends of the Library formed chapters in Spotsylvania, Stafford, Westmoreland and the City of Fredericksburg, first becoming active in 1973, and will celebrate their 50th anniversary in 2023. Within a three-year period the Colonial Beach and North Stafford branches, now known as the Cooper and Porter Branches, were established. The collection

changed as well. For the first time, movies and LP records were purchased and made available for check out. In 1972, the Virginiana Room opened to showcase and preserve the history of Virginia and in 1974 CRRL tried an experimental books-by-mail program to increase service to outlying areas which continues today alongside our Talking Books program for the blind and print disabled.

### **New Branches**

In 1981, Donna Cote became Director and held that position for the next thirty-four years. Under her leadership, the Hague and Spotsylvania Courthouse branches, now known as the Newton and Snow branches, and the Montross Branch were opened.

### **The Last Chance Committee**

Another crisis was resolved with community support in 1989. Discussion between the jurisdictions was stalemated over the issue of funding the renovation of the decaying Lafayette School building or construction of a new facility. An ad hoc regional library committee was formed which was composed of representatives from each locality. Dubbed the "Last Chance Committee," they broke the impasse and successfully hammered out a regional solution.

The committee was awarded the first-ever Chamber of Commerce Fredericksburg Regional Cooperation Award in 1990 for their solution to a long term community problem.

As a result of this agreement, the Headquarters Library was renovated in 1990, the John Musante Porter Memorial Branch was constructed in 1992, and the Salem Church Branch was constructed in 1994. These handsome new facilities, complete with new technology and upgraded collections, revolutionized library services in the region. Since that time, CRRL has continued to respond to the changing demographics of the region by moving and expanding the Spotsylvania Courthouse Branch in 1998 and renaming it the C. Melvin Snow Memorial Branch, expanding and renovating the Abraham and William Cooper Memorial Branch (2000), the Blake T. Newton Memorial Branch (2001) the Salem Church Branch (2009), moving the Montross Branch into a new building (2002) and building the England Run Branch in Stafford County (2010). In 2017, the Stafford County Board of Supervisors voted to rename England Run the William J. Howell Memorial Branch.

### **Library Service Center/Library Administration Center**

The Library Service Center (LSC) was created as an innovative new facility designed to maximize prime space in existing and new buildings by providing

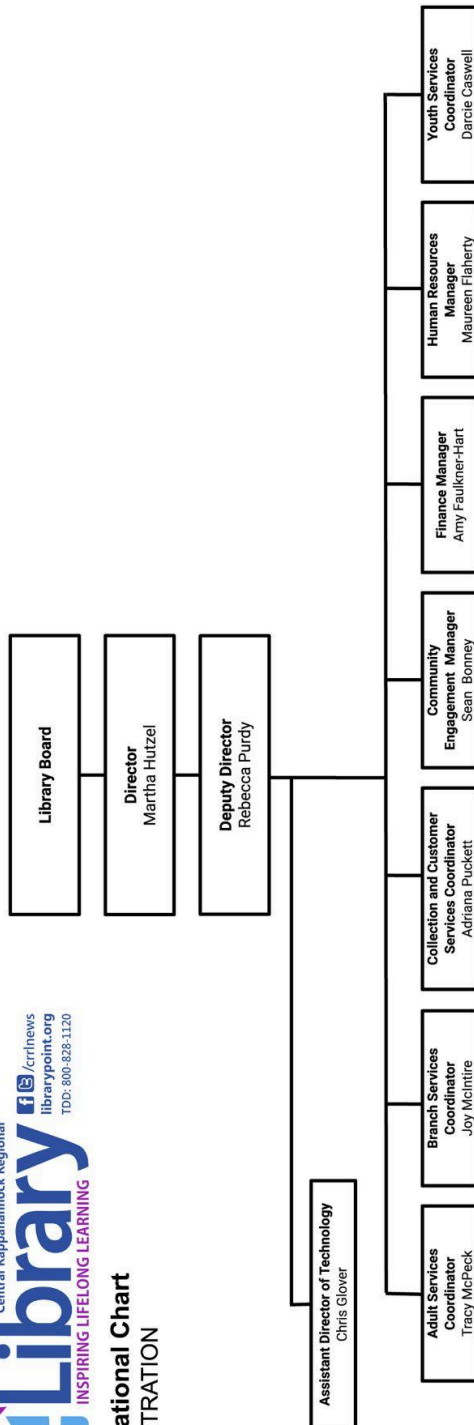
space for the streamlined economical processing and distribution of materials. This allows the branches to free prime space in the libraries for new books, frequently used materials, and popular services while simultaneously allowing the overall collection to grow in response to user demands and population growth. In 2017, the remaining Administrative staff moved to adjoining warehouse space and the LSC became the Library Administration Center (LAC). Since the 1201 Caroline St. building was no longer library headquarters, it was renamed the Fredericksburg Branch. In 2018 the last system-wide departments moved from the Fredericksburg Branch to additional adjoining space at the LAC. These changes had a tremendous impact on the Fredericksburg Branch, allowing for conversion of offices into much-needed public space, with renovations beginning in 2018.

### **IdeaSpace**

IdeaSpace: Making+Media opened in 2020, offering maker technology and empowering creative exploration. This facility was made possible by the support of the Fredericksburg Economic Development Authority, the Fredericksburg Cable Commission, and The Duff McDuff Green, Jr. Fund of The Community Foundation of the Rappahannock River Region. IdeaSpace offers creative high-tech equipment for use onsite and for checkout, an AV booth, training on equipment, and maker programming.

The history of the public library services in the Fredericksburg region is the story of grassroots activism for library services. Thousands of local people who believe in libraries write letters, make phone calls, vote and advocate for the cause. Public support and enthusiasm have led to the establishment of each branch in the system and continue to be the driving force behind expanding library services in the local communities. Director Martha Hutzler has positioned the library as a resource not just through traditional visits to our branches, but by increasing community outreach and partnerships, informing every resident about the library and our new and innovative avenues of service.

# Organizational Chart



# Enriching the Community

Central Rappahannock Regional Library supports local government by serving as a community hub for residents, schools, businesses, and nonprofits. CRRL offers a wide array of classes, events, and services, and library staff is fully embedded in the regional community, representing the library through collaborative partnerships.

## Citizenship • Government • Community Building

The **library promotes citizenship** by offering year-round voter registration and displays of ballot information, as well as materials and events on current issues. Porter, Salem Church, and Howell branches serve as official polling sites. Civic engagement is encouraged through **Civic Labs** and the **We the Readers Civic Book Group**, and the library participates in regional cultural events such as the **University of Mary Washington Multicultural Fair**.

