

**Pamunkey Regional Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
March 22, 2023**

The Pamunkey Regional Library (PRL) Board of Trustees (BOT) met on Wednesday, March 22, 2023, at the King and Queen Branch Library.

Attendees

Attending were Trustees:

Goochland County: Barb Young

Hanover County: Ryan Martin, Julie May, Mike Smith, Joe O'Connor

King and Queen County: Tricia Simpkins

King William County: John Edwards, Mary Shipman

Unable to attend:

Goochland County: Barbara Sensabaugh

Guests Attending and Speaking:

Sharon Landrum – King William County

Dorothy Wassenberg – King William County

Jessica McLane – King William County

Ira Staley – Hanover County

Bob Ehrhart – King William County

Trudy Montagnoli – King William County

Christy Schumacher – Hanover County

Pat Jordan – Hanover County

Jim Taylor – Hanover County Deputy County Administrator

Peggy Lavinder, Hanover County

Debbie Staley – Hanover County

Audrey Mitchell – King William County

Library staff present included:

Tom Shepley: PRL Director

Sherida Bradby, PRL Deputy Director

Jamie Stoops, PRL Deputy Director

Jeff Huff – Collection Strategy Librarian

Levi Carter – Collection Management Librarian/Mobile Services Manager

Kelly Pridgen – Youth Public Services Coordinator

1. Call to Order/ Welcome

Chair T Simpkins called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed all BOT members and visitors who were in attendance.

2. Consideration of Agenda Amendments

There were no amendments to the agenda.

3. Citizens' Time

T. Simpkins explained that there would be thirty minutes for comments during the Citizens' Time and each speaker will have three minutes to speak. There will be no yielding-of-time and no provisions for groups.

Sharon Landrum – King William County resident

S. Landrum stated that she feels the Board is pretending to care. She said that T. Shepley has stated that the libraries follow the guidance of the American Library Association (ALA). S. Landrum said that she feels that the ALA is a “woke” organization and that they have totally obliterated the difference between adults and kids. She also said that the ALA promotes the “right to read” but that it does not give a right for children to read porn. She compared having a different set of guidelines for items available to read to having different guidelines for children and adult when we are talking about driving or drinking. She asked, “Do we really want our children to be overly sexualized?”

Dorothy Wassenberg – King William County resident

D. Wassenberg said she is a grandmother. She calls it offensive for us to think it is okay for children to read pornography. She stated that she thinks it is not necessary for us to have books that contain pornography available to children since that are many, many good books that they could read. She mentioned that children are not currently getting taught all of history and that they could read history books from the library.

Jessica McLane – King William County resident

J. McLane stated that she is a mother of four children. She and her family live in King William County and have always used the library extensively. However, she said that this will be the last time she speaks to the PRL Board of Trustees (BOT). She said she can get books in many different places for her children but will stop supporting the library if changes are not made. She said she may not speak to the PRL BOT again, but she will continue to speak, and her next time will be to speak to the King William Board of Supervisors. She said that right now libraries are polluted, just like a swimming pool can become polluted. When that happens, all are removed from the pool until it is cleaned. The same thing will happen to the PRL. The funding can go away. She said she does not want the libraries shutting down. What she wants is for the BOT to please label sexually explicit books.

Ira Staley – Hanover County resident

I. Staley said that he has read the Collection Policy. He suggested that the PRL staff go through staff development training that “flushes things out.” He stated that parents have rights and asked the question, “Are we doing enough for parents?” He also asked how does the PRL support parents? He suggested doing a simple survey with parents to find out what they want.

Bob Ehrhart – King William County resident

B. Ehrhart stated that he was previously on the King William Board of Supervisors. In that capacity, he said that he did not support funding for libraries. He stated that he is concerned that the libraries do not have a balance of views in their collections. He said that he is asking that books be labeled, not removed.

Trudy Montagnoli – King William County resident

T. Montagnoli stated that parents have the right to guide their children. She said she is not for censorship, but that we need to do more to protect our young readers. She asked, “Where is the balance? There are no conservative books for either adults or children.” She said that it is important for the PRL BOT to be sure to look at their total community when collection selections are made.

Christy Schumacher – Hanover County resident

C. Schumacher stated that even though parents can recommend books for the library collection, not all that they recommend are purchased. She asked that PRL consider new age classifications for the current youth section. She recommended that PRL have a classification for 11-13, one for 14-17, and one for 18 and above. She said that currently library staff recommend books, but feels there needs to be a standard for the recommendations. C. Schumacher said that she had done research on the book *If You’re a Drag Queen and Know It* by Lil Miss Hot Mess. This book is recommended for the reading ages of 2-8. The book’s description says “A fun, sing-along book with a drag twist that encourages kids to embrace all the playfulness of drag culture written by a founding member of Drag Queen Story Hour”. C. Schumacher stated that after much research, she discovered that this book is not in the collection of multiple surrounding regional libraries, county libraries such as Henrico and Chesterfield, city library systems including Richmond City, and in fact, is not even in the Fairfax County Public Libraries collection. She asked why PRL made the decision to include it in our collection? She stated that we as a community should not be sexualizing our children.

Pat Jordan – Hanover County resident

P. Jordan said that she supports the current materials in the PRL libraries and does not want others to determine what she reads. She stated that she doesn’t know how these folks who have spoken at the PRL BOT meetings are finding the sexually explicit materials in our libraries. She said that her children and grandchildren are not bringing these books home. She is concerned about the threats made by some of the speakers. She stated, “It’s not what we do. We need to learn to handle things appropriately.”

Jim Taylor - Hanover County Deputy County Administrator

J. Taylor stated he believes that the Board and staff have been responsive to the request he made last month to work on the policies related to collections and displays. He asked that the BOT seriously continue with policy reviews and updates today since he asked at the last meeting that the Board take action on these issues within the next 60 days.

