



**LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES
WORK SESSION
February 9, 2026
4:30 p.m.
Howell Branch**

ATTENDEES

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

LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION: Darcie Caswell, Amy Faulkner-Hart, Maureen Flaherty, Chris Glover, Joy McIntire, Tracy McPeck, Adriana Puckett, Samantha Thomason, Kim Young and Laura Baxter-Christopher

CALL TO ORDER

Christy Maupin called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Maupin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Maupin reminded Board members and attendees, the meeting was being recorded and the recording will be posted in the Board of Trustees section of the Library's website.

Maupin provided the Board with an update and answered questions regarding the Executive Director's Evaluation process.

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

Rebecca Purdy thanked the Board for attending the work session, allowing staff to update them on the Strategic Plan, and sharing CRRL's future priorities. Purdy introduced Kim Young, CRRL's new Director of Community Engagement.

Purdy then summarized the current 2022-2027 Strategic Plan, developed by a consultant using data-driven surveys from the Board, staff, customers, and partners. Staff have since used its priorities to guide work. Purdy noted most goals have been achieved, though some have been adjusted or redirected

due to budget, time, or a focus on more impactful alternatives. Purdy emphasized the significant, positive accomplishments of the staff on the Plan.

I. STRATEGIC PRIORITY GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Community Outreach

Expand marketing, awareness building, and outreach as a means of reaching and engaging CRRL's diverse population.

Goal 1: Increase library usage and engagement among four identified underserved populations: individuals experiencing homelessness, teens, those in rural communities, and English as a second language (ESL) individuals.

Individuals experiencing homelessness

Tracy McPeck, Director of Adult Services, presented an overview of library services for individuals experiencing homelessness. McPeck detailed CRRL's participation in the Fredericksburg Regional Continuum of Care and the Rappahannock EMS COPE Council, leading to partnerships which connect customers with resources. These local partnerships—including Faded & Co Barber Academy, Germanna Community College Nursing, and Rappahannock Area Community Services Board—increase services to those experiencing homelessness and financial challenges, offering resources like health screenings, haircuts, and legal information.

Staff also created a local assistance webpage for aid, including hygiene, laundry, housing, and food resources.

Teens

Darcie Caswell, Director of Youth Services, reported successful branch-level engagement comes from teen-initiated programs like book groups, Teen Council projects, and chess. Staff determine interests by talking with teens and responding directly. The library offers four monthly teen book groups and partners with area middle schools for Cafe Book discussion groups. CRRL's Teen Volunteer Program allows teens to earn required volunteer hours while gaining job-preparation skills through accountability, productivity, training, and feedback. The library's Teen Councils are a leadership offshoot of the volunteer program, where teens meet monthly to propose classes, events, and Fabulous Friday activities.

System-wide contests encourage teens to create projects and submit them for judging, feedback, and recognition. Meeting submission guidelines, deadlines, and accepting professional feedback develops post-secondary and employment skills.

Dr. Yeung made an inquiry about plans to reach underserved and homeless teens if they don't come to the library? Caswell noted there is no additional socioeconomic or demographic information specific to the teens group. The group is generally referred to as teens. Purdy noted CRRL staff visit schools and other events to gather feedback from teens who may not come to the library.

Those in rural communities

Tracy McPeck reported on the weekly delivery of technology and library services to rural Spotsylvania County through satellite locations at the Belmont Community Center and the Partlow Ruritan Club. These services include Wi-Fi, computers, printing, library materials, homework help, and research/technology assistance.

Additionally, CRRL launched the Westmoreland Library on the Go vehicle in the fall of 2025. This initiative brings technology and library services to Westmoreland County's rural communities, offering Wi-Fi, computers, printing, library materials, and research/technology assistance.

ESL individuals

McPeck continued to detail how CRRL added a cost-free website translation feature. Adult Services staff created "ELL Resources on Demand," featuring a scavenger hunt and resource checklist for ESL groups. They also developed a "Resources for English Language Learners" brochure, supplementing the "ELL Answers" webpage, to spotlight library classes, databases, and community resources. Regular ELL classes and events, offered at three branches and virtually, include English Basics for Beginners, an ELL Book Group, English conversation groups, and citizenship test prep.

Lori Hayes asked for the direct and indirect costs associated with programs for haircuts and health screenings. Purdy noted the library is just hosting those events and partnering with local agencies. Hayes requested a list be provided with what services are occurring in the Spotsylvania branches. Purdy noted not all programs are offered in Sportsylvania as the need is just growing in this area.

Hayes noted the county has been made aware of the need for internet access at the Partlow Satellite location and will maintain service.

David Ross inquired about potential risks of conflicts of homeless individuals at the Fredericksburg branch? Caswell noted there has been no feedback regarding this and following COVID programming attendance has actually increased.

