



LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES BUDGET WORK SESSION

August 13, 2025

4:30 p.m.

Porter Branch

ATTENDEES

BOARD MEMBERS: David Ross (Chair), Christy Maupin (Vice-Chair), Rebecca Purdy (Secretary-Treasurer), Kerry Devine, Lori Hayes, Cheryl Miller and Dr. Pamela Yeung

LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION: Chris Glover, Amy Faulkner-Hart, Raya Nickerson and Laura Baxter-Christopher

CALL TO ORDER

David Ross called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Rebecca Purdy thanked board members for attending the first ever budget work session. Purdy introduced Stacey Churchill, Accounts Assistant, and the mastermind behind the new look to the budget documents was implemented for FY26.

Budget Priority #1: Increase Salaries

Purdy noted CRRL staff salary increases over the past 5 years are well below those of local government employees and a lack of competitive salaries results in retention challenges. Additionally, 92% of staff live where they work so a salary increase also benefits the jurisdictions themselves.

Purdy noted this is one of two line items most impacted when CRRL doesn't receive full funding; the second, books and materials, has a tremendous negative impact on customers.

New Strategic Plan

Purdy noted a Strategic Plan is required by code for any library receiving State Aid. Estimated costs for an updated plan is \$59,000 this includes staff and customer focus groups and surveys and is a nine to twelve month process.

David Ross asked for clarification as to what staff time this would require? Purdy noted an outside consultant would be hired to conduct customer and staff surveys and focus groups. The mentioned cost is the consultant fee.

Dr. Pamela Yeung asked if staff have a plan for what they would like to see the consultant do? Purdy noted staff are continuing to address goals from the current strategic plan. There are some items staff would consider asking the consultant to carry over to a new plan.

Lori Hayes asked if part of the consultant fee included a review of outcomes from the current plan? Purdy responded the consultant does not conduct a review of outcomes from the previous strategic plan. Hayes suggested if funding is not provided, maybe use the current plan to create a new strategic plan. Purdy noted it might be possible but it would not have the input from the customer and staff focus groups and surveys.

Dr. Yeung and Christy Maupin noted the importance of having a consultant collect survey data.

Maupin suggested the possibility of certain hybrid elements to bring down costs. Also, the board could conduct some historical background work.

Purdy mentioned the board could discuss the Strategic Plan at the February work session. Several board members agreed.

Possible Increase to Benefits

Purdy detailed when CRRL moved its health insurance to The Local Choice plan they were advised to expect an average health insurance increase of 7%. Purdy noted this is a much lower percentage increase than CRRL experienced prior to the switch.

Purdy detailed the FY27 goals presented to the Board in June listed a requested increase of 2.3%. As of late June the CPI was listed at 2.7% so this request has been updated accordingly.

Purdy expressed, CRRL continues to shop around for the best prices and look for opportunities to reduce the cost of supplies wherever possible.

Hayes asked for clarification about the cost of copy paper? Purdy noted these expenses are shared with the Friend of the Library. Hayes also asked if staff could present information regarding print usage based on the new limits? Purdy noted staff could produce this information in the future.

Yeung asked for clarification about printing processes? Purdy provided feedback.

Kerry Devine asked if staff could determine who was making large amounts of copies? Purdy noted it varies based on customer needs and certain times of the year.

Ross asked about a check-in process for computer usage/printing? Purdy noted it would be possible but would be cost prohibitive.

Sunday Hours

Purdy detailed the projected salary, FICA and estimated substitute costs of opening the Fredericksburg, Porter and Salem Church branches for 4 hours a week on Sundays would be \$164,253. Purdy said this does not include additional costs such as supplies, utilities, additional cleaning which the localities cover, etc. or any pay differential might be required if CRRL has to incentivize employees to work on Sundays.

Purdy noted staff evaluated the possibility of shifting hours from a current open evening or morning to Sundays instead, in hopes it might level out the cost; however studies showed steady usage of all three branches throughout the day.

Purdy recommended the Board hold on opening Sunday hours for now. Purdy added if the jurisdictions are able to increase funding for FY27 then those funds could be put towards bringing staff salaries more in line with what the jurisdictions pay their employees before CRRL expands hours any further.

Purdy expressed that CRRL's books and materials budget is not sufficient to buy enough materials in order to fill many current customer requests in a reasonable time period. Purdy included opening another day of the week would increase demand on an already taxed collection. Purdy detailed, once CRRL achieves a more balanced level for both of these line items then this is something to definitely consider.

Devine noted postponing Sunday hours in lieu of funding other options.

Hayes noted holding this as the expansion of the Spotsylvania hours have helped with demand at this time.

Purdy confirmed there was consensus from the Board to not include opening Sundays in the FY27 budget proposal.

