

**Pamunkey Regional Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
February 28, 2024**

The Pamunkey Regional Library (PRL) Board of Trustees (BOT) met on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at the Ashland Branch Library.

Attendees

Trustees:

Goochland County: Barb Young, Barbara Slone

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

King and Queen County:

King William County: Mary Shipman

Trustees unable to attend: John Edwards, Tricia Simpkins

Guests:

Ellen Bowyer – Hanover County, Senior Assistant County Attorney

Danielle Floyd – Hanover County Board of Supervisors, Chickahominy District

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 – Collection Management Librarian

1. Call to Order

Chair B. Young called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

2. Consideration of Agenda Amendments

T. Shepley asked to add Capital Asset Policy Amendments to New Business, a change needed due to the audit process.

MOTION: B. Johnson moved to make the discussed change to the agenda. J. O'Connor seconded the motion, and it passed the BOT unanimously.

3. Citizens' Time

Peggy Lavinder – Hanover County resident

P. Lavinder, for several events with the Hanover NAACP, was in many libraries recently and staff were helpful in resolving issues. Henrico Libraries have some amazing facilities including demonstration kitchens and a recording studio. P. Lavinder continued to advocate for the Mechanicsville Library and stated she has received a lot of hate. Volunteers speaking out in support of libraries, keeping them fully funded and running as they have for the last seventy years, have been vilified in the community. Those who defend the right to read, get called porn pushers and groomers. She asked that this stop and suggested the Board could make a statement. P. Lavinder stated that there is no porn in the libraries; and if there was, law enforcement should be called. P. Lavinder expressed appreciation for the Board's work.

Rodney Propps – Hanover County resident

R. Propps stated that libraries are an important part of the community – funding, staff, resources, education, enjoyment for citizens, and access to forms, computers, and internet with assistance from qualified librarians for anyone who cannot afford it or lacks the skills to access it. Community events can be the highlight of someone's week. It is important to maintain access and require librarians to have the training, knowledge, and power to maintain their libraries and materials. Ordering and categorization of materials should be undertaken by those who spent years of dedication to gain certification and proper knowledge. Considering a work for exclusion should not be done purely because it is on a list with no context; but as a last resort and with meticulous care, relevant sections should be clearly highlighted that are outside lawful and constitutional protection.

Mary Crook – Goochland County resident

M. Crook asked the Board to ensure the information colleagues share is true before voting. At the January meeting, one person on the Board said multiple false and misleading things, called for a vote, which passed unanimously without a single pause to check for accuracy. The main false thing shared was that the middle grade book, *Cross My Heart and Never Lie*, was listed as juvenile fiction at PRL, but aged up as YA in Henrico. During the meeting, M. Crook checked the Henrico Libby App and saw that it was listed as juvenile fiction – as it is on Amazon, Google, everywhere, and, therefore, the correct place in the library.

The second false thing was that parents have no way of knowing information like age range or topics in a book at the library. This should have caused a pause as the library is a wealth of knowledge and, with free internet access, it takes seconds to literally look up anything about a book, plus librarians can help with library usage. There is nothing stopping parents from knowing every single detail about a book before checking it out.

To imply that this middle grade book is inappropriate for middle schoolers was misleading. M. Crook read the book in less than an hour and stated it is the most innocent middle grade book she has ever read; the extent of any sexual thought is a girl who denies kissing a new boyfriend. The book was categorized correctly because the system already works.

Some people on the Board say the system is not working, to trick the Board into giving them power. No one checked any information, but blindly accepted it, immediately voted, and misappropriated county resources to force librarians to do pointless work this month, all while triple checking budgets. The train is already on the track of censorship and every time someone sows distrust in librarians and spouts lies that are not challenged, another bit of track is laid and picks up speed. Speak up now or you will not be able to stop it.

Susan Lascolette - Goochland County resident

Eleven years ago, the Goochland County Board of Supervisors by unanimous vote decided to resign from the Virginia Association of Counties – an organization with a national parent organization, comprising membership of every county in the state. Why? In 2013, Goochland had a major disagreement with them as they wanted counties to have the ability to take or damage personnel property through eminent domain. Fortunately, in November 2013 over 70% of counties voted against this and protected property rights. Goochland County had been members of this organization for a long time and people questioned their resignation because it was seen as a prestigious state and national organization with a lot of benefits. Goochland asked how they could take their citizens' hard earned tax dollars and give it to an organization working against them? No man can serve two masters - either serve the community or serve a state/national organization. Consider this in deciding what organizations to be a member of.

