

**Pamunkey Regional Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
September 27, 2023**

The Pamunkey Regional Library (PRL) Board of Trustees (BOT) met on Wednesday, September 27, 2023, at the Goochland Branch Library.

Attendees

Trustees:

Goochland County: Barbara Slone

Hanover County: Bob Johnson, Ryan Martin, Joe O’Connor, Christy Schumacher

King and Queen County: Tricia Simpkins

King William County: Mary Shipman

Trustees unable to attend:

Goochland County: Barb Young

King William County: John Edwards

Guests:

Jim Taylor – Hanover County, Deputy County Administrator

Dennis Walter – Hanover County, County Attorney

Library Staff:

Tom Shepley - PRL Director

Sherida Bradby – PRL Deputy Director

Jamie Stoops – PRL Deputy Director

Jeff Huff – Collection Strategy Librarian

Levi Carter - Collections

1. Call to Order/ Welcome

Vice- Chair R Martin called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. and welcomed all BOT members and visitors who were in attendance. Special guest, Dennis Walter, County Attorney from Hanover County, was welcomed.

2. Consideration of Agenda Amendments

C. Schumacher makes a motion to remove “Approval of the August 2023 board meeting minutes” until next month. The motion was seconded by B. Johnson and passed unanimously by the BOT.

3. Citizens’ Time

R. Martin explained that there will be up to three minutes per speaker and that we will allow time for everyone to speak, even if it goes over the allotted 30 minutes.

B. Slone requested to make a statement before the start of Citizens' Time to address concerns brought to her by patrons in her county. In this statement she emphasized that the Library Board is not in the business of banning books and the rumors that are circulating otherwise are false.

George Crafts – Goochland County resident

G. Crafts was a librarian for 41 years at the University of Virginia and is the Friends of the Goochland Library vice-president. Individual parents have the right to decide what their children should read or not read. Any viewpoint that says that there are some things no children should read contradicts that principle. Respect my right to choose for my children, and I will respect your right to choose for your children. Labeling is too cryptic and is open to misrepresentation or misinformation. *The Diary of Anne Frank* has a passage in the book that contemplates sexuality. How could this be labeled? If there is labeling, it is a lot of work and who is going to do it.

Sharon Landrum – King William County resident

Please revoke membership with the American Library Association (ALA). Other localities such as the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Idaho, Mississippi, Montana, and Wyoming have voiced opposition to the Marxist influence of leadership of ALA and have decided to cut ties with them. ALA has bowed to woke ideologies and undermines parental rights. Please change the policy to place sexually explicit material for minors in a sequestered area of the library and discontinue purchasing these materials. An acquaintance informed S. Landrum that they will no longer support PRL when they found a board book for ages 1 to 3 years at the King William branch entitled, *Being You: A First Conversation About Gender*. PRL must be responsive to citizens' comments to make positive change to protect children.

Jennifer Strozler – Goochland County resident

Supports PRL the way it is – open access to books and materials. Ezra Klein podcast had an interview about the ALA and its leadership. Free, open public library is necessary in a civil society. We are here to protect a public resource. Public does not seem to have recourse if the board votes to fire the director, withdraw from ALA, pick which books citizens have access to, and label books. We will fight for public libraries. Those who challenge books are not afraid of books; they are afraid of ideas and free thinkers.

Kristin Holte – Hanover County resident

Books are freely available to anyone who wants them. Public libraries have always been curated, as they deem which books are appropriate for their constituency. This is not a ban as parents can still easily get their hands on these books. Dishonest to label parents as book banners when they want to restrict children from sexually explicit materials. Book banning is used as a trigger. Have been initiatives of late to ban books like Dr. Seuss, Huckleberry Finn, and books critical of gender ideology. I do not trust all librarians. These books want to indoctrinate, promote sexuality, turn children away from their parents, and confuse children. Certain books need to be moved into an adult area, not a children's section.

Cleo Rehmer – Hanover County resident

Consider moving these meetings to a time after 5pm so that more citizens can attend. If that is not an option, consider a compromise where half would be during the daytime and half after 5pm.

