

Jefferson-Madison Regional Library

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A P P R O V E D

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 28, 2015 MEETING OF THE LIBRARY'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES

TRUSTEES PRESENT

President Brian LaFontaine (Albemarle)
Wendy Wheaton Craig (Louisa)
Jane B. Kulow (Albemarle)
Peter McIntosh (Charlottesville)

Vice President Stephen Walls Mathis (Greene)
Gary Grant (Albemarle)
Marcia McDuffie (Nelson)
Tamyra Turner (Charlottesville)

TRUSTEES ABSENT

Carla Mullen (Charlottesville)

OTHERS PRESENT

John Halliday, Library Director
Krista Farrell, Asst. Lib. Dir. and Central Branch Mgr.
Tiffany Duck, Louisa Mgr.
Shawn Hirabayashi, HR Specialist
Toby Zakin, Albemarle Co. resident
Mike Powers, Albemarle Co. resident

Ginny Reese, Staff Recorder/Greene Mgr.
David Plunkett, Coll. and Tech Mgr.
William Lyons, Library Business Mgr.
Casey Baruzzini, Crozet resident
Janet Dix, Charlottesville NOW
Kathy Thaxter, MLIS student

The regular monthly meeting of the Jefferson-Madison Regional Library's (JMRL) Board of Trustees was held on Monday, September 28, 2015, at 3:03 p.m. in the Louisa County Library's meeting room (881 Davis Highway, Mineral, VA), President LaFontaine being in the chair. Trustee McIntosh made a motion for the approval of the August 28, 2015 minutes. The August 28, 2015 Minutes were approved as presented without opposition. Vice President Mathis abstained. Trustee Craig arrived after the vote.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

President LaFontaine began the meeting with public comments. Toby Zakin said that the public use of displays is appropriate and we have to allow for different views. She added that this is a secular society, that separation of church and state is important, and one can't impose one's religious views on others. Mike Powers expressed disbelief that the board still hadn't resolved the display issue. He told Ms. Zakin that religion had never been a motivation in his difficulties with the NOW display in April at the Central Library. He felt the issue is appropriateness for all ages and balance. He still wants to know if it is the position of the library as a whole that the display was correct. He offered some photos of the display to President LaFontaine. President LaFontaine thanked both and then asked Tiffany Duck, Branch Manager of the Louisa County Library to speak. Manager Duck gave a brief welcome in which she mentioned a couple of highlights of the Louisa library, including the "Tween Scene" program (for pre-teens) and the new parking lot scheduled for the fall. President LaFontaine then asked for any announcements. Trustee Kulow mentioned the 2nd anniversary celebration of the new Crozet Library scheduled for that evening at 7pm. She added that fund raising for the new library has officially closed down. Trustee McIntosh stated that the Friends of the Library (FOTL) received an unsolicited \$5,000 donation from PYMWYMI (Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is). Director Halliday reminded the Board that at the last board meeting there was a petition presented requesting him to make a public statement about the April 2015 display by Charlottesville NOW at the Central Library. He first offered some background to the issue. He detailed the personal attacks by a WINA radio host on Manager Farrell, Vice President Mathis, and himself. He then read his statement (Attached). Trustee Kulow made a motion, "The JMRL Board of Trustees accepts Director Halliday's public statement as the Board's response to the issue brought about by Charlottesville NOW's April 2015 display at the Central Library." Vice President Mathis offered an amendment which he withdrew after discussion. The motion passed without opposition. Trustee Grant abstained.

POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT

Director Halliday summarized the notes taken at the last policy committee. The entire meeting dealt with the issues surrounding the April 2015 display by NOW. There were comments from the public, then discussion. It was agreed that Director Halliday would draft a revision to the display policy (JMRL Policy: Section 4.51). Other items were tabled due to a lack of time. After Director Halliday's summarization, Trustee McIntosh brought up a point of order regarding his being silenced by Trustee Grant at the last policy committee meeting. Trustee Grant had said that only committee members

could speak. Trustee McIntosh felt it was the Chair's prerogative to allow anybody to talk. President LaFontaine agreed with Trustee McIntosh.

FIVE YEAR PLAN COMMITTEE REPORT

Trustee Kulow stated that the purpose of the meeting was to identify any objectives that have budget implications. There are implications related to the equipment fund and the position of the Digital Services Coordinator. Also the Outreach Services position. Greene, Louisa, and Nelson are all below "AA" standards for per capita spending and service hours. Northside is currently at 51 hrs/week and should be at 60. State Aid for the collection is less than it was 16 years ago. The goals for 2017 are being met except for staffing, in particular, the position of Development Director. Director Halliday distributed copies of the Five Year Plan.

DISCUSSION OF FY2017 BUDGET OBJECTIVES

Director Halliday stated that it was time for the Board to adopt budget objectives. Towards that end there will be presentations at the next Board meeting from staff. Director Halliday's highest priority is implementing the 3rd year of the Pay Plan. Vice President Mathis wants more hours for the Greene County branch. Trustee McDuffie wants more hours for the Nelson Memorial branch.

ADOPTION OF REVISED POLICY ON PUBLIC COMMENTS (SECTION 1.261) AND UPDATED RECORDS RETENTION POLICY (SECTION 1.7)

Director Halliday presented the two updated policies from the Policy Committee for the Board's approval. After discussion a vote was taken to accept the revised Policy on Public Comments. Trustee Kulow voted aye and all others voted nay. It was suggested that the Policy Committee consider allowing six speakers with each getting five minutes. There was no discussion regarding the Records Retention Policy. All voted in favor of accepting it.