Dorothy Wassenberg – King William County resident

D. Wassenberg requested PRL place sexually explicit books from the children's sections into a separate area for adults and have a juvenile library card indicating parental approval is needed to check these out. D. Wassenberg highlighted a citizen's recommendation at the January meeting to evaluate the "Code of Virginia Article 5 Obscenity and Related Offenses" and indicated some books like *Flamer* and *Sex is a Funny Word* have been referred to as kiddie porn. PRL should evaluate these books, among others, and see if they violate the spirit and letter of Article 5.

D. Wassenberg read sexually explicit excerpts from *Jack of Hearts* by L.C. Rosen from the YA section and suggested the book violates the spirit and letter of VA Code and should be moved from the children's section. It details the experience of a teenage boy writing a teen sex advice column for a friend's website. Throughout the book he chats about guys going down on each other, enjoying foursomes, getting F- by the coach in the locker room during Homecoming, giving teachers blow jobs to improve their grades, anal sex, double headed dildos, etc.

Sex and love are not connected. To some, love, marriage, and then sex is right. With this type of material available, D. Wassenberg would like to see the county pull out of PRL; but until that becomes a reality, ensure librarians put these materials in a separate location.

R. Martin asked this book's library location - under 18 section, YA section. M. Shipman commented that these are not children.

Sharon Landrum – King William County resident

S. Landrum read sexually explicit excerpts from the book, *And They Lived...* by Steven Salvatore from the YA section, bought by PRL and tax paying citizens of the counties.

Audrey Mitchell – King William County resident

A. Mitchell expressed concern about the constant complaint about books that need to be removed. When people read excerpts from books, she understands their concerns. A parent signs a library card agreeing they are responsible for their child's books. The constant attack on libraries and books people find offensive is not new - in 1966 Hanover County banned *To Kill a Mockingbird*. A. Mitchell stated that if she checks out a book not for her, she returns it and does not read it. Over the last 45 years, her children have gone to the library and she does not believe they were damaged or corrupted because she did her job to make sure books were appropriate.

A. Mitchell relayed appreciation for PRL and bringing communities together and realizes that not everyone is going to agree on everything. The national trend to bash librarians threatens them and proliferates moral outrage about a non-existent threat. Parents and grandparents are responsible and need to understand the freedom to read is the freedom for everybody to read and see themselves in books. A. Mitchell asked the Board to ignore the noise and do the right thing.

Jen Strozier – Goochland County resident

J. Strozier thanked everyone for their work for the library and came to talk about the crazy lie that there is pornography and dangerous books in our public library, that the library is dangerous. This is about democracy and upholding our constitutional republic. When democracies flourish, they do so by expanding access to thoughts and ideas which upsets people who then try to shut it down. The Civil War, the Red Scare, what is happening now - democracy expands and those in power scare people into shutting it down. J. Strozier recognized the attorneys in the room and suggested if there was pornography, they should call the sheriff. Sequestering certain books, making citizens ask permission to check them out, is an affront to the freedom to read and explore and access information. Parents need to parent their kids. The idea that pornography exists within these walls is ridiculous. This is withholding information and an affront to free speech and democracy. It is an attack on LGBTQ+, black and brown, and other marginalized citizens, and it is the dumbing down of society.

Danielle Floyd – Hanover County Board of Supervisors, Chickahominy District

D. Floyd read an email with the following content on behalf of a citizen who could not attend and asked her to speak as their elected official. Email: My wife and daughter attended toddler story time at the Atlee Branch on 2/14/24 where a library employee read "The Family Book" which depicts a same sex couple. When my wife realized the content, she quietly removed her daughter from the story time. He followed up to file a complaint with T. Shepley that the book contained content that normalized homosexuality and did not receive an encouraging response or an apology from the director. T. Shepley followed up on 2/16/24 and stated the content of the book was age appropriate and reflective of the community. T. Shepley argued that the content did not have anything to do with sexual orientation and the two fathers could have been from a blended family. The lack of concern from PRL on whether the content of their toddler story time books offends their community members is disappointing. The interactions with the library and the director have not been helpful or compassionate. Family and friends are skeptical of attending future events for fear of having to explain inappropriate topics that are being pushed in

our libraries to our young children. Looking forward to see how Hanover County and PRL will move forward with this. (End of Email)

D. Floyd stated that the librarian could have chosen any other non-controversial book for toddler story hour, but instead she chose to push her agenda on children. D. Floyd is not asking for this book to be removed. Instead, she is asking librarians to not use toddler story hour to push their agendas but instead to choose non-controversial books, of which there are plenty to choose from. D. Floyd requested that this situation be dealt with. Personal agendas do not need to be pushed on children and we do not find that acceptable in Hanover County.

B. Young introduced Danielle Floyd, Jim Taylor, and Dennis Walter. D. Walter introduced Ellen Bowyer as the new primary point of contact at the Hanover County Attorney's Office for the Library Board and PRL. She has been with the office for three years and she has had both local government experience and at the General Assembly in legislative services. This change comes from a rebalance of responsibilities within his office. Over the next month there will be a transition period and D. Walter will continue to be a secondary point of contact. B. Young thanked D. Walter for his help and welcomed E. Bowyer.