The library helps recent immigrants assimilate into the local community through partnerships with the **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services** and **RARAE (Rappahannock Area Regional Adult Education)**. CRRL offers naturalization information sessions and citizenship classes, each branch has information and study guides on becoming a United States citizen, and the library's **HelpNow** database includes preparation for citizenship tests. CRRL also offers English conversation groups at several branches and online, an English language basics class, and an ESL (English as a Second Language) book group.

The library's Social Media Team engages with the public through **Facebook**, and **Instagram** with news about books, reading, technology, and libraries. The Youth Services and Adult Services coordinators contribute regular columns on books to **The Free Lance-Star**. The quarterly **@ Your Library** magazine offers a comprehensive list of library classes and events and highlights many of our services. Approximately 8,000 issues are distributed each quarter in branches. Staff share library news and events at monthly interviews on the radio program *Town Talk*. Programming highlights are sent in an email newsletter to approximately 100,000 customers every two weeks.

CRRL takes pride in embracing the greater Fredericksburg area's rich local heritage and culture. The **Virginiana Collection**, housed at Fredericksburg Branch, contains rare and original documents on regional history and genealogy. Howell Branch maintains the **Bradshaw Collection** of Stafford County history and genealogical material. Partnerships with local and state organizations to bring cultural classes, events, and exhibits to our region include the **Library of Virginia, Stafford 350**, Lafayette 200, **Discover Stafford, American Evolution 1619-2019**, the **Fredericksburg Area Museum, Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc.** (HFFI), and many others. CRRL also embraces the local author community through its annual **Rappahannock Writers' Conference, Local Authors Reception**, writers' groups, and lobby signings scheduled at most branches.

CRRL connects our community to reliable federal, state, and local resources and events, disseminating community information from local organizations and government agencies such as **Parks and Recreation**, the **Virginia Cooperative Extension**, and free regional newspapers. The Fredericksburg branch is bringing in community agencies such as **Legal Aid Works** and the **Fredericksburg Department of Social Services** to connect low-income and unhoused individuals with much-needed services. CRRL serves as a major regional distribution point for federal and state tax forms, which are no longer provided to consumers in print, and helps customers navigate government services such as the Affordable Care Act and prison visitation appointments. Through its partnership with **AARP** and the **Rappahannock United Way**, the library helps thousands of lower-income and senior residents file their taxes yearly. The **Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)** partners with several branches to provide DMV Connect, pop-up sites to conveniently access basic DMV services. The library also provides tangible support through free public services including internet access, fax machines, copiers and scanners, and notary publics at all branches. CRRL also offers a **Law Library** at the Fredericksburg branch, featuring a curated print collection and access to Thomson Reuters Westlaw, both of which are regularly used by legal professionals and the public. A second law collection is in the works for the Montross branch.

CRRL conducts an annual **Food for Friends Week**, previously Food for Fines, in partnership with the **Fredericksburg Regional Food Bank**. Porter, Howell, and Salem Church branches have established **community gardens** cultivated by volunteers with donated supplies, to educate and contribute to the health and welfare of the community. In 2023, Porter Branch donated 268 pounds and Howell Branch donated 330 pounds of fresh vegetables and non-perishable items to



**SERVE, the Stafford County Food Pantry.** In 2023, Salem Church Branch donated 259 pounds of fresh vegetables and non-perishable items to the **Fredericksburg Area Food Bank.**

During the summer, when many children and teens don't have regular access to food, CRRL partners with local organizations to provide nutritious lunches to children and teens. Fredericksburg Branch works with the **Fredericksburg City Schools Mobile Cafe** and Salem Church and Snow Branches work with the **Fredericksburg Regional Food Bank** to distribute lunches throughout the summer.

CRRL distributes and educates the public on finding trustworthy health information and improving health outcomes. The library also offers health screenings, **Red Cross blood drives**, and fitness/nutrition classes in partnership with local organizations such as **Mental Health America** and the **Alzheimer's Association**. Examples of health programming include nature hikes, yoga, vision and diabetes screenings, senior health, healthy cooking, and memory cafés. One Adult Services staff member recently became an official Alzheimer's Association volunteer in order to facilitate Memory Cafés for those with memory loss and their care partners. CRRL is also a member of the **National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NNLM)**, Southeastern/Atlantic region. To date, two Adult Services staff members have received their CHIS (Consumer Health Information Specialist) certifications through the NNLM with a third in progress.

CRRL is dedicated to featuring new and inspiring technologies for our communities. Over the years our dedication to providing the community hands-on experiences with technology has evolved. Our first MakerLab, at Howell Branch, was created in partnership with the **Education Department of the University of Mary Washington**. The vision to provide technologies for the community continued when we expanded MakerLabs to Fredericksburg, Porter, and Salem Church branches, then having a Mobile MakerLab, and finally creating IdeaSpace, where customers can learn to use a variety of equipment or check out items from the Tech on the Go collection. Customers of all ages can also experience **STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math)** through classes and events at our branches, where staff incorporate demonstrations and hands-on experiences, as well as check out chromebook computers and hotspots to provide wireless access.

CRRL promotes adult literacy by collaborating with area organizations and agencies. A long standing partnership with RARAE (Rappahannock Area **Regional** Central Rappahannock Regional Library Board of Trustee Manual - 2024 v 1.0 pg 73

**Adult Education)** has resulted in Porter, Salem Church, and Snow branches serving as sites for semi-weekly ESL (English as a Second Language) classes for almost two decades, and Howell Branch serves as a site for semi-weekly **ESL and GED classes**. CRRL offers GED study guides and practice tests, and online GED preparation. Librarians are available to **proctor exams** for students taking distance learning courses, and residents attending driving improvement classes can take online **Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles** exams at any branch.

The library's public service mission of helping build strong communities includes providing free **meeting space for local nonprofit organizations and clubs**, including necessary equipment and room setup. CRRL **sponsors book discussion groups** at all branches, online, and in the community at Curitiba Art Café, Strangeways Brewing Company, Zibibbo 73, The Hague Winery, and Colonial Beach Brewing. The library's Book Group in a Bag service supports local book groups by providing 10 copies of popular titles to book groups. Library fitness and cooking classes, needlework groups, and writing clubs offer residents other ways to meet people and become involved in the community. CRRL's Library of Things extends the library's mission of inspiring lifelong learning by circulating non-traditional items that engage and delight customers, including craft kits, environmental devices, outdoor games, and emerging literacy packs.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020, CRRL staff quickly pivoted to offering virtual classes and events to continue its missions of promoting lifelong learning and building strong communities. In August 2020, a virtual **Lunch and Learn** series was launched via Facebook Live, in which regional partners and library staff present on educational and entertaining topics, such as the **history of Juneteenth with the Stafford NAACP Youth Council, Backyard Composting with the Virginia Cooperative Extension**, and a **brain health series from the Alzheimer's Association**. Held weekly, the series surpassed its 150th episode in summer 2023 and is still going strong. Other examples of virtual programming have included **Paws for Reading** and **Time With a Therapy Dog in partnership with Blue Gray Therapy Dogs**; the **Spotsylvania 300th lecture series**, English conversation groups, virtual **Grow a Reader classes**, and book groups for all ages. Continuing to offer a virtual programming component increases the accessibility of CRRL's classes and events.