Harriett Meader – Goochland County resident

H. Meader was an English teacher for 37 years and has served on the board of Goochland Friends. Goochland Branch is a wonderful library which offers so many programs for children and adults, spaces for gathering, and freedom to access books which is crucial to our country and personal growth. Easy to restrict access to books – don't check it out. If you don't like the book, close the books. Don't impose your will, views, politics, religion on everyone else.

Dorothy Wassenberg – King William County resident

We should not restrict what parents and kids read; we need to restrict what kids have access to. Not referring to books like *The Diary of Anne Frank*, but books like *Sex is a Funny Word* which goes into detail to explain sexual parts of a body for children. We should pull out of PRL because they are not doing what we have requested. Put these books in a separate area where children cannot access them.

Doug Mock – Goochland County resident

Taught biology at the University of Oklahoma for 35 years and the whole idea of education is to expose people to new material, possibilities, and to material from people who disagree with you. Freedom of thought underlies freedom of speech underlies freedom of everything else. Nothing else more important than maintaining access to ideas with which you disagree. At university level, you might be exposed to new ideas which might produce conflict and struggle - that is a good thing; that is education. Restricting materials or attaching stigmas to people who check out books from a certain shelf is the antithesis of free education and free thought.

Mary Crook – Goochland County resident

Worked in book industry for over 10 years and the owner of a local publisher. Speaking out against the efforts to restrict access to books. PRL is lucky to have a Library Director who has provided free, open access to books for over 14 years. Residents of Goochland need full access to the library and its resources, with full funding. Those who are trying to restrict books are trying to do good and are worried about their kids – but it is wrong logically, morally, and legally. Logically, the books are not obscene or pornographic because by definition a book cannot be labelled as such without reviewing the entire work and the overall purpose. Need to rely on librarians who have the education to protect it against politics or personal biases. Legally and morally restricting materials for your own comfort is wrong. First amendment protects a citizen's right to read freely. Restricting access to libraries and books is breaking the first amendment. After 300 years you want to change it, this will be your legacy, remembered for trampling first amendment rights. You are not just protecting children, but you are forcing your beliefs on others. In rural counties where bookstores are not available or internet is not existent, you are cutting off their only access. Do not leave the PRL system or cut off counties access and make them ignorant, apathetic, or destitute.

Eileen Ford – Goochland County resident

E. Ford was an educator for 31 years and a PRL Trustee for 8 years until 2020 and a branch staff member. PRL branches are public libraries operated by librarians which provide materials accessible to the general public. As a PRL Trustee, I was aware that it was not my role to decide on hiring or training staff, or to select materials. Protect libraries from government or personnel censorship. Need to be attentive to community standards, but also acknowledge that our communities have wide ranges in thoughts and beliefs. Some voices are so loud that they overpower quiet, hard-working citizens with different views. Board needs to be a protector of our libraries and the guardian of access for all citizens. Parents are responsible to know what their children are reading, just like what they are watching on TV or computer use. One group of parents or individuals cannot control or decide for another group. Maintaining the integrity of the library is a civic duty and a crucial role for trustees. As guardians of the first amendment, trustees need to defend against censorship and to respect all parents' rights to decide what to check out for their children.

Peggy Lavinder – Hanover County resident

Parent, volunteer in school division, and on board of Mechanicsville Friends of Library since 2005. Thank you to the library staff and administration as they have been under a great amount of stress and the targets of ugly public and social media comments. Appreciate statement about not banning books but find it personally disrespectful that we are to believe that removing books is not the goal of some of these people with references to other states like Texas, which have removed entire libraries from schools. We can see the writing on the wall and where this is going. In the last two years, the hostility, aggression, and ugliness in our community is not rooted in a love of libraries or a belief in the mission of public libraries. Trustees should not be able to attend these meetings remotely but appear in person at our libraries for the monthly meetings. If you can't come once a month to a meeting, you might be in the wrong position.

Carolyn Comerford – Goochland County resident

Supports PRL the way it is with unlimited access to books throughout the system. If a book offends you or you do not want to read a book, you close it, but you don't choose for other people. We need access to books so people can make their own decisions about their lives. Sexuality is a part of that life and we should expect it to show up in books every once in a while.