MID-YEAR BOOK BUDGET SUPPLEMENT

Director Halliday reiterated that State aid for materials acquisition was less than it was 16 years ago. He explained that the current budget allowed for \$42,204 for health insurance that was not needed because of employees who had opted out. He proposed that the Board reallocate those funds to be used for materials acquisition. Vice President Mathis made the motion, "The Board will make a one-time reallocation of the unused \$42,204 set aside for health insurance to be used for materials acquisition." The motion passed with all in favor.

LIBRARY BOARD SELF-EVALUATION

President LaFontaine handed out copies of the Board self-evaluation. He encouraged the Trustees to look over the report later and stated that the main area of improvement seemed to be in the area of Board continuing education. Towards that end, President LaFontaine will approach the Virginia Library Association regarding a Board retreat. Trustee McIntosh proposed that the retreat take the place of one of the monthly Board meetings.

REPORT ON PUBLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION'S "BOOT CAMP"

Assistant Director Farrell reported on the 4 ½-day "boot camp," which occurred in Nashville. It was an excellent opportunity to network and get new ideas. She came away energized by all the information (much of which she has yet to process) and promised to keep the Board informed as the new ideas are implemented at JMRL.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Business Manager Lyons helped JMRL receive \$105,000 through the federal E-Rate Program.
- The digitizing of the Daily Progress continues with all issues through 1923 completed. The most popular issue so far is April 16, 1912, the day after the Titanic sunk.
- President LaFontaine, Vice President Mathis, and Trustee Grant all have formal "meet & greets" planned. Flyers for those events were passed around. Other Trustees are encouraged to prepare their events, formal or not.
- FOTL has decided to take on the administrative duties of Books Behind Bars for one year. Trustee McIntosh added that in a year's time there would be an evaluation of the financial viability of the plan.
- "Beyond the Books" fall issue is ready. It was distributed. The Spanish version is online.
- After the meeting there will be a tour of the new library at Louisa County High School.

FUTURE ADGENDA ITEMS

The budget will be discussed. The meeting will occur at the Greene County branch.

PROPOSED ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Turner made a motion to adjourn. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 4:36 p.m.

Brian LaFontaine, President

JOHN HALLIDAY'S PUBLIC STATEMENT REGARDING THE APRIL DISPLAY AT CENTRAL LIBRARY

At the August Library Board meeting I was presented with a petition asking me to make a public statement regarding the April 2015 display at Central Library. This is that statement.

In April 2015, a display case at Central Library contained an exhibit created by the Charlottesville Chapter of National Organization for Women. Many people said the exhibit was offensive and should have been excluded, many other people said the exhibit was educational and supported the library's role of fostering the free exchange of ideas. Despite some heated rhetoric, personal attacks on library staff, and calls for immediate action, the Library Board has taken a thoughtful, deliberative approach to what the Library Board sees as a policy issue. Developing library policies is one of the Library Board's primary responsibilities.

That being said, I want to say I'm sorry that people were offended by the National Organization of Women display at Central Library. I understand why people would be offended and the Library Board and I certainly do not want to offend anyone. Offending patrons is not good customer service and responding to many complaints from library patrons is not the best use of staff time.

To recap the Library Board's actions regarding the display: In April the Library Board asked the Library Director to look into the display case issue and report back. In June the Library Director reported back that though library staff would have had a weak case to exclude the April display, the complaints about the April display highlighted several areas where library policy and procedures should be revised. The Library Director recommended several changes and advised seeking legal counsel regarding additional changes. In response, the Library Board asked the Library Director to solicit input on the display case policy from different sides of the political spectrum: The Rutherford Institute and The Thomas Jefferson Center for Free Expression. In August the Library Board heard from attorneys representing both those organizations and the attorneys concurred with the Library Director's June assessment that the policy did not provide support for library staff to exclude the National Organization of Women display. The attorneys pointed out that policy wording including "age appropriate" and "balanced" are vague and open to broad interpretation. The attorneys concluded the Library Board has two choices: 1) continue to allow community groups to have essentially unfettered access to the library display cases, or 2) limit display cases to library-use-only. Both attorneys indicated favoring Choice #1 so that "the marketplace of ideas can play out."

As I stated, the Library Board does not want to offend anyone. However, the Board is faced with a difficult choice: 1) if the library continues to provide unfettered access to display cases by community groups and individuals, the library must expect continued objections when people are offended by what they see, and 2) if the library excludes community groups and individuals from using the display cases, limiting displays to library-use-only, the library will be closing a forum for the free exchange of ideas.

I think there may be a third choice, a compromise that would allow some access to some library display cases by community groups while reserving most library display cases for library-use-only. I think such a compromise could alleviate many of the concerns heard recently. That is something that will need to be decided by the Library Board. I will also recommend that the Library Board establish an appeal process so that individuals or groups that have concerns about a library display will know how to appropriately express their concerns and to whom they should appeal to for a final resolution.

The library display cases have been used by hundreds of community groups and individuals over the past decades with few objections. The Library Board has now listened to diverse opinions on the April display at Central Library and has solicited input from staff and attorneys. No matter which direction the Library Board decides to take on this policy issue, I hope people will be patient, considerate, and polite as the Library Board deliberates to make its best decisions for our community.