## **Economic Development**

Civic officials view public libraries as a valuable tool for stimulating economic development. CRRL branches draw hundreds of customers every day and serve as

anchor institutions for shopping centers and commercial areas. CRRL's most recent survey shows that most library use is done in conjunction with other errands and shopping.

CRRL is keenly aware of the importance of supporting the local economic base and encourages workforce development. Many businesses have indicated the need to develop an educated local workforce, a goal that dovetails with the library's mission. CRRL offers **Reference Solutions by Data Axle**, a database to empower businesses to create marketing campaigns and identify competitors, suppliers, and clients. **LinkedIn Learning** provides over 6,000 online training courses led by certified instructors on topics such as leadership, business, and computer skills. **JobNow** and **VetNow** provide live virtual tutoring, career and interview coaching, resume help, and skill building for adults, with specialized help for military veterans. CRRL partners with **ServiceSource** and **Rappahannock Goodwill** to provide training on demand for computer and job skills, from writing resumes to interviewing.

CRRL is an active member of the **Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce**, the **Greater Fredericksburg Black Chamber of Commerce**, and **University of Mary Washington's Leadership Colloquium Advisory Board** and **Small Business Development Center**, and staff routinely attend networking events with area business professionals, frequently hosted at library branches.

CRRL encourages local residents and businesses to share their expertise in free workshops, discussions, and demonstrations at the library to inform and educate the community. Entrepreneurs and employers use the library's **one-on-one training classes** to tutor their employees in research and computer skills. Library staff present to area organizations and businesses on using the library's business, grant searching, and law resources. CRRL also provides personalized resource lists for local businesses to share with their employees and customers, and in early 2022 launched a quarterly **Workforce and Economic Development newsletter** to highlight CRRL's many resources.

## Schools & Education

CRRL has long-standing productive relationships with the teachers, students, and school officials in our region, and library staff work diligently to foster those relationships.

Each August and September, staff attend **student and teacher orientations** to promote CRRL's educational offerings. Once teachers are settled into their classrooms, the library reaches out to teachers directly with a **Curriculum Connections** booklet that details every service CRRL provides to teachers and their students.

The library's most popular services among area teachers are those that directly impact their work. **Classroom Carryout** and **Book Group in a Bag** allow teachers to request items from CRRL to supplement their curriculum, and the library's **databases** allow teachers and students access to trusted sources for research projects.

Through the annual **Kindergarten Library Card Campaign**, CRRL works with area school divisions to ensure that every kindergarten student has the opportunity to receive a public library card, to help support their growing literacy and encourage a love of reading.

Every year, CRRL staff bring their expertise into the schools to support school curriculum and encourage reading. Trained staff **reinforce the 2nd and 3rd grade Standards of Learning** by presenting folktales from the Chinese and Native American cultures. The **Café Book** program in seventeen middle schools in the City, Stafford, and Spotsylvania, teaches critical literary evaluation skills, as librarians from CRRL and local middle schools facilitate intriguing discussions of current books for teens. Each spring, CRRL librarians visit local schools to present lively sessions emphasizing the value of reading and **encouraging participation in summer reading**.

CRRL also supports the curriculum of educators at **Rappahannock Juvenile Center**. Every two weeks a young adult librarian visits the Center to provide engaged learning experiences and to mentor the residents.

CRRL also provides services to the increasing number of **homeschool** families in the region. Homeschool educators also make use of Classroom Carryout and databases, and regularly use meeting rooms at CRRL branches for classroom space.

## Serving Local Children

Children's services remain a cornerstone of the library's mission. The library provides engaging learning opportunities that increase language development and literacy skills, and provide **STEM** instruction to support school curriculum and develop 21st century citizens.

CRRL provides over 23 early literacy **Grow a Reader classes** every week for children ages birth to five. Specially trained staff present stories, songs, and activities that lay the foundation children need to get ready to read, introducing and reinforcing early literacy skills. Parents and children can use these skills to practice at home, making sure children **start school ready to learn to read**.

CRRL's **1,000 Books Before Kindergarten** initiative, launched in 2023, further develops kindergarten readiness by encouraging adults to read to their babies, toddlers and preschoolers every day.

Monthly classes for school age children on a variety of themes **offer engaged learning experiences**, always including at least one STEM-focused class per quarter. **PAWS for Reading** is another popular event for school age children, where they can practice reading to trained therapy dogs provided by volunteers from **Blue Gray Therapy Dogs**.

One of the biggest library initiatives for children and teens is our **Summer Reading program**. Almost **3,000 children and teens** participate, helping to prevent summer learning loss and ensuring they return to school maintaining or even **increasing their reading levels** from the previous year.

## Teens

**Innovative library programming** is offered for teens at all library branches. Two **teen book groups** encourage reading and discussion and allow teens to build community with like minded peers. At **Teen Game Night** teens choose from a variety of activities, including gaming and opportunities to create art. **Teen Council** offers teens leadership experience while they earn volunteer hours and help guide the library's decisions related to teen programming. The annual **Teen Art Show, Teen Poetry Contest, and Teen Stop Motion Video Contest** empower aspiring artists, poets, and creators to showcase their skills. Winners are awarded prize money compliments of the Friends of the Library.

**OurSpace**, at Salem Church, provides a safe and supportive environment for **at-risk teens** to work on homework, explore their interests, and forge relationships with peers and library staff. Safe, teen-only spaces are also provided at Fredericksburg, Howell and Porter branches. **Teen Volunteer** programs at all CRRL branches provide opportunities for individual volunteering, scout projects, Honor Society, and community service work.

## Library on the Go

CRRL's **Library on the Go** initiative delivers library services and information directly to the communities where citizens live, work, learn, play, and shop.

Preschoolers at area **daycare centers** are a major audience. Many of them have commuting parents who are exhausted after a twelve-hour day and have limited energy or time for reading or library visits. CRRL's Library on the Go Specialist for Youth Services visits daycare centers to read stories, teach early literacy skills, and promote kindergarten readiness.

Library on the Go specialists provide library services at **Satellite Locations** in rural Spotsylvania County. At the satellites, customers have access to free wifi, computers, printing, holds pick-up, books, movies, audiobooks, homework help, and reading recommendations from trained staff.

The **Access Services** department provides services for people with disabilities or adaptive needs. Services include the **Talking Books** program for those with print and vision impairment; **Books by Mail** for the homebound; the **Deaf Culture Digital Library** for the Deaf and hard of hearing; as well as offering other special services and programs.