4. Consideration of the Consent Agenda

The items on the Consent Agenda were:

1. August 2023 warrants (green)
2. August 2023 Board Financial Report (green)

C. Schumacher asked why the rent for the PRL HQ was double the normal amount this month.

T. Shepley responded that this was a combination of invoices for two months.

B. Slone asked for clarification on four Overdrive payments totaling around \$43,000 and a Hoopla payment for \$57,000. T. Shepley responds that these are electronic products which have differing business models. Hoopla gives access to hundreds of thousands of titles and is charged

on a per patron usage basis. Fees vary depending on what material is and how it was licensed. Average cost is a little over \$2 per item. The Hoopla invoice is paying for more than one month of usage. The financial system combines invoices for payment.

For Overdrive, PRL pays a platform fee which includes some content credit and in addition a variable fee for content is paid based on whether it is an eBook or an audio book. Fees in this month's warrant list are likely materials purchased since the platform fee is billed annually.

C. Schumacher asks for more information on the contractual payment with the Library of Virginia. T. Shepley explains that the Library of Virginia coordinates statewide the hiring of consultants from a national firm to help public libraries apply for the Federal E-Rate program, ensuring access to network connections. The program has lots of filing dates and procedural deadlines and the consultant allows participating libraries to file as a group. These consultant costs are passed on back to the participating libraries on a percentage basis.

MOTION: J. O'Connor made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda items. The motion was seconded by B. Slone and passed unanimously by the BOT.

5. Old Business

A. King and Queen Update

T. Shepley communicated with Ms. Seay, K&Q County Administrator, for an update. K&Q has finalized their recruitment for a Director of Community Programming and Tourism, starting on October 9. After this date they would like to meet with PRL to discuss transition for their branch. They are paying their requested share quarterly for shared services and keeping their branch open. The first quarterly payment has not been received to date, but it has been entered to be paid. K&Q is planning to turn the facility into a community center operation.

B. Montpelier Update

Construction is continuing at the Montpelier Parks & Rec Center/Library. The building is scheduled to be dried in by late November/early December. Meetings have been held about furnishing the library portion; and Parks & Rec have had meetings regarding their side of the facility. T. Shepley expects that the building will open jointly.

C. West Point Update

Renovation is continuing to move forward on this facility. Town had previously gutted this former police station, located in a strip mall, and their contractor is now completing spaces for the library by finishing drywall the past few weeks. PRL staff have made several trips to WP for construction updates and project clarification.

T. Shepley distributes an email from J. Edwards, West Point Town Manager, asking for monthly progress billing of 13.11% of the total costs to date, equaling \$21,911, through the end of August. The Board of Trustees had previously approved up to \$150,000 of reserve funds for this project, representing 13.11% of total project cost.

MOTION: B. Slone made a motion to appropriate funds for the West Point Library as requested, with the understanding that the BOT will receive a list of payments made and invoices, in order to have knowledge of what we are paying, for this invoice and for the process going forward. B. Johnson seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously by the Board of Trustees.

6. New Business

A. Library Association Membership

C. Schumacher asked for clarification regarding what PRL's procedure has been up to this point for trustee members and library association memberships. T. Shepley responded that traditionally PRL has paid for American Library Association (ALA) and Public Library Association (PLA) memberships for trustees. C. Schumacher asked if historically all trustees have been informed that memberships were made in their names. T. Shepley stated that trustees were aware because they received information and monthly magazines from the association, but that they have not been asked prior to being signed up.

MOTION: C. Schumacher made a motion that PRL will not sign any trustees up for any organizations or memberships without expressed permission from the individual trustees, from this point forward. B. Slone seconded the motion.

J. O'Connor expressed that he finds the magazine useful as it gives ideas from libraries around the country, noting that he does not always agree with everything in it. C. Schumacher clarified that trustees who want to be members can continue to be members, but that individuals should be asked if they want to be members. B. Slone pointed out that anyone has full access to the ALA through their website, do not need to be a member of the association to fully learn what they are all about.