4. Consideration of Consent Agenda

The items on the Consent Agenda were:

1. Approval of the draft minutes from the January 24, 2024, regular meeting of the PRL Board of Trustees
2. Acceptance of January 2024 board report
3. Acceptance of January 2024 warrants
4. Acceptance of January 2024 Funds Schedule
5. Acceptance of January 2024 Deposit Report

B. Slone noted that the Deposit Report says December 2024 and should say January 2024 and the last column of the Funds Schedule should be dated 1/31/2024.

MOTION: B. Johnson moved approval of the Consent Agenda items as amended. The motion was seconded by M. Shipman and passed unanimously by the BOT.

5. Director's Report

T. Shepley distributed the document "Library Director's Report—February 2024", included at the conclusion of the minutes. Below are additional points and discussions not in the report.

Accessibility/ADA Update

Regarding the Upper King William (UKW) branch, PRL signed a Resolution Agreement (distributed to the Board) with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), US Department of Education, which requires a fair amount of assessment and upcoming deadlines to ensure accessibility.

OCR has several concerns with the exterior of the shopping center building that houses UKW including the parking lot and the ramp from the handicap parking places up to the sidewalk. The landlord had agreed to seal coat the parking lot last year, but work was not done before the asphalt plants shut down. OCR is withholding their approval of the ramp until they receive more documentation, as they work remotely, having only seen photographs and received measurements. There is other work which needs to be completed inside, including roof leaks. Since the agreement was signed, Jack Bailey, the shopping center owner, passed away and there is uncertainty regarding the ongoing point of contact.

T. Shepley cannot answer B. Slone's question about the monetary cost at this time until he understands the extent of the work and the property owners agree to make the external changes. If the property owners do not agree to make changes, it will be difficult to fulfill the OCR requirements and they could lose PRL as a tenant.

D. Walter indicated the timeline allows work to be completed over the summer. The UKW lease expires yearly on June 30 and is automatically renewed. If it becomes clear in April/May that the landlord is unwilling or unable to do the exterior aspects, the matter will return to the Library Board as the library, as a place of public accommodation, cannot be operating a branch that is not physically accessible to all citizens. The lease provides that exterior items are the landlord's obligation. The option exists to request a minor extension depending on work contracts, etc. If landlord is unable to make changes, conversations will need to take place with King William about other potential spaces.

UKW has been in its current location for decades. D. Walter clarified that accessibility is an ongoing assessment over time – for example the ramp is serviceable, but OCD's main concern was that the railings do not go to the end of the ramp and whether it fully meets current standards. The library is accessible, but now that OCD has a complaint, they work to make it fully accessible. Now that we know there can be improvements, we have a legal, ethical, and moral obligation to make them.

Atlee Toddler Storytime

T. Shepley shared that *The Family Book* by Todd Parr was published 20 years ago and PRL's copies have been loaned hundreds of times, and it has probably been used before in a few story times. The patron did not initially want to share contact information and seemed interested in taking the issue immediately to the Hanover BOS, which does not give PRL room to respond.

R. Martin asked whether Storytime books are posted ahead of time so patrons can evaluate. T. Shepley answered that the theme is posted and, if people were interested in the titles, they would be happy to provide them. T. Shepley answered C. Schumacher's question that branch staff choose Storytime books from their collection – a Children's Librarian at Atlee chooses books, and they may have consulted with the manager. M. Shipman commented that divorced and blended families often have various family makeups which results in two moms or no mom.

Mechanicsville Branch Incident

Regarding the incident outlined in the Director's Report, T. Shepley indicated that security camera video footage was available as the incident happened near a door and there was nothing recorded to verify the allegations. There are multiple cameras in each facility, depending on design, which show the movement of people.

Other Points:

- Montpelier branch - June opening
- K&Q branch - T. Shepley believes the budget of \$11,000 will cover moving expenses.
- B. Slone requested the written Director's Report and documentation prior to the meeting so trustees have time to review them. T. Shepley indicated he would work on this.
- C. Schumacher asked about T. Shepley's participation in the recent Virginia Library Association (VLA) meetings. T. Shepley indicated that he did attend on his own time.
- C. Schumacher also asked for a library legislative update as the General Assembly has recently been in session. T. Shepley indicated that the budget amendment to increase state aid by \$2.5 million has made it through the House and Senate and is expected to pass. VLA worked with legislatures to amend a previous bill on parental notification for school classroom materials. There was language in the initial bill, introduced by former Senator Dunnavant, within the enactment clause which did not show up in the electronic version of VA Code. There is support on both sides for this and it is expected to pass.