The Fredericksburg Subregional **Library for the Blind and Print Disabled (AKA the "Talking Books" Library)**, operated by CRRL, is one of only 97 libraries nationwide serving as part of the **Library of Congress National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled**, which covers all qualifying participants residing in CRRL's service area as well as Manassas, Manassas Park, Caroline, Culpeper, Orange, Fauquier, King George, Prince William, and the military bases of Quantico, Dahlgren, and Fort Walker. **The regional (state) Library for the Blind and Print Disabled, located in Richmond, determines the service area for subregional libraries.** CRRL offers about **175,462 Talking Books** for the print and visually impaired, loaning approximately 3,275 audiobooks (via mailed

cartridge and mobile app download) to 958 qualified participants each month. CRRL was one of six libraries in the nation chosen by the **Library of Congress** to be a test pilot for **Project Gutenberg**, an initiative to quickly download Talking Books in an easily accessible digital format. After the pilot was completed, the rest of Virginia's subregional libraries began converting to the Gutenberg format. CRRL is also one of only nine subregional libraries that volunteers to test the WebReads catalog system used by Talking Books libraries. In addition to audiobook materials, CRRL also offers the electronic players to listen to the audiobooks, printed braille, electronic braille, and braille eReaders as part of the **Talking Books** program. CRRL offers a sample collection of 68 braille books in its catalog, while an additional 21,804 titles can be accessed from the **regional (state) library** upon request.

The Library on the Go Specialist for Adult Services conducts Lobby Stop visits to area **senior and assisted living centers** biweekly, serving 17 locations with materials and providing internet access, readers advisory, and training on electronic devices. This allows customers with limited transportation and mobility to place holds on, check out, and return library materials without needing to leave their home.

A young adult librarian visits incarcerated youth at Rappahannock Juvenile Center (RJC) every two weeks, bringing public library resources, services, and programming to these students. CRRL has also established a permanent collection of books at the RJC and through this work aims to support students' academic curriculum, encourage a lifelong love of reading, and empower students with tools and resources for self-directed learning. CRRL has been the recipient of several Great Stories Club (GSC) grants from the American Library Association (ALA) and was awarded this grant again in 2023. The GSC grant supports themed book clubs targeting underserved teens.

CRRL staff provide library booths at **area festivals and events**, bringing awareness of library services to the public, distributing the **@ Your Library magazine** and other library brochures. Festival goers are enticed to stop and learn more about **MakerLab** equipment and hands-on STEM activities, and to sign up for a library card if they don't already have one.

## Programming • Culture • The Arts

**Educational, cultural, and entertainment classes and events** for the regional community draw thousands of people to the library each year. Library staff present hundreds of in-house children's classes and events annually. Many children have their first group social experiences in **Grow a Reader classes**, where their love of books begins years before they can read. Children's programming is extremely popular at all our branches, especially those where thousands of young families have relocated nearby.

**Gardening and nature, health and wellness, and arts and crafts classes as well as summer outdoor performances by local musicians, writers' groups, and author talks** have proven to be very successful events. The Friends of the Library graciously sponsor many of these wonderful events. Salem Church, Fredericksburg, Howell, Porter, and now Towne Centre branches also showcase **local artists'** works each month. In addition, the library hosts juried art shows, entitled **Uniquely Fredericksburg, Uniquely Stafford, and Uniquely Spotsylvania**, focusing on artwork relating to our region. Music on the Steps, approaching its 40-year anniversary in 2025, is an annual concert series attracting hundreds of community members to the steps of the Fredericksburg branch each week during the summer.

CRRL fosters a vibrant reading community, offering 22 book groups for all ages in a variety of formats. Summer Reading for all ages and Winter Reading for adults are both very popular. The library also has a special Facebook group to engage adult readers and hold virtual book chats. CRRL's My Librarian and Book Match services are unique ways for customers of all ages to get personalized reading recommendations from library staff. Staff contribute a wealth of booklists and blog posts to the library's website to highlight new and exciting titles, and CRRL also offers **NoveList** and **Books and Authors**, two databases to discover new reads for all ages.

## Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Library is a non-profit organization that advocates on behalf of Central Rappahannock Regional Library and encourages citizen support of the library through paid memberships and donations. The Friends also raise funds with book sales at library branches and their dedicated bookshop located adjacent to



the Library Administration Center. The organization offers an annual grant for expenses such as continuing education and training for staff as well as library programs and events. The children and teen **Summer Reading events**, CRRL's **Music on the Steps** concert series, and the **Rappahannock Writers' Conference** are stellar examples of how the Friends' support helps to build community and enhance cultural life in the area.

# Staff Accomplishments and Service to the Community

## **Central Rappahannock Regional Library**

- 2024, awarded, Northern Neck Insurance Community grant
- 2024, named Friends of the Library chosen as TopsideCares Community Partner
- 2023, 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018, Porter Branch voted Best of Stafford by InsideNOVA
- 2022, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009, Star Library designation  
*Library Journal*, America's Star Libraries
- 2022, Fredericksburg Savings Charitable Foundation Fund, Community Foundation of the Rappahannock River Region grant
- 2022, awarded "2022 Preservation Spark Award", Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc.
- 2021, chosen best in category "Family Fun: Indoor Activity" *Fredericksburg Parent & Family*
- 2021, honored "online storytimes, virtual Paws for Reading Program, and tutoring" *Fredericksburg Parent & Family*
- 2021, "Institute of Museum and Library Services" grant
- 2021, chosen distribute COVID-19 antigen test kits, Virginia Department of Health
- 2020, awarded "2020 Medallion Award", Mary Washington Healthcare and the MWHC Innovation Council
- 2020, awarded "Cardinal Comeback Story", Virginia Economic Developers Association
- 2020, The Community Foundation's Community Relief Fund grant
- 2020, 2019, awarded "Best Tutoring Service", Fredericksburg Parent's
- 2019, awarded "Better Together", Spotsylvania Towne Centre Branch/Cafaro Company/Spotsylvania County partnership, Virginia Public Library Directors Association (VPLDA)
- 2019, Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce, Leadership FXBG *Community Action Project*
- 2019, National Endowment for the Arts *Big Read* grant
- 2019, The O'Neill Fund for the Stewardship of Historic Resources of The Community Foundation of the Rappahannock River Region grant
- 2019, awarded "2019 Community Partner of the Year", Rappahannock Goodwill
- 2019, awarded "2019 Risk Management Performance Award" Virginia Risk Sharing Association
- 2019, Fredericksburg Branch, Good Neighbor Award, American Red Cross
- 2019, awarded "Matthew Glenn Award", Fredericksburg Regional Food Bank
- 2019, Salem Church Branch, Neighborhood Favorites, Nextdoor App
- 2019, Spotsylvania Towne Centre recognized new and repurposed libraries, *American Libraries*
- 2023, 2019, 2018, American Library Association *Great Stories Club* grant
- 2018, Best Business Theme, Scarecrow contest, Fredericksburg Mainstreet
- 2018, House Joint Resolution proclamation commending CRRL for being named a "Star Library", Virginia House of Delegates