Purdy noted services described were part of an effort to address the needs of the current population and redirect existing customers.

Cheryl Miller asked if staff provide a print list of various resources available throughout the area in an attempt to direct customers? Staff do provide a list of resources in both print and online.

Devine noted freezing temperatures and the close proximity of the warming shelter to the library.

CUSTOMER CENTRICITY & INCLUSION

Offer diverse and stellar programs, resources, and services aimed at creating a culture of inclusion and meeting customers' needs.

***Goal 1:** Increase materials in the collection that reflect the community, including ESL resources offered to the community.*

Samantha Thomason, Director of Collection and Customer Services stated CRRL is intentionally expanding its collection to reflect the community's diversity, supporting ESL learners, multilingual families, and foreign language learners through both digital and print resources. Transparent Language Online, via the Library of Virginia, offers English instruction in over 40 languages and U.S. Citizenship Test prep.

The library has also refreshed its print collection with the latest guides for the U.S. Citizenship Test and TOEFL. To support "home language" maintenance, LOTE4Kids and Mango Languages are available.

Other resources like Kanopy and hoopla also offer multilingual content. CRRL continues to align its collection strategy with the needs of its multilingual, tech-savvy community.

Dr. Yeung inquired about the costs/data of providing these services to gauge the success of programs? Thomason noted many provided services are used by both ESL and customers learning other languages like students.

Goal 2: *Determine which programming needs (in-branch and outreach) are most important to our community.*

Adriana Puckett, Deputy Executive Director, detailed work on this is just getting underway and staff will start by returning to the purposes and priorities for CRRL classes and events including metrics such as community demand, partnerships, and impact on staffing and funding.

Goal 3: *Focus on functionality of services on customer needs and expectations.*

Chris Glover, Assistant Executive Director, explained a major way CRRL is addressing this goal is with the Capital Fund Requests for FY27 - FY29. The new self-check machines, conversion to RFID tags on all library materials and automatic materials handling will expedite materials processing and increase customer satisfaction with instantaneous assurance their materials have been successfully checked in.

Hayes asked if CRRL has received buy-in from every locality for the capital request? Purdy noted Westmoreland County is the only county to approve the funding while others have shown support.

Goal 4: *Continue to prioritize diverse hiring and cultural awareness/sensitivity within CRRL's existing diverse workforce.*

Maureen Flaherty, Director of Human Resources, stated CRRL uses inclusive recruitment practices by opening full-time managerial roles both internally and externally to ensure a wide and diverse candidate pool, and applies equitable hiring practices throughout the selection process for all positions. CRRL also supports cultural awareness through ongoing staff training, open dialogue and policies which promote respect, inclusion, and understanding across the workforce.

STAFF TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Ensure staff are equipped, enabled, and empowered to serve our community as CRRL becomes a library of the future.

Goal 1: *Develop a plan that would provide at least one opportunity per year for each employee to shadow a different area of CRRL as a means of increasing awareness and development.*

Maureen Flaherty detailed that CRRL is not able to fulfill the goal as described. Staff concluded after evaluation, the library has prioritized other professional development opportunities to provide greater organizational impact. In lieu of shadowing opportunities, CRRL has implemented alternative development opportunities for educating staff on possible career paths within the organization including examining job descriptions and providing platforms to learn about other roles at CRRL. Departments provide training to do the necessary tasks related to a staff member's job roles during the onboarding process.

Kerry Devine asked if there was a specific area staff are looking for in professional development? Flaherty noted there is not one specific topic but a variety of topics concerning library roles.

David Ross asked if deescalation training is included? Flaherty noted all staff are trained during on-boarding.

Ross also asked about shadowing opportunities. Flaherty provided insight.

Dr. Yeung inquired about transition plans for fulfillment of potential retirees? Purdy noted a robust succession plan and training opportunities.

Goal 2: *Provide each employee with the opportunity to attend at least two external professional development opportunities each year that are specific to their role, professional goals, and interests.*

Flaherty explained CRRL regularly navigates complex and challenging situations. CRRL has intentionally invested in professional development to ensure staff are well-prepared, confident and supported to handle these situations. All staff receive mandatory, organization-wide de-escalation training upon hiring. This core training ensures consistent staff skills, knowledge, and expectations CRRL-wide for customer service and rule enforcement, supporting outstanding daily service.

Areas of this goal still in progress are expanding internal professional development opportunities for all staff members.

Goal 3: *Provide staff quarterly opportunities to share library trends, professional development experiences and otherwise continue to emphasize the importance of and commitment to employee growth.*

Flaherty stated, staff have created a system for sharing new ideas and insights gained from conferences to training sessions and professional development experiences. Staff are able to submit kudos to a fellow staff member and share personal events and holidays which are then shared with all staff.