B. Johnson asked if there are other library organizations. T. Shepley responded that the ALA is the oldest, largest professional association for libraries. There are no other organizations. PLA is a large subunit of the ALA with a focus on public libraries. There are numerous state associations which are also affiliated with the ALA.

The results of the verbal vote were unclear, so a roll call vote was conducted. The results are as follows:

Barb Slone	yes
Bob Johnson	yes
Joe O'Connor	no
Ryan Martin	yes
Tricia Simpkins	no
Mary Shipman	no
Christy Schumacher	yes

Motion passes 4 votes to 3 votes.

B. Review of Board Bylaws

- R. Martin identified that one of the major goals for this process is to identify committees and define the roles of committees.

- Mr. Dennis Walter confirmed that the makeup of the board with representatives from each jurisdiction is part of the underlining regional agreement and cannot be changed by the library board. The jurisdictions are starting to revise the agreement, especially with K&Q withdraw, and discussions are ongoing. His understanding is that they are aiming to have this completed by the start of the next fiscal year, but it could be earlier or later.

- The minimum number of meetings is currently six per year. These should be interpreted as scheduled meetings according to D. Walter. It does not preclude the board from meeting more than that number.

- J. O'Connor suggested inserting the word "modified" before Robert's Rules of Order.

- C. Schumacher suggested under the order of business for all regular meetings to move the "Report of Library Director" before Old Business so that it doesn't get lost at the end of the meeting and to have a standing item for "Committee Reports".

- Discussion occurred around having a Treasurer versus a Chair of the Finance Committee.

B. Slone emphasized the need for someone on the board who is working directly with the Library Director and has access to all financial information in the interest of transparency with public funds.

D. Walter – A practical, rather than legal perspective, is that the BOT could potentially have a Finance Chair who is an officer, but who is also the BOT chair or vice-chair, unless the intent is that they are ineligible to serve. Would set up a situation where one person is serving in two positions and would need to keep in mind when appointments are being made.

M. Shipman pointed out the difference between governmental accounting and small business accounting.

B. Slone clarified that the Finance Chair would be working with the Library Director. They would not be writing checks or reports on their own but working closely with staff.

T. Shepley stated that the BOT and public can always request additional detail and reports. If the plan is to have a Finance Chair sign invoices, it could result in a heavy workload.

B. Johnson emphasized the need to have a person who sits on the Board to ensure that money is being spent appropriately. In his experience, this responsibility would not rest with the CEO of the organization. Someone on staff should provide all the materials and work closely with the Board's representative. This bright line between the roles of the Board and the staff becomes especially important as an organization grows.

B. Slone pointed out that the present by-laws state that any two officers may sign for the payment of invoices. The Board is responsible to understand and fully report what has been spent, but it is not the Board's responsibility to run the day-to-day operations.

In B. Johnson's experience, any check over \$5000 required a second signature from the Board.

T. Shepley explains that library funds are held by the Hanover County Treasury, and we are subject to their procedures. On the Warrants List, payments with an "E" next to them, have been paid by check. There are multiple approvals for expenditure prior to payment.

D. Walter clarified that the BOT is required to have a Treasurer who is given custody of the funds under the state code; and they are supposed to be bonded unless the board waives this requirement.

- Change was suggested that BOT officers should serve two-year terms. J. O'Connor made the point that this could eliminate a person from being an officer who only has one year left in their term.

- B. Slone pointed out that while signing checks no longer exists, the desire is that the Finance Chair would be aware and approve any large invoices.

- Executive Committee

B. Slone - Entire BOT can attend meetings, but only committee members can vote.

J. O'Connor clarified that an Executive Committee, according to Robert's Rules, is normally made up of officers and committee heads, but it is important to have someone from each jurisdiction.

T. Shepley read the discussion regarding the Executive Committee from the May 2022 minutes – committee would handle preliminary information and decisions for Finance and Operations which will be brought before full BOT for approval, consist of one representative from each jurisdiction with four total members including the Chair, and four assigned meetings per year.

T. Shepley questioned the purpose of the Executive Committee when the full BOT is meeting 10 times per year. He suggested eliminating the Executive Committee.