2018, The Duff McDuff Green, Jr. Fund of The Community Foundation of the  
Rappahannock River Region grant  
2018, Public Broadcasting Service/American Library Association *Vietnam War* grant  
2018, 2017, 2016, American Library Association *Great Stories Club* grant  
2018, 2017, 2016, Fredericksburg Economic Development Authority *JumpStart!* event  
sponsorship grant  
2018, 2009, Stafford County proclamation commending CRRL for being named a "Star  
Library", Stafford Board of Supervisors  
2017, Rappahannock Electric Cooperative *LEARN* grant  
2017, Library of America *World War I & America* grant  
2017, Scotts MiracleGro *GRO1000* grant  
2017, "Better Together Social Capital Award" Virginia Public Library Directors Association  
2017-2018 "Best Tutoring Service" FredParent's Family Favorite Awards  
2015, Community Impact Award, Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce  
2013, "Cultivating Community," Outstanding Cooperative Program  
Virginia Public Library Directors Association

"Best Public Library in Virginia, 2010"  
"Fifth Best Public Library in the Nation, 2010"  
"Best Public Library in Virginia, 2008"  
"Fourth Best Public Library in the Nation, 2008"  
"Seventh Best Public Library in the Nation, 2003"  
"Best Public Library in Virginia, 2003"  
"Fifth Best Public Library in the Nation, 1999"  
Hennen American Public Library Ratings (HAPLR)  
*American Libraries Magazine*

2007, "Live Homework Help" Innovator Award  
October 2006, Innovator of the Month, Tutor.com  
"2005 Top Ranking Public Service"  
Spotsylvania County Citizen Satisfaction Survey  
1990, Chamber of Commerce Fredericksburg Regional Cooperation Award

### **Martha Hutzel, Director**

2024-2022, Board of Directors member, Topside Federal Credit Union  
2024-2017, Board Member, Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce  
2024-2022, Chair, Rappahannock Goodwill Industries  
2024-2016, Board Member, Rappahannock Goodwill Industries  
2024-2016, Member, Rappahannock Fredericksburg Rotary Club, Rotary International  
2024-2016, Member, Virginia Public Library Directors Association  
2023, Committee Member, Standards for Virginia Public Libraries,  
Virginia Public Library Directors Association  
2023-2022, Member, *Public Libraries* Advisory Committee, Public Library Association  
2023-2022, Member, Public Library Association Leadership Advisory Committee, Public  
Library Association  
2021, Graduate, Lead Virginia  
2020-2016, Advisory Board Member, Leadership Colloquium, University of Mary  
Washington  
2019, awarded, Elizabeth M. "Libby" Lewis Award, Virginia Public Library Directors  
Association (VPLDA)

2019-2018, Member, 2020 Census Taskforce, American Library Association  
 2019-2018, Member, Standards Task Force, Planning for Library Excellence, Library of Virginia  
 2019-2017, Member, Legislation and Advocacy Committee, Public Library Association  
 2018, awarded, Patricia Lacey Metzger Distinguished Achievement Award, Leadership Colloquium at the University of Mary Washington  
 2018-2017, Member, 2018 National Conference Program Subcommittee, Public Library Association  
 2017, awarded, "Laurie A. Wideman Enterprising Woman's Award," Chamber's Network of Enterprising Women, Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce  
 2017, Immediate Past President, Virginia Library Association  
 2017, Leadership Fredericksburg, Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce  
 2017-2016, Member, Annual Conference Program Subcommittee, Public Library Association  
 2016, President, Virginia Library Association  
 2016, Steering Committee Member, Chamber's Network of Enterprising Women, Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce  
**Martha Hutzel, England Run Branch Manager**  
 2015, Vice-President/President Elect, Virginia Library Association  
 2015, Fellow, Public Library Association Leadership Academy, American Library Association  
 2015, Chair, Steering Committee, Chamber's Network of Enterprising Women, Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce  
 2015-2014, National Library Legislative Day State Coordinator, Virginia Library Association  
 2014, Nominee, President, Virginia Library Association  
 2014-2012, Chair, Virginia Library Association Fundraising Committee  
 2014-2013, President, North Stafford Rotary Club  
 2013, "Paul Harris Fellow," Rotary Foundation of Rotary International  
 2012, "Service Above Self" Award, Rotary International

**Rebecca Purdy, Deputy Director**

2024-2022, Secretary, Executive Committee, Virginia Library Association  
 2024-2020, Member, Women's Leadership Colloquium, University of Mary Washington  
 2023-2019, Board member, Stafford Rotary Foundation, Rotary International  
 2023-2017, Secretary, Executive Committee, Board of Directors, Smart Beginnings Rappahannock Area  
 2020, Fellow, Leadership Fredericksburg, Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce  
 2019, Steering Committee Chair, Chamber's Network of Enterprising Women, Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce  
 2018-2017, Steering Committee Member, Chamber's Network of Enterprising Women, Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce  
 2016, Fellow, Leadership Institute, American Library Association

**Rebecca Purdy, Youth Services Coordinator**

2016-2013, Member, Early Childhood Development Advisory Committee for Germanna Community College  
 2016-2011, Co-Chair and Technology Coordinator, Capitol Choices, Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens  
 2015-2012, Leadership Team, The Community Collaborative for Youth and Families  
 2015-2014, Member, Nonfiction Award Committee, Children's Book Guild of Washington, D.C.

2011-2008, Reading Group Facilitator, Capitol Choices, Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

**Rebecca Purdy, Head of Youth Services/Headquarters Branch**

2006, Member, Sibert Award Committee, American Library Association

2006, Chair, Liaisons with National Organizations Serving Children and Youth Committee, American Library Association

2006-2004, Co-Chair, Liaisons with National Organizations Serving Children and Youth Committee, American Library Association

2004, Database Selection Committee, Library of Virginia

2003, Outgoing Chair, Jefferson Cup Award Committee, Virginia Library Association

2000, Chair, Jefferson Cup Award Committee, Virginia Library Association

1999, Chair, Youth Services Forum, Virginia Library Association

1998, Chair-elect, Youth Services Forum, Virginia Library Association

1997, Region V Representative, Youth Services Forum, Virginia Library Association

**Chris Glover, Assistant Director of Technology**

2024-2021, Chair, Fredericksburg Cable Television Franchise Renewal Steering Committee

