

Botetourt County Library Board of Trustees
September 13, 2023, 12:00pm

Present: Dr. Marlene Preston, Chair; Mr. Chris Becke; Ms. Mary Lynn Leffel; Ms. Julie Phillips;
Dr. Brandi Porter
Absent: Ms. Julia Patterson

Dr. Preston called the meeting to order at 12:02pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Anne Palmer, Fincastle District

Ms. Palmer stated that she was with BRACE (organization) but speaking for God. She stated that she had spoken with the Fincastle Library manager and was amazed at everything going on in libraries. She stated that no one wants to close libraries; we need libraries and what they offer. We just want a handful of books to be taken off the shelves. She stated that the books are pornographic in nature and read Merriam-Webster's definition of "pornography" and "erotic." She stated that these books are written to show children how to perform oral sex and other sexual activities and to promote the sexualization of children. She added that horrible things happen to children when they become sexualized. She stated that these books are porn, they arouse, and they put sex acts into the minds of children. Parents can buy their own books if they want their children to have them. She then read Bible verses to think on pure things, and that people's eyes have become closed to the truth. She closed by stating her gratitude for libraries.

NOVEMBER MEETING DATE

Board members agreed to shift November's Library Board meeting from the 8th to the 15th so all members could attend. The November or December meeting could be canceled if there are no pressing issues to discuss.

FUNDRAISING/FOUNDATION

Dr. Porter renewed a past conversation about establishing a library Foundation. She reminded the group of reading material they had perused some months ago.

Dr. Porter listed a number of benefits to having a Foundation, including more opportunities for grants, sponsorships, planned giving, and endowments. She noted that it could be a centralized way to raise additional funds for the library and could be scalable for small or large amounts. It is a slow process to develop a Foundation, but could open up possibilities that are beyond the ability of the Friends of the Library to support.

Some possible next steps include:

1. Using feedback from staff and the community to prioritize funding needs (particularly beyond what the current budget and Friends can support).

2. Creating a toolkit with background information, such as the strategic plan, history of the library, mission/vision, etc. (as needed by funders/grants).
3. Recruiting people who might serve on the Foundation's Board (start out small and ensure a rotation of terms for continuity).
4. Talking to other Foundations in the community to learn what they are doing, whether it is beneficial, how active they are, what they have learned.

Dr. Porter noted that setting up a Foundation is simple – get a federal tax ID number, articles of incorporation, filing and filing fee. The Foundation would be a separate entity from the Library and Friends; no County dollars would be needed to establish it.

The downsides of a Foundation are the logistics and work of running it. The Foundation would not control any library operations or policies. Usually the library and Foundation have an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) that delineates goals and boundaries.

Mr. Becke noted that Roanoke City library's Foundation solicits funding from larger donors to provide free culturally-relatable books to underprivileged children as a literacy outreach effort. There is ample funding for such projects as literacy is a major focus right now.

Board members agreed to establish an ad hoc Foundation subcommittee, with Dr. Porter and Mr. Becke as members. Dr. Porter also recommended that the subcommittee consult with Mr. Steve Vest, the President of the Botetourt County Friends of the Library. The tentative completion date for the committee's work in establishing a framework for the Foundation was set for March 2024. The Library Director would serve as the library's connection to the project.

Mr. Becke suggested that the Foundation focus on larger donors, while Friends manage smaller donations. Dr. Porter noted that Foundations often focus on systemwide needs, while Friends often manage projects for their local branches.

Dr. Preston asked Ms. Phillips to send the Board a map of magisterial districts, library locations, and population density (current and projected). She noted the community demand for a library location in Daleville. Ms. Phillips noted the need for capital planning in order to meet community needs and expectations. Board members agreed on the need for both long-term projects (such as capital projects) and shorter-term projects for earlier successes.

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Julie Phillips, Library Director, offered the following report:

- The new shared well between the Eagle Rock Library and Eagle Rock Elementary School is near completion and currently undergoing tests.
- The mural at the Buchanan Library is complete. Staff report highly positive responses from the community.
- Development for the mobile app has been delayed as the vendor works out some issues. The app will hopefully be released before the end of the calendar year.

- The OCLC Wise team will visit in-person during October to highlight upcoming improvements to the online catalog and gather additional feedback from the consortium as an early adopter. An events management module is also under development.
- The library no longer offers e-cards (online signup for immediate temporary cards). The service was launched during the pandemic when in-person services were halted, but it is no longer needed and rarely used.
- Access to the Entrepreneurial Learning Institute, a self-paced online course for entrepreneurs, will end after September 30. This resource has been made available to all Virginia libraries through the Library of Virginia.
- Library resource highlight: Brainfuse HelpNow is a free live online tutoring service for grades K – college, including homework help and test prep. Live certified teachers are available on demand 7 days per week, 2-11pm.
- Upcoming library program highlights:
 - Meet a British Soldier: Revolutionary War Reenactor
 - Hydroponics
 - Botetourt Trails: On and Off the Beaten Path (culminates in a group hike to Roaring Run)
 - Life of Sorrow: The Life and Times of Carter Stanley – Gary Reid, storytelling and musical performance
 - REVIVE! Narcan Training
 - Rain Barrel Workshop
 - Deaf Awareness
 - Informational programs on the Affordable Care Act, retirement and hospice
 - Teen Time and Chess Club
 - Regular children’s programs include StoryTime, Little Explorers, LEGO Club, STEM Club, and arts and crafts
 - Wings of Fire
 - “Elemental” family movie showings
 - Garden Club
 - Beekeeping
 - DHR: Your Historic Property and How to Save It
 - Partner programs with Parks & Recreation: Senior BINGO, Forever Fit, Yoga for Beginners, Self-Defense
 - Spooky Storytelling in Troutville Town Park (late October)
- Staff are currently planning January/February programs.
- The Fincastle Friends of the Library will hold a book and bake sale in later September, and the Buchanan Friends of the Library will hold a book sale in early October.
- The Buchanan library is participating in the Town of Buchanan’s RERC (Recreation Economy for Rural Communities) grant work, including expanding its existing presence as a tourist center for the town.

- Libraries still provide free COVID test kits, and demand is expected to increase as cases rise and cold/flu season moves in. Patrons can utilize the library's curbside service to pick up tests without leaving their vehicles.
- Libraries will be closed over the Columbus Day weekend.
- September is National Library Card SignUp Month, and patrons are invited to share their feedback by filling out cards with the starter sentence, "My library helped me...." Many responses indicate that the library encourages reading and learning, but a majority of responses focused on the library's opportunities for social connection and a sense of community and acceptance.

Mr. Clinton asked how programs were planned and by whom. Ms. Phillips stated that the library's programming team (including the library director, branch managers, and the Youth Services Coordinator) gather input from the community and staff to determine which programs would meet community interests and needs. They then filter suggestions through the library's mission and capacity, as well as what experts might be available and at what cost. Most presenters offer their services free of charge, and the library occasionally pays presenter fees for others so that programs can remain free for participants. Mr. Becke suggested adding programs for young moms, including fitness and post-partum. Roanoke County and City libraries have seen good success with such programs.

BOARD COMMENTS

None.

The meeting adjourned at 1:11pm.