M. Shipman explained that the Executive Committee was formed when the major benchmarking on salaries was conducted and there was significant finance work. Vision was for a joint operations and planning committee, as well as cutting down on meetings.

B. Slone echoed Mr. Shepley's comments questioning the purpose of the Executive Committee. A workshop session open to the public with all members might be more productive, rather than doubling meetings.

J. O'Connor – Executive Committee was brought in to focus on issues and get things done quickly. They do not have the authority to make decisions without coming back to the whole board. BOT would be better off to come up with additional committees as needed. Not in favor of the Executive Committee.

T. Shepley suggested a work session model as a full board with quarterly milestones, which could focus on issues such as long-range planning, by-laws, etc.

J. O'Connor pointed out that the Chair can appoint a committee at any point to address any issue – such as review by-laws. If the board has an Executive Committee, the Chair of the BOT should be Chair of the Executive Committee.

B. Slone emphasized that the work of the Executive Committee is the same work as the BOT. Vital to get everyone's input and just get the work done in a workshop format.

M. Shipman pointed out that the Executive Committee also organized a staff development schedule to go through the trustee handbook, as well as trustee self-evaluations.

R. Martin suggested sending additional edits to Barbara Young. T. Shepley emphasized the need for a clear, final draft to be presented to everyone and consult with Mr. Walter. B. Slone suggested scheduling a bylaws' work session between now and the next meeting. T. Shepley will work with the BOT to identify a possible date.

J. O'Connor asked for qualification on the suggested addition under General Duties of Library Director to "provide the board of a monthly list of all books purchased". B. Slone clarified that this addition was for information only and to provide more information and transparency. T. Simpkins commented that this information is available on the website.

C. FY2025 Budget

T. Shepley provided a draft for the FY2025 budget including overall, branches, and shared services spreadsheets. Budget does not contain a lot of changes from FY2024. PRL works closely with the Hanover County budget office, as 70% of funding comes from there. Hanover County is early on in their preparations for a FY2025 budget, but some changes include a 5% merit increase, 8% increase in health insurance, other payroll related increases, and various contractual increases. Previously there have been discussions that the Montpelier rent that is currently paid should be rolled into staffing the new location. Shared Services operational costs have been reduced by \$40,000 - to account for the withdrawal of King and Queen County.

Proposed increases in revenue for each governing body in FY2025 are as follows: Hanover \$205,741 and King William \$51,851 and Goochland \$48,184. State Aid reduction for FY2025 is calculated as \$5,792 - accounts for K&Q withdraw and State Aid has fluctuated in the last few months with budget changes by the state legislator. Not taking as much money from the reserve fund in FY2025.

C. Schumacher asked what the ideal budget timeline is for PRL. T. Shepley explained that Hanover County requested budgets from their departments by October 13th. PRL's ideal timeline is to have a budget request approved by the BOT at this September meeting, or at the latest at the October meeting.

B. Slone asked why branch utilities for Goochland and King William are budgeted at \$0. T. Shepley explained that these counties pay for those expenses and at the time of the audit they will receive common government services credit for support of the library.

D. Electronic Meetings (Remote Participation Policy)

A proposed policy was distributed based on the Jefferson Madison Regional Library policy.

R. Martin noted that Hanover County has a remote participation policy that allows the Board of Supervisors and School Board members to participate remotely.

D. Walter confirmed that this policy is functionally similar to Hanover County and most Hanover entities that use remote participation include it in their by-laws or rules. This policy is based on the newer language in state code. One issue is the provision for a distant meeting location over 60 miles away that would be a factor for the Library BOT. If the plan is to include this policy in the by-laws, this could be discussed at the planned, upcoming work session.

E. Reserve Fund

B. Slone asked for further clarification regarding the reserve fund - how money gets added to the fund and assigned to categories.

T. Shepley handed out a document with a multi-year Designation of the Reserve overview. The BOT needs to annually designate how the reserve fund is going to be used as part of their oversight. The reserve fund is made up of contributions and revenue over time that has not been spent. The aim is to address upcoming needs and track available funds alongside their intended use.