Hayes asked what is included in the General supplies line item? Purdy noted various items including pens, pencils, and anything required to add a book (plastic wrap, or barcodes) to the collection. Hayes also asked for details regarding the telephone line item? Glover detailed the VOIP system was secured at a low rate and would eventually need to be evaluated but not necessarily at this time. Hayes also asked about internet Hot Spot usage? Glover noted the Hot Spots are very popular and there are long hold lists on those devices.

Dr. Yeung asked what is included in the miscellaneous line item? Amy Faulkner-Hart stated bank fees and other expenses don't necessarily fall into another category. Dr. Yeung also asked about software expenses? Glover noted these expenses are the annual licensing fees for our systems.

Capital Requests

Purdy detailed at the June meeting, the Board approved creation of a technology and equipment fund.

Purdy explained the jurisdictional administrators recommended CRRL create this fund for specific one-time projects instead of folding these costs into operating budget requests.

Purdy detailed at the September meeting, staff will propose to use the remainder of the Finley Trust totaling \$129,296.28 to help seed this fund. Purdy expressed this will get the fund started, but it is not enough to cover some of the more costly upcoming projects or to allow CRRL to modernize where needed. Purdy noted if the Board approves use of the Finley Trust for this purpose then it will only get CRRL through updates for one-time projects for current technology and equipment through FY27.

During discussions with the administrators staff mentioned CRRL's current self-checkout machines are nearing their end of life and need to be updated. Purdy detailed the importance of CRRL's self-checkout machines and adopting this technology has also allowed CRRL to realize savings in the salary and benefits line items by gradually reducing through attrition service desk staffing by one position at the four big branches.

Purdy noted CRRL is asking each jurisdiction to cover the projected cost of the self-check machines for their branches.

Purdy also provided extensive research regarding RFID tagging and automatic materials handling. Purdy expressed that CRRL is a bit behind the times when it comes to how materials are circulated and checked. RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) is a technology that uses radio waves to identify and track tags attached to objects and is an updated version of CRRL's current barcode system. Purdy noted this would allow staff to be able to check in multiple titles at the same time rather than one at a time as they do currently.

Purdy also detailed AMH (Automatic Materials Handling) library materials are checked in instantly and customers have immediate confirmation an item has been checked in. Purdy said currently each item has to be manually checked in by a staff member and customers don't receive confirmation and have to check their accounts after the fact.

Purdy noted in FY24 CRRL circulated around 979,000 physical items and each of those items were handled twice at a minimum just in the check in / check out process.

Yeung asked how much time this would save staff? Purdy noted with the combination of these technologies CRRL would need one less position at each of the four big branches for each hour the branch is open. Purdy detailed using FY26 pay rates would result in an additional \$216,457 in the salary budget. The proposed 3 year plan would allow CRRL to use attrition in years 2 and 3 in order to make those position changes without laying anyone off or reducing anyone's hours.

Hayes asked if this cost was in addition to the operating budget? Purdy noted this is a capital request and administrators had suggested capital funds be used.

Purdy provided details that include the purchase of RFID workstation hardware, the cost of the tags, training, and the staff costs for tagging library materials. The cost of the hardware was divided among the jurisdictions based on the number of workstations at each branch. The cost of the RFID tags, training, and staffing was divided among the jurisdictions based on the percentage of items circulated at the branches in each jurisdiction.

Purdy also detailed projected costs of the automatic materials handling for each location with the costs of the machines for the LAC split evenly among Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania and Stafford as is done for the other LAC expenses per the agreement. Stafford has one additional machine because of the drive-up book drop at Howell.

At this point these are projected costs and once funding is secured CRRL would be able to put out any necessary Request For Bids (RFBs), finalize costs and make any adjustments.

Purdy described a 3 year funding plan for these projects. The Year One request includes the projected costs of both the replacement self check machines and implementation of RFID. The year 2 and Year 3 projections are for the automatic materials handling.

Hayes asked if this was to replace the machines we currently have but not to upgrade to the RFID? Purdy confirmed this would not include the new technology.

Ross suggested the cost saving for the upgraded technology be included in the presentation.

Devine asked for clarification about the new printer/copier costs? Glover was able to provide details.

Ross asked for clarification regarding the digital signage systems and Hayes asked if those upgrades could be pushed back? Glover noted it may be possible however several machines are reaching end of life.

Devine asked for clarification regarding the number of self check out machines at the Fredericksburg Branch? Glover was able to provide details regarding the locations and number of those machines.

Yeung asked about the possibility of obtaining funds from proffers and or bonds? Ross noted this would be up to the locality.

Hayes also asked about the number of self check systems at the Towne Centre? Purdy provided clarification and explanation.

Purdy asked the board for next steps and the possibility of obtaining funds for FY26? Overall board members noted more of a possibility for FY27. Hayes noted possible grant opportunities.

Yeung asked if staff had a back up plan? Glover provided details for maintenance.

ADJOURNMENT

The next Board meeting is scheduled on September 8, at 4:30 p.m. at the Fredericksburg Branch. The meeting was adjourned at 5:28 p.m.