6. Standing Committee Reports

A. Financial Committee Report

T. Shepley distributed the following documents: PRL Investment Overview including Hanover County's Investment Policy, PRL Finance Committee yearly calendar of tasks, and a list of PRL vendors. Upon request a Deposit Report and Funds Schedule have been added to the Consent Agenda.

All the localities are working on FY25 budgets and PRL will amend its FY25 budget as localities settle on merit increase numbers.

Audit

T. Shepley explained that capitalization is changing in the audit world. In FY22 the previous auditors wanted to capitalize items such as Hot Spots and Chromebooks, which were under the \$5000 capitalization threshold. The current auditor for FY23, PBMares, wants to capitalize books and materials, which PRL has viewed as a supply previously. Staff have collected book and material expenditures over the last six years and are mathematically assigning the collection a value to track capitalization and depreciation. T. Shepley only knows of one other VA library that has capitalized their collection.

FY23 statement issuance will be slowed down by the collection capitalization. In order to minimize delay, the following change to the PRL Finance Policy - Capital Assets is necessary, as a prerequisite to issuance.

Capital Assets

a) Capital assets shall be capitalized for unit costs greater than a \$5,000 expenditure for which useful life exceeds ~~five-one~~ years and meets capital definitions of land, building, improvements to building, infrastructure, ~~or equipment~~ or the library's physical collection.

b) Capital assets shall be depreciated over the estimated useful life of the asset ~~using~~ in accordance with GAAP auditor accepted depreciation manners.

c) Capital assets will be disposed of through public auction or by donation to a governmental entity.

MOTION: B. Slone made a motion to accept these changes to the policy for Capital Assets, including deletion of the word “using” under point b). B. Johnson seconded the motion, and the BOT passed it unanimously.

B. Young shared that the Finance Committee has set up their meeting schedule for the year, every other month beginning in May.

M. Shipman asked whether Hanover County has approved their merit increase. T. Shepley answered that this has not been approved. A public hearing will be held on April 3.

B. Johnson asked when collection capitalization will be completed. T. Shepley will review work to date with K. Catron and then K. Catron and Ms. Shawver will do the bulk of the work to be finished in a week to 10 days. Uncertain how fast the auditors will be able to respond.

B. Personnel Committee Report

R. Martin presented documents outlining a 360 Evaluation with the company Question Pro including the approach, purpose, Top 10 reasons, and pricing for a 360 Review. He recommended purchasing the Advanced pricing option which would cost \$1200 for a year and does not limit the number of survey responses. This option is limited to one end user, which R. Martin would recommend he fulfill as Chair of the Personnel Committee.

M. Shipman asked for clarification on the timeline and R. Martin indicated that we implement this as part of the review process for the end of this fiscal year. M. Shipman also asked how much time it would take for staff to complete this survey and R. Martin indicated he expected that this would take no more than an hour. B. Johnson asked which staff we would seek input from, and R. Martin answered that we have talked about direct reports previously, but we are not limited in the responses, so he is open to what the Board decides. T. Shepley indicated time was needed to evaluate the vendor.

R. Martin will raise again at the March meeting and schedule a Personnel Committee meeting.

B. Johnson asked for details about the staff's yearly review process including how, when, and what rubric is used to understand how this would fit into the 360 process.

T. Shepley requested that the Board work together with consensus rather than individual requests to help staff address priorities and manage the workload. T. Shepley requested to wait later in the meeting to present documents regarding the staff evaluation.

C. Long Term Planning

B. Young reported that the committee has not yet met.

T. Shepley shared that he is a member of the Virginia Public Library Director's Association which has a set of library standards for planning, setting goals and objectives, etc. based on the size of population served. T. Shepley recently completed the process and was surprised how low PRL ranked, with not enough points to earn the lowest bronze level. This would be a useful tool to incorporate in the long-term planning exercise.

7. Old Business

A. King and Queen County's Departure

B. Young asked for an update on signage for K&Q citizens to fulfill the MOU. T. Shepley indicated this still needed to be addressed.

K & Q Library opened and has a website, library catalog, meeting room reservation system, and have a limited number of materials available (21 items). House Bill No. 1430 passed the General Assembly which allows K&Q to have a public library without a library board.

B. Audit Updates

i. FY2022- PDF not yet received from Cherry. PRL's copy is posted on the Budget and Finance page of the website.

ii. FY2023 – Staff is working on incorporating the information regarding collection capitalization throughout the statements.

C. Report from PRL Staff – How to differentiate between elementary and middle grades for books in the juvenile section.

C. Schumacher clarified, due to a comment during Citizens' Time claiming she misled the Board, that the book in question at January's meeting is indeed on the shelf in Henrico's YA section.