2024-1999, Member, Spotsylvania County Cable Commission

2019-2014, Member, Fredericksburg City Cable Commission

2016, Public Library Innovator of the Year Award, Virginia Library Association

**Sean Bonney, Community Engagement Manager**

2023, 2022, Member, Virginia Professional Communicators

2022-2018, Board of Directors, Fredericksburg Public Relations Society

2020-2018, President, Fredericksburg Public Relations Society

**Darcie Caswell, Youth Services Coordinator**

2024, Member, Suicide Prevention Coalition

2024-2023, 2022-2016 Member, Community Collaborative for Youth and Families Suicide Prevention Coalition

2024-2023, Member, Stafford Schools Leaders Council

2024-2023, Member, Community Collaborative for Youth and Families

2024-2023, Member, Foundation First: Rappahannock Area Task Force

2024-2023, Member, Fredericksburg City Schools Superintendent Community Roundtable

2023-2022, Member, Fredericksburg Area Museum Education Committee

2023-2022, 2019-2016, Member, Early Childhood Development Advisory Committee for Germanna Community College

2022, Member, Fredericksburg City Schools Community Outreach Committee

2022, Member, Rappahannock Area Early Childhood Nutrition and Mental Health Committee, Smart Beginnings

2022-2020, Member, Capitol Choices, Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

2019, awarded "Public Innovator Award", Creative Minds, Virginia Library Association

2019, Member Relations, Capitol Choices, Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

2019-2016, Board of Directors, Capitol Choices, Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

2019-2016, Member, Smart Beginnings Rappahannock Area Community Transition Steering Committee

2019-2018, Membership Coordinator, Capitol Choices, Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

2018-2016, Technology Coordinator, Capitol Choices, Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

**Amy Faulkner-Hart, Finance Manager**

2024-2022, Member, Virginia Government Finance Officers' Association

**Maureen Flaherty, Human Resource Manager**

2024-2022, Member, Fredericksburg Regional SHRM

**Joy McIntire, Branch Services Coordinator**

2024-2023, Member, Stafford Superintendent's Community Leaders Council

2024-2023, Board member, Service Leadership Program Committee Chair, Scholarship Committee Chair, Kiwanis Club of Fredericksburg

2024-2022, Member, Board of Directors, Kiwanis Foundation of Fredericksburg

2024-2020, Member and Club Liaison, UMW Circle K International Club Kiwanis of Fredericksburg

2023-2022, Liaison Committee Chair, Member, Scholarship Committee, Kiwanis Club of Fredericksburg

2020, Member, City of Fredericksburg Complete Count Committee

2018-2016, Member, Stafford Rotary Club

2018-2016, Member, Fred Tech Committee, Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce

2018-2017, Youth Services Committee Co-Chair, Stafford Rotary Club

2017-2016, Conference Planning Committee, Virginia Library Association

**Joy McIntire, Youth Services Department Head/England Run**

2016, Steering Committee, FredTech (Fredericksburg's Regional Technology Council), Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce

2016, Conference Committee, Virginia Library Association

2015-2013, Reading Group Facilitator, Capitol Choices, Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

**Tracy McPeck, Adult Services Coordinator**

2024-2022, Public Relations Committee Chair, Via Colori Stafford, North Stafford Rotary Club

2024-2021, Public Image Chair, North Stafford Rotary Club

2024-2022, Member, Partners in Aging

2024-2021, Board of Directors Member, Greater Fredericksburg Habitat for Humanity

2024-2019, Member, North Stafford Rotary Club

2023 Fellow, Leadership Fredericksburg, Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce

2021-2020, Member, Virginia Library Association Planning Conference Committee

2020, Member, Stafford County Complete Count Committee

2020, Member, Women in Business Leadership

2019-2018, Virginia Library Association Continuing Education Committee

**Adriana Puckett, Collection and Customer Services Coordinator**

2024, Member, Capitol Choices, Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

2024-2023, Member, Metropolitan Area Collection Development Consortium (MACDC)

2022, Fellow, Leadership Fredericksburg, Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce

2022-2019, Member, Potomac Technical Processing Librarians

**Adriana Puckett, Digital Services Manager**

2017, Member, Scholarship Committee, Virginia Library Association

**Adriana Puckett, Senior Web Developer**

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2014, LITA/Christian (Chris) Larew Memorial Scholarship in Library and Information Technology recipient, American Library Association

**Jessica Antosh, Branch Manager/Porter Branch**

2024-2021, Member, Stafford NAACP

**Jessica Farrow, Youth Services Department Head/Porter Branch**

2018, Up and Comer Award, Virginia Library Association

**Mary Buck, Branch Manager/Howell Branch**

2023-2018, Liaison ,Greater Fredericksburg Black Chamber of Commerce

2019-2015, Member, Fredericksburg Advisory Council, Virginia Credit Union

**Mary Buck, Research Department Head/Porter**

2016-2012, Member, Rappahannock Region Financial Stability Coalition

2013-2012, Chair, Virginia Library Association Region V

**Aimée Dillon, Westmoreland Branch Manager**

2024-2023, Vice President, Kinsale Fire Department Volunteer Auxiliary

2023-2019, Member, Kinsale Fire Department Volunteer Auxiliary

2023-2022, Member, TRIAD/S.A.L.T, Westmoreland County Sheriff's Office

**Chuck Gray, Branch Manager/Snow Branch and IdeaSpace**

2024-2023, Virginia Library Association, The Makerspace Forum

2023-2022, Member, Canal Quarter Maker District

2024-2021, Member and Newsletter producer, National Alliance for Mental Illness

2021, Member, Rappahannock Regional Toastmasters

2020, Manager of Digital Presence, Spotsylvania Courthouse Lions 100 Club

**Craig Graziano, Branch Manager/Fredericksburg Branch**

2024-2023, Member, Fredericksburg Regional Continuum of Care

2024-2022, Member, Community Outreach Patient Engagement, Rappahannock  
Emergency Medical Services

2024-2022, Member, Fredericksburg Main Street, Fredericksburg Economic Development  
Authority

2020, Member, Canal Quarter Maker District

2020, awarded "2020 Donna G. Cote Librarian of the Year"

**Pamela Smith, Branch Manager/Salem Church**

2024-2019, Member, Secretary, Executive board, Spotsylvania Crime Prevention Council

2024-2019, Member, Christian Business Women's Network

2024-2019, Member, League of Women Voters of the Fredericksburg Area

2020, Member, National Neighborhood Watch Crime Prevention Council

2020, Member and Program Planner, Spotsylvania 300 Committee

2020, Member, Spotsylvania Complete Count Committee

**Pamela Smith, Research Department Head/Porter**

2019-2016, Member, Nominating and Programming Committees,  
Stafford/Spotsylvania/Fredericksburg TRIAD

