

Minutes
Board of Library Trustees Work Day
February 2nd, 2017
University Park Library
3435 University BLVD North

Present:

Ronnie King, Chair
Tim Anderson, Vice-Chair
Mario Payne, Secretary
Sybil Ansbacher, Foundation Liaison
Guy K. Anderson, Trustee
Jill Dame, Trustee
Charlie Kleeman, Trustee
Dr. Bill Mason, Trustee
Jackie Perry, Trustee
Gerald Reid, Trustee
Dr. Brenda R. Simmons-Hutchins,
Trustee

Absent:

Marc Hardesty, Trustee

Staff:

Barbara A. B. Gubbin, Library Director
Jennifer Giltrop, Deputy Director,
Public Services
Mark Merritt, Deputy Director,
Administration & Finance
Chris Boivin, Assistant Director,
Community Relations and
Marketing
Julie McNeil, Assistant Director, Public
Services
Gretchen Mitchell, Assistant Director,
Support Services
Richard Mott, Manager for Strategic
Initiatives
Aubrey Winship Shah, Assistant
Director, Facilities Management
and Planning
Andrew Herron, Executive Assistant to
the Director

Others Present:

Dr. Johnny Gaffney, Mayor's Liaison
to Boards and Commissions
Jamie Self, Director, Jacksonville
Public Library Foundation
Dick Waters, Godfrey's Associates
Kaitlyn Weatherly, Jacksonville
Public Library Foundation

Friends:

Sylvia Wren, Friends of the
Jacksonville Public Library
Sharon Coon, Friends of the
Brentwood Library
Ramonda Fields, Friends of the
Dallas Graham Library
Roxanne Henkle, Friends of the
Willowbranch Library
Judy Klein, Friends of the Murray Hill
Library

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Library Board Chair Ronnie King called those present for the Board Work Day to order shortly after 8:30AM. Chair King invited everyone to share something about themselves, noting that trustees rarely have opportunities to get to know one another.

2. Current Trends

Richard Mott, Jacksonville Public Library's (JPL's) Manager for Strategic Initiatives, facilitated a discussion of library usage trends, which included statistics showing that new card issuance and program attendance have increased. Trustee Jill Dame expressed concern that the increases were impressive only among child customers and expressed hope that large numbers of children being introduced to the library through its partnership with Duval County Public Schools (DCPS) will continue to use the library as they age. Trustee Brenda Simmons-Hutchins noted that elders often enjoy field trips to the library too. The group as a whole took special interest in age demographics as related to library usage. Trustee Tim Anderson defined the urgency of this interest: When market share is given up from any demographic, it is difficult to regain. Customer retention is bound to be challenging in a region with Jacksonville's sizable recreation industry, and Trustee Anderson cited this as a compelling reason to continue advocating for restored, expanded and consistent hours of weekly service.

Library Director Barbara Gubbin acknowledged that library usage and program attendance trends were more impressive among children than adults but reminded those present that investments in adult programming are expensive, as they often involve paying for outside talent, while children's programming usually can be accomplished with salaried staff. The library has no General Fund budget to support adult or children's programming.

3. Visions

Chair King led a discussion of attendees' visions for the future of Jacksonville Public Library: Trustee Charlie Kleeman shared a vision of a library focused on providing customers with resources that they can't easily access elsewhere, with expanded hours of service to match those of a Barnes and Noble. Trustee Tim Anderson envisioned the library rotating away from being a repository of materials and towards being an enabler of learning through more digital means. He wondered if efficiencies could be discovered within this rotation to streamline staff, thus freeing funds for other priorities such as expanded hours of service. Trustee Bill Mason lauded the wide range of services offered by JPL but saw a considerable awareness gap among potential customers, suggesting that a greater emphasis be placed on marketing and publicity, particularly through social media. Trustee Jill Dame agreed with Trustee Mason's emphasis on marketing but noted that carefully targeted marketing might best connect potential customers with specific programs that would interest them most. Trustee Brenda Simmons-Hutchins stressed the importance of collaborative partnerships with organizations that work with target groups such as senior citizens. Roxanne Henkle of the Friends of the Willowbranch Library suggested that the library serve as a gathering place for more nonprofits and reported discussing the matter with several such groups. Trustee Mario Payne envisioned making the library a "cool" gathering place even for more informal groups. Trustee Sybil Ansbacher suggested promoting the library as a community center, a "safe place," and an area where those in desperate circumstances can be referred to organizations able to help

them. Trustee Gerald Reid shared the perspective that the library should always offer services for customers from all economic brackets, providing a commons where customers encounter people they might not otherwise meet. Trustee Jackie Perry suggested expanding the library's entrepreneurial support programs.

Trustee Guy Anderson made a case for expanded advocacy of the wide range of services the library offers, particularly in advocating for better library facilities for the Urban Core and a new library in Oceanway.