T. Shepley noted that the citizen referenced checking Libby, an OverDrive electronic product, where the book was classified as Juvenile. OverDrive staff determine book audience placement for all library branches using their product and it might not match a physical book's shelf location. T. Shepley does not believe that an individual library would be able to change a book's electronic location within OverDrive, which Collections staff confirmed.

T. Shepley shared that the patron who submitted the Request for Reconsideration for the book *Cross My Heart and Never Lie* had checked out the book for their twelve-year-old and then determined it was not appropriate for their nine-year-old, which is within their parental role.

T. Shepley stated differentiation is already available through information in the catalog, NoveList, or the internet either on the library branch computers or a patron's smartphone. Each patron has their own individual filter and interpretation. Resources are available, but it is the parent's responsibility to review a book for their child; the library cannot force them to do this.

The PRL Staff's "Proposal on Differentiating Elementary- & Middle-Grade Books" is included at the conclusion of the minutes. The recommendation is to use current assets, like NoveList, and add more programming to train patrons. Differentiation is difficult as information regarding age and grade recommendations is not uniform across publishers.

B. Slone commented that she does not hear a solution to the initial, valid request, but a decision from staff to ignore the request. NoveList is helpful, but it does not indicate graphic material in the books. There needs to be a better way to help parents make decisions. From the excerpts read during Citizens' Time, B. Slone asserted there is pornography in our libraries. T. Shepley stated there is no pornography in the library.

C. Schumacher asked whether PRL has consulted with the Henrico County Library regarding their different parameters in categorizing books. Many books, including noncontroversial ones like those from Alan Gratz, James Patterson's Middle School series, and Rick Riordan, are placed in the YA section in Henrico and the Juvenile section in PRL. Parents visiting the PRL Juvenile section do not understand that it spans a very large age group – including books for middle schoolers. T. Shepley indicated that Henrico is unable to provide any concrete parameters. C. Schumacher clarified that it is the Henrico collection's person making a different personal judgement than PRL's collection team; librarians with the same educational background coming to different decisions. T. Shepley agreed.

T. Shepley shared that *Cross My Heart and Never Lie* became available in December and won a national award just days before the Board's January meeting. Many libraries have it now and there is an even classification split between Juvenile and YA.

M. Shipman pointed out that PRL serves various localities, and their elementary schools cover different grades - Hanover and Goochland K-5th and King William 3rd-6th.

B. Slone reminded the Board of the document provided by D. Walter with the legal definition of pornography – "a) material of a sexual nature that arouses many readers and viewers, b) printed or visual material containing the explicit description or display of sexual organs or activity, intended to stimulate erotic rather than aesthetic or emotional feelings, and c) the depiction of erotic behavior (as in pictures or writing) intended to cause sexual excitement. The U.S. Supreme Court and other courts have found that most pornography—at least for adults—is protected by the 1st Amendment. Child pornography – treated differently (not protected by the 1st Amendment)." B. Slone stated that there is a place for these books, but not in the children's section.

T. Shepley asserted that legally the entire work must be read, and excerpts cannot be taken out of context.

D. Walter stated that definitions are very important when it comes to pornography and obscenity. As a baseline, obscene materials are not protected and PRL does not have any obscene materials. Pornography is generally not a term defined in law; it is a description. The Supreme Court has said to look at the whole book to see if it fits the definitions or appeals to the prurient interests. The Code of VA addresses Child Pornography, which is against the law and has a specific definition. Child Pornography is not the same as pornography that children can access, but pornography that depicts children involved in those activities. If an item fits under that definition, let staff know and it will be reviewed under that definition. Just because there is an excerpt in a book available to children that may be under the definition of pornography, does not make it child pornography. Pornography is protected under the First Amendment. There are books and network television which people would consider to be pornography, but it is fully protected by the First Amendment. The FCC does not allow obscene items or child pornography on television. The Supreme Court has decided for educational or public libraries that the Board is charged to figure out where materials are located, whether they be pornography or complicated subjects, or items directed for a particular target audience. It is not a matter of taking one sentence, one chapter, a title, or an author, and making that decision. It becomes a matter of a categorical type of review, which has largely been delegated to staff as the experts. The Board can create a brand-new category or a section of the library that does not yet exist and staff would do their best to implement. He has not heard anything at the meeting today that is obscene. Obscene materials do not have any redeeming artistic, cultural, historical, or social value to them. It becomes a matter of review and interpretation. The Board needs to review things before them through a societal lens; it is not a lawyer's decision.

B. Young asked about graphic/comic book novels and how it applies here. D. Walter stated that the Supreme Court has made determinations based on the conveyance of an idea rather than how it is conveyed. The written word is different than stick figure art than highly detailed computer created images and it needs to be viewed in context. One panel of a three-panel comic strip vs. one panel of a 400-panel book is a different situation. It must be reviewed in context - what is part of that message and how it interplays with the work, the community at large, and community standards.