Staff continue an ongoing virtual meeting twice a month which allows leadership and staff who participate as guest speakers to share updates to the organization.

INGENUITY & INNOVATION

Use internal and external resources, knowledge, insights, and inspiration to constantly reimagine what's possible as a Library of the Future.

Goal 1: *Host employee mastermind sessions to engage staff in discussing current innovation and brainstorming new innovative ways of meeting customers' needs.*

Chris Glover, Assistant Executive Director, stated the library actively discusses innovative services in department and virtual meetings. The rapid expansion of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a key development, offering opportunities to assist customers and improve internal service delivery. All staff received basic AI training in early December, covering tools in Google Workspace. More comprehensive AI training for Adult and Youth Services staff on customer assistance is being developed, and an AI working group is forming to keep staff current.

Goal 2: *Expand CRRL's digital and non-traditional collections.*

Samantha Thomason, Director of Collections and Customer Services, stated CRRL continues to redefine the modern library experience, providing innovative resources which empower our community. By

expanding digital and non-traditional collections, the library is ensuring every resident—from young explorers to legal researchers—has the tools they need to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

The Library of Things expanded significantly this year with 34 new STEM and outdoor kits, thanks to grant funding. CRRL's digital news access expanded with the fall 2025 launch of America's News, a resource seeing robust usage. It provides access to nearly 4,000 nationwide newspapers, including almost 300 full-color editions like the Richmond Times-Dispatch and The Roanoke Times, as well as national publications such as USA Today and The Washington Times. It also offers lesson plans for teachers based on headlines and curated topics.

The Law Library now offers a new circulating consumer law collection focused on high-need topics and expanded access to the Westlaw legal database for both professionals and the public.

IdeaSpace now offers Oral History and Podcasting Kits, enabling residents to record their own stories, promoting creation over just consumption.

Hoopla BingePasses maximize value by offering 7 days of unlimited access to specialized collections with fewer "borrows."

Finally, a Community Foundation grant will soon launch circulating eReaders, pre-loaded with instantly accessible eBooks, removing the barrier of device ownership and ensuring digital literacy.

Goal 3: Innovatively use space to meet the community's growing needs.

Joy McIntire, Director of Branch Services, detailed the library innovatively uses current spaces with the addition of privacy pods and Smartboards to meet growing community needs.

Smartboards

Grant funding brings portable Smartboards to Fredericksburg, Howell, Porter, and Salem Church meeting rooms this year. These electronic whiteboards, similar to classroom tech, will allow groups to collaborate on projects and include applications like teleconferencing.

Privacy Pods

The library expanded the availability of privacy pods in 2024, providing private spaces for study, virtual meetings, telehealth, and job interviews, addressing a critical need for study room space. Over 4,000 customers used the pods from January 2023–December 2025.

Devine asked for clarification regarding usage data presented. McIntire was able to provide clarification.

MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Nurture and expand existing partnerships that support the community's needs.

Goal 1: Develop a plan for cultivating new and existing partnerships with organizations, businesses, and agencies in our community that align with our mission in support of the community.

Adriana Puckett, Deputy Executive Director, detailed work is just getting started on this goal. Over the years, CRRL has worked with many, many community partners so we are beginning by assessing existing partnerships to determine which most closely align with the Library's mission and vision and which ones are still even active partnerships.

Cheryl Miller encouraged Board members to pick up a copy of the newest At Your Library magazine.

Goal 2: *Execute the plan for cultivating new and existing partnerships by a minimum of two new or renewed partnerships.*

Puckett, stated how cultivating and renewing strategic partnerships allows the library to deeply integrate itself into the regional fabric. These collaborations strategically bridge service gaps by introducing specialized skills and niche expertise complement the staff's strengths. Examples of partnerships include Hub of Hope, Blue Gray Therapy Dogs, Master Gardeners, the Alzheimer's Association, the Stafford County Historical Society, and many more. By leveraging partners' established networks, the library extends its reach through marketing channels which introduce the library's mission to new demographics.

Hayes and Dr. Yeung left the meeting due to a prior conflict.

Purdy asked the presentation about the Value of Public Libraries be presented at another date due to meeting time constraints.

III. FUTURE PRIORITIES | CRRL'S ROLE IN SERVING COMMUNITIES

Purdy presented the library's core mission of promoting literacy is changing, requiring constant monitoring of local needs and national trends. Innovation must be intentional; CRRL adopts new tools and services not for novelty, but to bridge the gap in residents' current and future needs, making traditional and technology literacy equally vital.

Access is crucial. High-quality library resources ensure economic or social status does not limit a resident's potential. The library must serve all patrons, from toddlers with picture books to seniors mastering AI prompts, and provide essential services like internet access for job interviews, or easy eBook downloads for those who can't visit.