Reserve fund categories are defined by the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) as non-spendable, restricted, committed, assigned, and unassigned. These categories show the various levels with which the board intends for something to happen.

Committed: \$90,000 for Atlee Library (donation from Atlee Friends) & \$260,000 for Ashland Library (majority of this was a generous gift from someone's will in FY23) & \$150,000 for West Point renovation project & close to \$100,000 for the administration HQ rent.

Assigned: \$1,748,087 for future administrative facility & no money for future branch capital projects & \$300,000 for time left on the five-year admin facility lease & \$500,000 for unanticipated expenses (i.e. vehicle replacement).

PRL does not have any funds in the unassigned category.

For FY2024, there is \$3.1 million in the reserve fund.

B. Johnson asked for a brief written description of each of the reserve fund categories and inquired about additional expenses that would fall under "unassigned". T. Shepley explained that this fund would provide for continuing library operations for a short period of time (salaries, keep lights on, maintain operations) if there were significant shortfalls in what the governing localities were able to contribute due to the economy, for example.

B. Slone asked when it was decided to hold this amount of money for the future administration capital project. T. Shepley confirmed that this money is for office space, which was a Board decision and a discussion the Board had over multiple years, somewhat related to decisions

regarding the Atlee Library. The previous Atlee Library had 3000 sq. ft. dedicated to the collections part of administrative operation. At that time, the BOT approved bringing all of the administrative staff under one roof. The decision was to rent at the current renovated location with a 5 year lease, with the intention to identify property to purchase or new construction. T. Shepley recommends the need to move forward soon as it is a long process to find property, construction, etc.

T. Shepley cautioned to keep money for the future admin capital project until there is a solution to provide ongoing office space for employees.

C. Schumacher asked for clarification regarding the lease end date for the present HQ facility. T. Shepley will confirm, but he thinks it is December/January 2026.

The reserve fund is not a separate fund; they are integrated into Hanover County's funds who oversees investment. The designation of the reserve fund is an intellectual process based on accounting rules. It is time for the BOT to redesignate these amounts in preparation for the audit of FY2023.

There are no specific plans for the money designated for Atlee and Ashland branches. The Ashland branch is one of the highest performing branches with the oldest infrastructure. The building needs the minimum of paint and carpet and staff have developed a plan to add meeting spaces, collaborative rooms, and generally make spaces work better.

Money at Atlee was focused on helping with the garden space at the north end of the building. Atlee facility bids came in 20% higher than architect's cost estimator had predicted. Took work with county staff to value engineer the project and plans for the outside space were diminished (i.e. planned amphitheater was not built). At one point in time, there were additional ideas from an architect which did not meet expectation.

7. Report of Library Director

T. Shepley distributed a copy of Director's Report September 2023, FY23 Circulation Breakdown (breakdown between approximately 2/3 physical & 1/3 digital circulation), and PRL Statistical Reports for July 2023 & August 2023. The Director's Report is included at the conclusion of these minutes.

8. Adjournment

The October 2023 BOT meeting will be held on October 25, 2023, at the West Point Branch Library at 10:00 a.m.

Having completed the business of the PRL BOT, Vice-Chair R. Martin adjourned the meeting at 12:24 p.m. by acclamation of the Board.

Respectfully submitted,

Christy Schumacher
PRL Board of Trustees' Secretary

**Director's Report
September 2023**

Met with Ms. Schumacher and Mr. Johnson to provide one-on-one orientation.

- Posted past audits per request
- Included staff payroll information in budget per request
- This report includes preliminary circ breakdown per request

Montpelier: construction continues to progress. Estimated to be dried in late November or early December. Staff have met with architects and county staff about furniture.

King William library: staff provided library building programming needs to project architects at request of the county.

West Point project: have meet with GC and town staff onsite multiple times to coordinate on project details. Currently, drywall work is being done.

Budget: have developed the draft FY2025 budget for the BoT's consideration.

Staffing: library has a few recruitments in process. Staff turnover is fairly low.

Working on reducing the number of hotspots to the fiscal year budget.

Attended Hanover department heads monthly meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Shepley, Director