2018, Conference Planning Committee, Virginia Library Association

2018-2016, Member, Rappahannock Regional Financial Stability Coalition

2017, Representative, Virginia State TRIAD Conference

**Nicole Albright, Collection Discovery Librarian**  
2023, Member, Potomac Technical Processing Librarians

**Alice Avila, Youth Services Programmer**  
2023, VLA Professional Associates Forum

**Ingrid Campbell, Manager/Spotsylvania Towne Centre**  
2020, Member, Librarians of Color Forum, Virginia Library Association

**Erin Creighton, Assistant Branch Manager/Adult Services Department Head/Fredericksburg Branch**

2024, Mentor, Virginia Library Leadership Academy (VALLA)  
2024-2023, Member, Virginia Extension Leadership Council  
2024-2023, Member, Fredericksburg Regional Continuum of Care  
2024-2023, Member, Friends of Lafayette, 200th Lafayette Committee

**Erin Creighton, Adult Services Department Head/Porter Branch**  
2022, Member, Extension Leadership Council  
2020, Member, Citizen Science Month Planning Committee, National Network of Libraries of Medicine

**Lee Criscuolo, Adult Services Department Head/Howell Branch**  
2024-2022, Member, Rappahannock United Way Prosper Coalition  
2020, Member, Rappahannock United Way Financial Stability Coalition  
**Lee Criscuolo, Adult Services Librarian/England Run**  
2007, Virginia Library Association Scholarship Recipient

**Samantha Thomason, Collection Development and Discovery Manager**  
2024-2022, Member, Metropolitan Area Collection Development Consortium (MACDC)  
2024, Secretary, Potomac Technical Processing Librarians  
2023-2021, Member, Potomac Technical Processing Librarians  
**Samantha Thomason, Community Relations Manager**  
2019-2016, American Library Association Virginia Chapter Councilor, Virginia Library Association  
2019-2018, Board of Directors, Fredericksburg Public Relations Society  
2018 Fellow, Leadership Fredericksburg, Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce  
2016, Graduate, Virginia Library Leadership Academy  
**Samantha Thomason, Media Strategies Librarian**  
2015, Co-Chair, Conference Committee, Virginia Library Association  
**Samantha Thomason, Web Developer**  
2014-2013, Chair, Local History, Genealogy, Oral History Forum, Virginia Library Association  
2012, Paraprofessional of the Year, Virginia Library Association Paraprofessional Forum  
2012, Library Systems & Services Scholarship, University of Maryland, iSchool  
2012, Peter Lyman Memorial/SAGE Scholarship in New Media recipient, American Library Association

**Sarah Hutchinson, Youth Services Department Head/Porter Branch**  
2022, 2020, Member, Awards and Recognition Committee, Virginia Library Association



**Anna Lowry, Graphics Department Head**

2023, Fredericksburg City Public Schools Branding Workgroup  
2022, Board Member, Fredericksburg Public Relations Society

**Jenny McGee, Library on the Go/Lobby Stops/Belmont Community Center**

2024-2022, Member, Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services

**Joe Prince, Collection Development for Youth Services**

2024, Member, Capitol Choices  
2024, Member, Professional Recognition and Services Committee, Association for Library Service to Children  
2024, Member, Young Adult Library Association  
2024, Member, Association for Library Service to Children  
2023, Member, Mazza Summer Conference Committee  
2023, Member, Association for Library Service to Children  
2023, Member, Odyssey Award Committee, Association for Library Service to Children

**Kara Rockwell, Adult Services Department Head/Salem Church Branch**

2024, 2023, Member, Alzheimer's Association  
2024, Chair, Spotsylvania Stafford Fredericksburg TRIAD  
2023-2022, Committee Co-Chair, Spotsylvania Stafford Fredericksburg TRIAD  
2021-2020, Member TRIAD  
2020, Member Scholarship Committee, Virginia Library Association  
2020, Member, LGBTQIA+ Forum

**Eric Anderson, Adult Services Librarian/Howell Branch**

2024-2022, Member, Adult Services Jam Sessions, Library of Virginia

**Ed DeButts, Adult Services Librarian/Porter Branch**

2016, Graduate, Virginia Library Leadership Academy  
2013, Moderator, Leadership Development Forum Book Discussion Online, Virginia Library Association  
2010, Member, Leadership Development Forum, Virginia Library Association

**Virginia Johnson, Digital Services Librarian**

2020, 2015-2010, Local History, Genealogy, and Oral History Forum, Virginia Library Association  
2018, Second Place, "Blogs: – Nonprofit, Government, or Educational," Virginia Professional Communicators  
2018, Third Place, "Specialty Articles: History," Virginia Professional Communicators  
2017, Third Place, "Specialty Articles: Reviews," National Federation of Press Women  
2017, First Place, "Specialty Articles: Reviews," Virginia Professional Communicators  
2017, First Place, "Web and Social Media: Writing for the Web," Virginia Professional Communicators  
2017, Second Place, "Web and Social Media: Blogs, Nonprofit, Government, or Educational" Virginia Professional Communicators  
2017, 2009, 2007, Third Place, "Writing for the Web, Feature Articles," National Federation of Press Women  
2016, First Place, "Blogs: Web Content Written for Not-for-profit, Government or Educational Organization," National Federation of Press Women  
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2016, 2014, 2012, 2011, 2004, 2003, First Place, "Blogs: Web Content Written for Not-for-profit, Government or Educational Organization," Virginia Press Women  
 2015, 2007, Third Place, "Writing for the Web, Feature Article," Virginia Press Association  
 2014, 2009, 2007, Third Place, "Blogs: Web Content Written for Not-for-profit, Government or Educational Organization," Virginia Press Women  
 2014, 2007, 2006, Honorable Mention, "Blogs: Web Content Written for Not-for-profit, Government or Educational Organization," Virginia Press Women  
 2013, 2011, 2010, 2008, 2007, 2004, 2003, First Place, "Writing for the Web, Feature Article," Virginia Press Women  
 2013, 2008, Second Place, "Blogs: Web Content Written for Not-for-profit, Government or Educational Organization," Virginia Press Women  
 2013, 2010, Second Place, "Specialty Articles: Reviews," National Federation of Press Women  
 2012, 2010, 2009, 2006, Second Place, "Writing for the Web, Feature Article," Virginia Press Women  
 2009, First Place, "Nonfiction Book (History) for 'Virginia Horse Racing: Triumphs of the Turf,'" Virginia Press Women  
 2008, Second Place, "Writing for the Web: Feature Articles," National Federation of Press Women  
 2004, Second Place, "Web Editing," Virginia Press Women

**Jody Lewandowski, Children's Librarian/Headquarters Library**

2016-2015, Member, Parent Advisory Team, Spotsylvania County Public Schools  
 2010, Member, Leadership Academy, Virginia Library Association

**Megan Slingerland, Digital Services Producer**

2024, Member, American Library Association  
 2019-2018, Member, Website Content Committee, Virginia Library Association