B. Slone reiterated the point D. Walter made about looking at the whole piece and putting it in context, but also recognizes that kids are not necessarily looking for the artistic parts but tend to be drawn to the dirty parts. There is a place for these books in the library but urges common sense in placing these books in age-appropriate sections. Adults should be smarter and not make certain books readily accessible. Give parents a fighting chance by deciding what section they want their child to check out from.

B. Young stated that the Hanover County letter asked for tools for parents. While NoveList has good information, it does not identify explicit sexual content. R. Martin further shared that if the goal is to make sure parents have the information they need, the website entry for "And They

Lived” says nothing about graphic sexual material. T. Shepley added that the catalog record is not the place for that information but defended that the NoveList content certainly does and read from the last of four reviews on the page, 2nd line from the bottom, “Frank, vivid sex scenes model consent, informed safety, and honest conversations about intimacy.”

R. Martin asked how parents coming into the library would know about NoveList. T. Shepley stated that NoveList is part of the description when searching for a title. For parents interested in understanding the process, the tools are there. For parents who are not interested or are not worried, they are ok with their child borrowing what they are borrowing. The parental piece is the challenge. PRL serves 150,000 people and there are citizens that believe the materials should be available for those that want to use them - common sense is interpreted differently.

T. Shepley stated that part of First Amendment case law is that materials are not to be put in a different location when all information points to them being written for younger audiences. B. Slone stated that these categorizations come from BISAC, which has a clear bias, and she does not consider them to be parent friendly. B. Slone stated she needs to be true to the people she represents in Goochland County, and she knows there are people who want PRL to put sexually explicit books in a section not readily available to kids. B. Slone advocated parents having more information and a library card that would indicate which sections kids could or could not use by parental choice.

C. Schumacher asked for more concrete suggestions on the first line of the staff’s recommendation to “leverage existing products that provide the requested differentiation already”. T. Shepley indicated that they are trying to communicate more with parents, but staff do not sense through their interactions that this is needed as they are not getting routine requests for help from parents in selecting materials.

T. Shepley stated that PRL does a great job at putting books in age-appropriate sections. Parents that need this information can use whatever tools they choose. If someone thinks BISAC has a bias, BookLooks is a source used by folks during Citizens’ Time, which also has a bias that does not fit with the role of the public library. There are too many resources and opinions even within this room, representing a very small subset of the people in the region.

B. Johnson asked if the library could put an encouragement for parents to use these tools on the checkout screen. T. Shepley stated he did not think that would be fitting and did not know if it was even possible to do. A very small portion of the service area has this concern, and a very large portion of the service area does not have this concern. B. Johnson suggested that, as the chief librarian, T. Shepley could state that PRL encourages patrons to use these tools because of all the commotion in society today. T. Shepley indicated this could be covered in classes for parents. B. Johnson responded that many parents will not attend the class.

J. O’Connor observed that the Storytime complaint was not because of sexual content, but because it portrayed a gay couple – which is not against the law in this country. J. O’Connor commented that what was read in Citizens’ Time was vulgar, but it was not pornography. We cannot find a middle ground when it is said we have pornography in our libraries because that is

against the law. It is a difficult issue to address where the books should be located - there are books that maybe should not be in there and there are books that help our citizens. At the June Hanover BOS meeting, J. O'Connor spent time with many people on both sides of the issue and asked them to continue speaking at Library Board meetings. He spoke with two young ladies there questioning their sexuality. It was a very emotional time for them and a book in the library, not in the Adult section but in the YA section, had helped them.

C. Schumacher clarified that differentiating between Elementary and Middle grades does not necessarily have to do with sexually explicit material, but an aid to help parents determine if material is geared for younger elementary or middle grades. A past suggestion was to have a dedicated Novelist computer in the library with attractive signage saying "Parents, want to check out what your child is reading?" and allow them to scan a book and have NoveList pop right up. Is that something that could be explored? T. Shepley answered that they often do not have floor space to add another computer, power outlet, or network. Additional computers would have to be purchased for something that is already on the computers that are in the library today.

C. Schumacher stated that we need to make it as easy as possible for parents to find information and communicate clearly with parents about collection age groups. She asked for actual, practical suggestions from staff on leveraging available products and how PRL can better communicate and connect with parents regarding available resources.

D. General Review Process for PRL Staff

T. Shepley distributed the PRL Performance Evaluation, exhibiting multiple sections with example behavior and areas for comments filled out by supervisors, as well as additional documentation, focus forward goals, and employee/supervisor comments.

