

Minutes
Board of Library Trustees Work Day
February 23rd, 2018
Jacksonville Public Library
303 North Laura Street

Present:

Ronnie King II, Chair
Jill Dame, Secretary
Sybil Ansbacher, Foundation Liaison
Guy K. Anderson, Trustee
Charlie Kleeman, Trustee
Celia Nass, Trustee
Mario Payne, Trustee

Absent:

Tim J. Anderson, Vice-Chair
Carlo Fassi, Trustee
Marc Hardesty, Trustee
Jackie Perry, Trustee
Gerald Reid, Trustee

Staff:

Tim Rogers, Director
Mark Merritt, Deputy Director,
Administration & Finance
Richard Mott, Manager, Strategic
Initiatives
Charlene Adkins, Manager, Collection
Development
Raymond Albury, Assistant Director,
Facilities
Chris Boivin, Assistant Director,
Community Relations and Marketing
Andrew Herron, Executive Assistant to
Director
Julie McNeil, Assistant Director, Public
Services
Gretchen Mitchell, Assistant Director,
Support Services
Rebekah Mitchell, Specialist, Youth
Services

Others Present:

Tia Leathers, Ex Officio, DCPS
Jamie Self, Executive Director,
Jacksonville Public Library Foundation
Robin Albanese, Chair, Jacksonville
Public Library Foundation
Kenyon Merritt, Jacksonville Public
Library Foundation
Michael Soto, Safety and Security
Officer

Margaret Smith, Friends of the
Jacksonville Public Library
Joshua Messinger, Friends of the
Beaches Library
Sharon Coon, Friends of the Brentwood
Library
Melvin Turnage, Friends of the
Brentwood Library
Judy Klein, Friends of the Murray Hill
Library
Roxanne Henkle, Friends of the
Willowbranch Library
Guests and Other Staff

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Board Chair Ronnie King called the meeting to order shortly after 9AM and offered those present an opportunity to introduce themselves. Chair King specified that goals of the day included thinking towards a shared vision for the long-term future of JPL, assessing data-driven approaches to measuring success, identifying new initiatives to help achieve the vision, considering a clear framework for FY 2019 budget and Capital Improvements proposals, and renewing the group's shared commitment to advocacy.

Trustee Jill Dame, recalling the prior year's Board Work Day, recalled the high priority that trustees gave to marketing. Staff updated the Board on the library's efforts in that area.

2. State of the Library

Richard Mott, Manager for Strategic Initiatives, discussed the state of the library since the last Board Work Day, noting the library's success at being named Library of the Year by the Florida Library Association, at continuing its partnership with Duval County Public Schools, at conducting continued literacy outreach through Project LEAP, at helping students attain GED's through Career Online High School, and in launching the Jax Makerspace at the Main Library. Trustee Guy Anderson noted the irony of this success occurring despite ongoing budget challenges, and Mr. Mott offered examples. For instance, JPL is 16th out of 17 peer libraries in amount of weekly hours open per library but 2nd out of 17 in public usage per hour. Mr. Mott also noted declining circulation, a problem afflicting JPL and other libraries coast to coast. Chair King, Director Tim Rogers, and Mr. Mott speculated on whether or not more open hours would remedy the situation. Trustee Guy Anderson urged all present to think about what would be the most useful metric for the library to gauge its future success – gate count, circulation, program availability, etc. Others such as Margaret Smith of the Friends of the Jacksonville Public Library, Roxanne Henkle of the Friends of the Willowbranch Library, and Trustee Jill Dame, noted that a lot of things could be impacting usage, including age demographics, a possible inverse relationship between the state of the economy and library use, and socioeconomics. Trustee Charlie Kleeman queried the specifics of the peer library comparisons, and Joshua Messinger of the Friends of the Beaches Library discussed subtle ways that such data often is often parsed in other contexts. Mr. Mott noted that socioeconomic demographics have a surprisingly weak correlation to library use but dollars spent on materials have a strong correlation to circulation.

3. JPL's Future

Library Director Tim Rogers gave an overview of his evolving vision for JPL. He discussed his ideas on proper methods for choosing goals, including a preference for goals that can be counted and measured. He urged the Board to think towards a large, unifying goal that could pull together the library staff's efforts, the Board's advocacy, and the library's mission as a whole. As an option, he suggested that in 10 years, 75% of households in Duval County might be actively engaged with JPL. Attendees suggested possibilities for increasing gate count toward this end, including partnering with outside organizations to encourage them to use meeting space and other library services. Mr. Rogers noted one library system that requires such outside organizations to hear a briefing on library services when they use library space.

4. Success-Driven Data Measures

Further to the idea above, those present considered ways the library might measure progress towards broader public engagement with the library, for instance, how many households use library services. The group considered requiring customers to swipe their library cards to enter buildings, an idea

with multiple practical and logistical challenges. As an alternative, the group considered creating estimates based on numbers that are already measured (like gate count) and conducting phone interviews with residents to see if they'd recently used the library. They also considered the more broad question of how to measure the value the library gives the community: number of programs offered, total gate count, return on investment, or percentage of households who use the library. The group looked towards further rumination on this issue at future meetings.

5. Ideas for Spending \$75K

In preparation for the FY 2018 budget, the Board set aside \$100,000 for strategic initiatives, \$25,000 of which was earmarked for a marketing campaign. Trustees volunteered ways to allocate the remaining \$75,000, including:

- Marketing via TV and social media advertising,
 - Finding one thing to focus on (one idea: "the library is more than a stack of books"),
 - Seeking grants for ads, perhaps from stations,
- Giving library cards to company employees as a perk,
- Sending mailers to high school graduates to present them a new library card,
- Opening the funds to competitive proposals from staff,
- Leveraging funds with partnerships,
- Offering digital "starter kits" at retail spaces,
- Delivering materials to people's homes, and even
- Partnering with Meals on Wheels and similar organizations to deliver materials.

6. Extreme Choices

Chair King walked attendees through a purposely unrealistic series of questions designed to gauge the priority trustees gave to library services in a competitive context. Broadly, trustees and guests prioritized providing computer availability over providing printing services, providing books over providing technology or e-materials (owing to surprising resilience in demand for the former), allocating meeting space for the public over space to book displays, providing daily service over providing longer hours, increasing the number of customers served over the number of visits by individual customers, refreshing carpet and paint over refreshing audio-visual technology, providing a broad catalog over providing a deep number of copies of the most popular titles (trustees were evenly divided; guests broke the tie), and providing youth services over providing technical literacy (again, trustees were evenly divided; guests broke the tie). Naturally this discussion didn't disavow the losing services but merely gave the Board a sense of how it might focus scarce resources if necessary.

7. FY 2019 Budget Preparation, Possible Enhancements, and Capital Improvement Plans

Mark Merritt, Deputy Director for Administration and Finance, discussed the state of the JPL budget and what would be necessary to maintain the same level of service in FY 2019. He also discussed possible costs of enhancements. Numerous attendees expressed a desire for some

continuity with previously requested enhancements, given that a number of years of advocacy have already been invested in restoring hours of service and materials budgets. It was broadly agreed that, whatever the requested enhancements are decided to be – something on which the Board will think in coming meetings - it will make sense at some point to ask pointedly for the larger items, so that smaller items don't deflate the message.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

-APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES MARCH 2018.