**Sarah Smethurst, Youth Services Librarian/Howell Branch**

2022, Member, Virginia Library Association Graphic Novel Diversity Award Committee

**Babak Zarin, Access Services Librarian**

2024-2023, President Elect, Southern Regional Conference Planning Committee, National Library Service  
 2024-2021, Member, Virginia Deaf Culture Digital Library Steering Committee  
 2024-2023, Member, Librarians of Color Forum, Virginia Library Association  
 2024-2020, Member, Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services  
 2023-2022, Chair, Virginia Library Association Conference Committee  
 2023-2021, Member, Awards Committee, Virginia Library Association  
 2023-2022, Member, Southern Regional Conference Planning Committee, National Library Service  
 2022, awarded "George Mason Award," Virginia Library Association  
 2022, awarded "2022 Movers & Shakers," Library Journal  
 2022, Member, National Library Service Outreach Group  
 2022, Member, National Library Service Rating Unrated Book Project  
 2022, Member, National Library Service Webreads UAT Test Group  
 2022, Member, National Library Service DEI Working Group  
 2022-2019, Member, American Library Association  
 2021, awarded "Up and Comer," Virginia Library Association

2023, 2020, Member, Awards Committee, Librarians of Color Forum Virginia Library Association

**Douglas Jackson, Law Specialist/Fredericksburg Branch**

2024-2023, Member, National Legal Aid and Defender Association (NLADA)

2024-2023, Member, Virginia Association of Law Librarians (VALL)

2022, Member, National Notary Association

2022, Member, The American Association of Law Libraries

**Jacquelyn Murdock, Library on the Go YS/Partlow/YS Outreach**

2023, Spotsylvania County HeadStart Policy Council

2023, Stafford County HeadStart Policy Council

2023, Fredericksburg City HeadStart Policy Council

2023, Member, Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services

**Kitty Norris, Customer Services Supervisor/Cooper Branch**

2022, Member, Alliance of Colonial Beach Community Organizations, Town of Colonial Beach

**Kitty Norris, Branch Manager/Cooper Branch**

2016, "30 Year Award," Boy Scouts of America

2011, "25 Year Award," Boy Scouts of America

1998, "Silver Beaver Award," Boy Scouts of America

1997, "President's Honor Award," Virginia Parent Teacher Association

1994, "Honorary Life Membership," Virginia Parent Teacher Association

**Joy O'Toole, Adult Services Programmer/Howell Branch**

2024-2023, Member, Professional Associates Forum Board

2024-2023, Member, VLA Professional Associates Forum Knowledge Management Committee

2024-2022, Member, Adult Services Jam Sessions, Library of Virginia

2021, Member, Virginia Library Association Programming Forum

2020-2018, Board Member, Professional Associates Forum, Virginia Library Association

2019, awarded "Outstanding Professional Associates," Virginia Library Association

**Simon Watts, MakerLab Specialist/IdeaSpace**

2022, Member, Advocacy Committee, Virginia Library Association Professional Associates Forum

2021, 2020, Member, Canal Quarter Maker District, Fredericksburg Planning Commission

2020, awarded "2020 George Mason Award"

2019, awarded "Top 10 of the Next Gen", Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce

**Donna Cote, former Director**

2011, Awarded, Elizabeth M. "Libby" Lewis Award, Virginia Public Library Directors Association (VPLDA)

2008, President, Virginia Library Association

2007-2002, Member, Legislative Committee, Virginia Library Association

2006, President, Virginia Public Library Directors Association

2006, Chair, Advocacy Task Force, Library of Virginia

"Community Peacemaker Award, 2006," The Rappahannock Mediation Center

"Woman of Distinction, 2005," Commonwealth Girl Scout Council of Virginia

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"Outstanding Director, 2003," Virginia Public Library Directors Association  
2002, Chair, Public Library Section Region V, Virginia Library Association  
"Planning for Excellence"  
1999, 1988, 1985, Member, State Standards for Virginia Public Libraries  
Library of Virginia

**Caroline Parr, former Deputy Director**

2011, Member, Distinguished Service Award Committee,  
Association for Library Service to Children, American Library Association

**Caroline Parr, Youth Services Coordinator**

2008, Elected Chair, Sibert Committee, American Library Association  
2007, Member, Caldecott Committee, American Library Association  
2003, Member, Arbuthnot Award Committee, American Library Association  
2002, Member, Legislative Committee, American Library Association  
2001, Elected Chair, Newbery Award Committee, American Library Association  
1996 President, Virginia Library Association  
1996-2012, Co-Editor, Capitol Choices, Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens

**Central Rappahannock Regional Library**

**Chris Glover and Lisa Varga**

"Tech Tips"

2007, Outstanding Staff Development Program  
Virginia Public Library Directors Association

**Christie Hoerneman, Adult Services Coordinator**

2018, Board of Directors, FailSafe-ERA

**Christie Hoerneman, Reference Department Head/England Run**

2016, State Coordinator, National Library Legislative Day, American Library Association  
2016, Conference Committee, Virginia Library Association  
2015, "Top Ten of the Next Gen Award," Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce  
2011-2009, Chair, Virginia Library Association Multicultural Forum

**Candace Schmidt, Youth Services Librarian**

2006, Member, Youth Services Advisory Committee, Library of Virginia

**KidsPoint.org**

"Website of the Month, May 2004"

School Library Journal

"Website of the Month, January 2004"

Association for Library Service to Children, American Library Association  
"Innovative Internet Applications Recognition, KidsPoint"  
WiltonLibrary.org

**Hon. John Chichester**

"George Mason Award, 2002," Virginia Library Association

**Headquarters Library**

"Best in the Burg, 2002"

*Free Lance-Star*

**librarypoint.org**  
"Outstanding Website, 2001"  
Virginia Public Library Directors Association  
"Website of the Month, January 2001"  
LibrarySpot.com  
"Website of the Year, 2001"  
LibrarySpot.com

**Valerie Mayo, Library Board Trustee, 1980–1991, 2003–2007**  
1991, Trustee Library Award, Virginia Library Association

**Dr. Samuel Smart, Library Board of Trustee, 1995–2003, 2011–2017**  
2019, "Trustee Award" Virginia Library Association

**Frank Tobin, Library Board Trustee, 1986–1994**  
"Outstanding Library Trustee, 1996," Virginia Library Association

**George Van Sant, Library Board Trustee, 1969, 1995–2002**  
2006 Honorary Lifetime Member, Virginia Library Association  
"Outstanding Library Trustee, 2000," Virginia Library Association

# Policy Manual

The current [Policy Manual](#) can be found here on our website [librarypoint.org](http://librarypoint.org).

# Strategic Plan

The current [Strategic Plan](#) can be found here on our website [librarypoint.org](http://librarypoint.org).