Each section is weighted differently, and a drop-down menu indicates if the employee is exceptional, above proficient, proficient, or below proficient, which produces a weighted score at the end. One of the biggest concerns is the use of the word "proficient" as employees do not feel this word is complimentary, but it means meeting expectations and doing the job. Employees are evaluated 6 months after they are hired and then every year.

B. Johnson requested returning to this as a discussion item at the next meeting after having more time to review it.

M. Shipman commented that according to the Trustee Handbook part of the Library Director's assigned goals is Human Resources under Managing Other Staff, including writing their job descriptions, hiring, and evaluating. An employee has never come to the Board with any kind of problem with their evaluation. We might be creating a problem that we have never had. The Library Director runs a tight ship.

T. Shepley suggested that a longitudinal view of the process would be helpful in the discussion – position descriptions and application forms are available on the website, as they are onboarding people all the time.

E. Thank You Cards for PRL Retirees

Cards were distributed for the Board members to sign for two notable retirements.

F. West Point Relocation Project

T. Shepley mentioned that West Point is a larger coordination project than Montpelier, because Montpelier is getting new shelves. At West Point, books must be taken off existing shelves, the shelves disassembled and moved to the new space, move the books and reshelve.

G. Montpelier

H. Policies Review

B. Young distributed a document titled, “Our Policy and Procedures Review”, outlining steps, definitions, and guidelines. According to our Trustee Manual, the Library Board is responsible for library policies and reviewing them is a process that will take time. B. Young made the overarching comments that the policy formatting is a mess, policies are outdated, and there is a lack of organization. Some policies have procedures, and some do not. The recommendation is to keep policies and procedures together. Many forms are configured differently, and B. Young suggested keeping the form with the policy and creating a separate form section, as well as making forms consistent and electronically available so they can be filled out online.

B. Slone commented on the list located on the first page which states that the policies are based on the ideas, principles, and values expressed in the following documents – PRL Regional Contract, Library Board By-Laws, PRL Plan 2016-2020 (outdated), ALA Library Bill of Rights, ALA Freedom to Read Statement, and ALA Libraries an American Value.

B. Slone shared the ALA’s original mission statement was to “enable librarians to do their present work more easily and at less expense”. B. Slone read the ALA documents and stated, as originally written, they are of value. In doing due diligence in updating the library policy, the Board needs to look at the interpretation of these documents.

B. Young assigned the Board to review the following sections in the packet titled Library Policies for the next meeting, using the Guidelines for Review: Confidentiality of Library Circulation Records, Customer Service and Safety, and Friends of the Library. The policy review will be approached in stages and there might be the need for a few work sessions.

B. Young asked staff to develop a policy formatting template. T. Shepley suggested having policies electronically with a dynamic table of contents and hyperlinks to other policies/forms. B. Young suggested using a “Change Log” for each section or chapter.

C. Schumacher asked in reference to the “Friends of the Library” section if each Friends group has an assigned staff or board liaison as it states in the current policy. T. Shepley stated that historically they use their branch managers and deputy branch managers as liaisons, but the Board also has that role and responsibility as well. C. Schumacher suggested that each Hanover representative contact a Friends group to talk with them about the policy.

8. New Business

A. Capital Asset Policy Amendments

This agenda item was addressed during the Finance Committee Standing Report.

9. Adjournment

The March 2024 BOT meeting will be held on March 27, 2024, at the West Point Branch Library at 10:00 a.m. On March 23, 2024, the Library Board is invited to attend the PRL Employment Milestone Reception at the Atlee Branch Library at 6:30 p.m.

J. O'Connor made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by R. Martin, and after a unanimous vote from the Library Board the meeting was adjourned at 12:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Christy Schumacher
PRL Board of Trustees' Secretary

Attached: PRL Library Director's Report - February 2024
Proposal on Differentiating Elementary- & Middle-Grade Books

Pamunkey Regional Library
Library Director's Report—February 2024

Jan. 31—attended ribbon cutting for Chesterfield's Midlothian Branch

Feb. 1—attended Hanover department heads meeting and human services meeting

Feb. 5—audit update meeting

Feb. 7 and 21—attended Montpelier project meetings

Feb. 10—met with regional library director colleagues

Feb. 16—met with E-rate consultant to discuss results of service bid process

Feb. 20—met with Dennis Walter and Ellen Bowyer

Feb. 22—met with Ms. Shawver to discuss capitalization

-Finance Committee Meeting, UKW

- Staff considered various option related to differentiate between elementary and middle-grade books within the Juvenile section. Director queried colleagues across state.
- Accessibility/ADA update—following several virtual meetings with Jan Gray, Attorney with Office of Civil Rights, United States Department of Education related to complaints about ADA at the Upper King William Branch Library, and Dennis Walter, Hanover County Attorney, an agreement between OCR/DOE and the Pamunkey Regional Library was signed. The library is in the process of meeting its commitments to the agreement in order to improve accessibility at the branch. A number of things were completed before there was an agreement. Areas inside the building are relatively easy to resolve, while there are a number of potential challenges related to the exterior of the building that are more extensive in scope.