Leadership will now detail how CRRL is addressing these shifting literacy trends, including a significant national one, to continually meet community needs. Additional information is available in your packet.

Cultivating Traditional Literacy

Darcie Caswell noted, Traditional literacy is crucial at all ages. Early literacy skills are essential for kindergarten readiness and academic success. Strong reading skills are foundational to all subjects; inability to read well hinders knowledge acquisition across content areas.

The foundation for lifelong learning is established in the first five years during peak brain development. However, declining reading rates risk a repeating cycle, especially as Gen Z parents, who may lack strong traditional literacy skills themselves, might not prioritize reading for their children.

Excessive screen time can negatively alter brain development and increase social-emotional problems. Physical books, conversely, offer unique developmental advantages digital screens cannot replicate, primarily through high-quality caregiver-child verbal exchanges.

Traditional literacy is vital for a productive life, necessary for K-12 success, higher education, job applications, and workplace training. The library is particularly focused on reversing the decline in parents reading to their children, aiming to elevate early literacy messaging and provide resources to help parents make reading a daily routine.

Devine asked about the promotion of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library? Caswell provided insight to the library's area partnerships with DPIL.

Ross asked if print materials were prioritized when purchasing for the children's collection? Thomason noted normally print materials are carefully balanced and children's books tend to be more print.

One of the key factors that impacts our ability to impact traditional literacy is bolstering the collection budget

Purdy stated the strength of the library is directly tied to its staff and resources. While increasing staff salaries remains a key priority, a substantial boost to the library's collection budget is vital to meet current demand and prepare for population growth. Although the use of eMaterials is increasing, physical books are heavily utilized by customers and, as Darcie noted, are indispensable for early childhood literacy. Currently, the collection budget is approximately 8.5% of the CRRL budget, but an ideal minimum would be 10%.

Educating customers in the areas of information, digital and technology literacy.

Chris Glover noted, the public library has always promoted information literacy, now encompassing digital sources. Library staff assist customers with the constantly changing information landscape.

AI is rapidly becoming a defining technology, with significant regional implications for jobs and infrastructure. Many customers seek library help to understand what AI is, its current impact, and its future role. Staff continuously learn emerging technologies to anticipate customer needs, offering one-on-one technical training.

Moving forward, the library will increase its focus on helping customers with new AI tools, addressing questions about the advantages and risks of using AI in chatbots (like ChatGPT and Gemini) and in image, audio, and video creation. The library plans additional AI training for staff on assisting customers and internal use. An AI working group will help staff and administration keep pace with the rapidly changing AI environment.

Empowering our community with the tools to master practical and life literacies

Puckett noted the library serves as a gateway for all ages to gain skills for personal growth and stability. CRRL customers can learn food literacy through cookbooks, classes, and the Seed Library; financial literacy via books and expert classes; health & wellness literacy through yoga, caregiver support, health assessments, and current research; and civic literacy through book groups, events, and the Teen Council. The Library of Things continues to expand with items like craft kits, tools, and instruments for hands-on skill application. Children can also check out Nature packs for outdoor learning and environmental stewardship.

Providing opportunities for customers to experience social connection and to develop cultural literacies

Puckett stated the following: the library will continue to provide opportunities for social connection, helping to combat the increasing loneliness epidemic. CRRL is a unique third space. The library serves as an intergenerational & multilingual hub, and this is an area CRRL will continue to grow in the future. Cultural literacy will continue to be facilitated by opportunities to explore different cultures and unique cultural expressions

Addressing the needs of the Aging Adult Population

Tracy McPeck detailed, the U.S. population is aging; in 2024, adults 65+ outnumbered children under 18 in nearly half of U.S. counties, and the 65+ population grew almost five times faster than the total population from 1920 to 2020. This demographic shift creates new demands in proactive health (including brain and mental health), social connection, and financial security. As a trusted institution, CRRL is positioned to help older adults meet these needs.

CRRL's current efforts include: Social connectedness, Financial literacy and security Proactive health practices.

Future solutions involve increased outreach to assisted/senior living and rural communities, expanded technology support (e.g., staff-facilitated AARP Senior Planet courses), and stronger partnerships with local organizations such as Healthy Generations, Bay Aging, Partners in Aging, and the Alzheimer's Association.

Purdy concluded with a final future priority impacting CRRL's budget is the Library Administration Center's future. Since the current lease expires in six years, early planning with the Board and jurisdictions is necessary to determine the most cost-effective option. Staff will present an overview of the current facility at the March Board meeting. Staff welcomes your thoughts on all future priorities and any which may be missing.

ADJOURNMENT

The next Board meeting is scheduled on March 9, 2026 at 4:30 p.m. at the Porter Branch. The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 p.m.