4. Demonstrations of Library Experiences

JPL Staff provided attendees with demonstrations of various library experiences that JPL offers its customers: interactive robotics demonstrations provided in the Main Library's Jax Makerspace; field trip activities provided to teach DCPS students how to use the library; online products for those using the library to access business and financial information; training for customers seeking to increase their technical skills; planning of the Pablo Creek Library's "Turn it Up" Thursdays, in which the library hosts a variety of activities and organizations in one night; and social media marketing by the library through such platforms as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

5. Practical Possibilities for the Future – The 20th Century Library

Director Gubbin put the future in context by reviewing the 2011 Capacity Plan and what it has and has not accomplished. Plans to improve delivery of information have resulted in a number of service level agreements with the City of Jacksonville (COJ) Information Technology Division (ITD) that have improved elements of its working relationship with the library. Bandwidth has increased, and self-check equipment has been upgraded. Facilities maintenance by COJ Public Works has become more responsive, though a five year maintenance schedule was not achieved. Plans to replace certain Urban Core Libraries with a large modern facility were shelved in light of the local community's rejection of the idea, and the new CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) includes proposals to build replacement libraries for the Graham and Brentwood libraries. Branches have been organized into regional management units. The building of a new library in far northeast Jacksonville remains unachieved. Plans to establish an independently funded library district failed narrowly at the ballot level, but the library is now able to retain money from fines for capital projects. The number of appointed positions has increased.

Director Gubbin moved on to review actions the library is taking to position itself for the future: reclassifying positions to better align with services, observing a direct reporting relationship between the Foundation and the Library, adjusting the collections budget to reflect demand for digital services, renovating certain library spaces to align with the broader needs of customers, conducting community outreach and partnering with other organizations, investigating extending student library accounts beyond DCPS students (as all DCPS students now have library accounts), and

considering again the pursuit of independent district status as a means to stabilize funding.

Finally, she shared a range of ideas generated by senior staff of programs and services the library should consider in the next five years.

6. Small Wins

Chair King led a discussion of what JPL could do with \$50K – a question designed to provoke thought by trustees on achievable goals for the next year: Trustees Tim Anderson, Guy Anderson, and Bill Mason, along with Sharon Coon of the Friends of the Brentwood Library, suggested a system-wide one-day party to highlight library services to potential customers. Trustee Perry suggested a “techmobile” for the Urban Core until such a point as more technologically advanced library services can be offered there. Trustees Ansbacher and Simmons-Hutchins echoed a suggestion of Deputy Director Jennifer Giltrop that \$50K be put into a new campaign for an independent library district. Trustee Simmons-Hutchins also suggested that community experts be asked to recommend locally important subject matter on which the library could focus collection development. Trustee Payne suggested offering a second language learning program at each location. Roxanne Henkle, Friends of the Willowbranch Library, suggested more after-hours open times for neighborhood events. Trustee Reid suggested spending extra funds on marketing, a suggestion which found broad agreement. Library Consultant Dick Waters suggested adding 24-hour accessibility through the use of vending machines and suggested establishing a committee to streamline library policies and procedures. He also reminded those present that materials remain the primary reason that customers use libraries and are likely to remain so for years to come. Ramonda Fields of the Friends of the Dallas Graham Library suggested offering scholarship stipends to incentivize Urban Core youth to read more. Ms. Coon suggested that the library seek grants for goals listed above. Deputy Director Mark Merritt suggested a campaign to add Facebook followers and expand advertising and marketing.

Library Chair King asked the group how it would rate the following priorities: Additional Marketing, Programming, Restored Hours of Service, and Additional Materials. The ratings provided by trustees were as follows:

	Marketing	Hours	Programming	Materials
Trustee Guy Anderson	1	3	4	2
Trustee Tim Anderson	3	2	1	4
Trustee Sybil Ansbacher	1	2	4	3
Trustee Jill Dame	1	2	3	4
Trustee Charlie Kleeman	1	2	4	3
Trustee Bill Mason	1	3	2	4
Trustee Mario Payne	1	2	3	4
Trustee Gerald Reid (who also listed policies streamlining as a fifth priority)	1	2	3	4
Trustee Brenda Simmons-Hutchins	1	3	4	2
Average Score	1.22	2.33	3.11	3.33

Ramonda Fields, Friends of the Dallas Graham Library, recommended a rating of 1 for programming, 2 for materials, 3 for hours, and 4 for marketing.

Library Consultant Waters counseled that offering more *consistent* hours was as important as simply offering *more* hours.

7. Budget Priorities

Deputy Director Merritt explored in detail the calendar of events that will feature in the advocacy and passage of JPL's FY 2018 budget. He highlighted specific items which JPL staff plan to present to the Board in the proposed budget for FY 2018, including funds to provide six days of weekly service at the nine locations which currently lack it, funds for improved facilities maintenance, funds to rebuild library collections, and various other items. Aubrey Winship Shah, Assistant Director, Facilities Management and Planning, called attention to the need for improved facilities maintenance at the branch where the session was being held.

8. Adjournment

Board Chair King thanked staff, trustees, and Friends for a productive session. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3PM.

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES 02/09/17.