The bottom line is that there are multiple deadlines that the library needs to meet related assess the location, and likely a number of changes to implement.

- Following storytime last week at Atlee, the father of a child that attended the storytime shared their concerns related to books being used for the storytime which was about families. The father did not attend. The customer's concern was with *The Family Book* written by Todd Parr published in 2003. The book uses more than 20 examples of different families: bunny families, alien families, messy families, and neat families. The page which raised questions for the father is below; the father was unhappy the book discussed families with two dads and said that raises questions for his three-year old child. This book was used at two storytimes last week and more than 80 people attended.

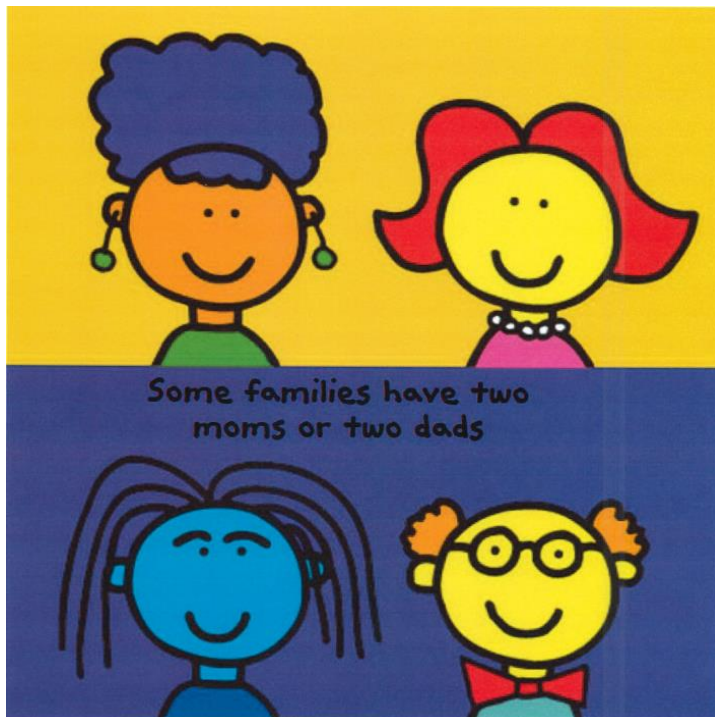
There was friction between customers at the Mechanicsville Branch on 2/23/24; an adult woman was in the Children's area with her child. She alleged that two teens that were also in the Children's Room were acting inappropriately. One of the teens reported the incident to staff. Staff directed the teens to relocate away from the Children's area and they promptly did. Approximately 10-15 minutes later the, adult woman complained to staff saying the teen male lifted the teen female's shirt exposing the female's breasts to both the adult woman and her

child. Staff did not witness the incident, but the adult woman complained when staff did not act to ban or kick the teens out of the library. Hanover Sheriff's Deputies visited the branch later in the day. This incident was investigated and nothing supporting the adult woman's allegation was found.

- Audit—draft statements that are being reviewed on the PRL side of things. PB Mares believes the library has a misstatement of capital assets because the library book collection is capitalized. Staff are working to put this information together to be added to the FY2023 statements. This is why we have a draft capital asset policy to consider today.
- Montpelier project—work continues; library staff have reviewed and answered questions related to shelving, furniture, IT for the new branch.
- West Point—work continues; staff are working on logistics of move including shelving, furniture orders, setting up computer network.
- King and Queen—working to finalize costs from moving out.
- Budget—Will be presenting in King William in March; monitoring all three county processes.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Shepley, Director



MOTION passed at Library Board of Trustees meeting on 1/24/24:

Library staff are to create a proposal on how to differentiate between elementary- and middle-grade books within the Juvenile section.

RECOMMENDATION

Our recommendation is to leverage existing products that provide the requested differentiation already, such as the **Novelist** suite of products. In addition, the Library can provide programming for parents in the usage of the library catalog and NoveList, as well as invest in further readers' advisory training for staff. The Novelist suite of products allows patrons to research and find titles that they wish to read, with the ability to refine search results by appeal, award winners, readalikes, grade/Lexile/Accelerated Readers levels, and more. NoveList Plus and NoveList K-8 Plus are provided by the Library of Virginia and have been part of PRL's list of resources for 7+ years. At the suggestion of a patron, PRL added **Novelist Select** one year ago to put the same powerful readers' advisory tools right into the library catalog for quick and easy access.

DRAFT