J. Taylor said that we appreciate the citizen engagement over the past few months on both sides of the issues. He said we want our libraries to be welcoming to all customers, and that the

materials need to be in the appropriate places in the library. He stated that parents should have confidence in their public library, but is afraid that we are losing some of that trust. He stated, “We encourage you to develop policies that allow parents to be more informed. There is a current VA law to establish an acceptable use policy for the internet to “prevent access by library patrons under the age of 18 to material that is harmful to juveniles.” He stated that it makes sense that this should extend beyond the internet policy. He asked that the Board do their best to ensure to find an appropriate balance of good practice and recognition of community concerns as the Board deliberates.

Peggy Lavinder – Hanover County resident

P. Lavinder stated that she has been a longtime user of the PRL libraries and has been an active member of the Mechanicsville Friends of the Library for many years. She stated that she finds it upsetting that threats have been made by other speakers. She finds it upsetting that people in our libraries are being represented as polluters of the libraries. She feels this is being done by conservatives. P. Lavinder state that libraries are progressive, and she shares the view that libraries should be open. She stated that she does not want any labeling. She said that she thinks conservatives want to shut down libraries.

Debbie Staley – Hanover County resident

D. Staley stated that a person who spoke previously said, “What can we do?” D. Staley said she has read the Virginia Public Library Trustee Handbook from the Library of Virginia. She noted that on Page 2 it states that “A public library board has the primary responsibility for the success of the library (. . .). Trustees have a legal responsibility to successfully maintain a free, public, nonsectarian library for all residents in the library’s service area.” She emphasized “for all residents”. D. Staley stated that the PRL policies are the Board’s, not just the director’s. She asked that the Board take an active role and a legal role. She said that the director works for the Board, the Board does not work for the director. She urged the Board to step up to its responsibilities. D. Staley said that there have been two things missing in the Board’s current discussions: 1) Discussion about NoveList, and 2) Signage in the libraries to help parents.

Audrey Mitchell – King William County resident

A. Mitchell stated that she is a former Middle School Librarian. She said that she is very concerned about the movement to decide what is appropriate to have in a library. She stated what is not appropriate is for one person or group to decide what is appropriate for someone else. A. Mitchell talked about formerly banned books such as Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger, The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck, and To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee. She asked the Board to look globally and nationally.

4. Consideration of the Consent Agenda

The items on the Consent Agenda were:

1. February 2023 Budget Report
2. February 2023 Warrants Report
3. February 22, 2023 Board of Trustee Minutes

MOTION: M. Smith made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda items. The motion was seconded by J. May and passed unanimously by the BOT.

5. Old Business

A. Governance Guidelines Review

B. Young gave a short presentation to the Board on the two types of Boards, a governing board and an advisory board. The PRL BOT is a governing board. She reviewed with the Board the primary responsibilities of a governing board and highlighted several of the expectations for trustees on a governing board.

The Governing Guidelines topic for the April 26, 2023 BOT meeting will be The Mission and Vision of PRL.

B. Policy Updates: Collections, Library Programs, and Displays

T. Shepley had sent to the BOT in an email on March 21, 2023, the updated Collection Development Policy which includes the updated Reconsideration Form, the Updated Library Display Policy, and the Updated Library-Sponsored Programs Policy.

J. Edwards asked where we are with a plan for signage in the libraries. T. Shepley said that the plan is about 60 days out. J. May suggested that we rename our sections in the PRL libraries to include “young adult & teen”, and “children & teen”.

J. May asked about the status of the availability of the NoveList Program at all library branches for parents. The names of the items, the requested change and the outcome of the Request for Reconsideration should be reported to the BOT both monthly and summarized annually to help the BOT to understand the patterns and degree of citizen concerns with our Library collection. T. Shepley stated that progress on this is ongoing.

R. Martin spoke in opposition to the revised policy documents for Collection Development, Library Display, and Library-Sponsored Programs. He stated that there was no real change done to the documents. J. O’Connor said a lot of effort has gone into the documents and that the Board will need to develop the operational side. He said that the documents set the foundation to move forward. M. Shipman stated that the documents were a good start. M. Smith said that we need to appreciate the time and effort put into the documents.

MOTION: M. Smith made a motion that the PRL BOT accept the policies as written. The motion was seconded by J. O’Connor.

J. May requested that the BOT be informed monthly about any Reconsideration Forms that are received by library staff or administration staff. There was no resolution on this request.

J. O'Connor addressed the citizens attending the meeting. He said that we love our children and your children, and the Board has the task of starting the conversation about the policies.

R. Martin stated that he does not understand why PRL orders sexually explicit books and puts sexually explicit books in the Young Adult section of the libraries.

M. Smith called for the vote on the motion.

A voice vote on the motion was taken. The results of the verbal vote were unclear so J. O'Connor called for a roll call vote. The roll call vote results are as follows:

Ryan Martin	no
Mary Shipman	yes
John Edwards	yes
Barb Young	no
Julie May	yes
Tricia Simpkins	yes
Mike Smith	yes
Joe O'Connor	yes

The motion passed.

M. Simpkins, Chair, recognized B. Young to present a proposal for the establishment of a PRL Citizens Advisory Board to specifically review library books and materials that have been flagged by PRL staff, library patrons, or by a publisher as having sexually explicit content and/or illustrations. B. Young described the purpose of the proposed advisory committee and outlined the proposed membership, responsibilities and meeting schedule. **SEE ATTACHMENT A: Proposal to Address Sexually Explicit Materials in the Children and Youth Sections**

J. May spoke in favor of a committee of local citizens to provide some local and regional perspectives to balance the professional librarians' decision-making using the guidelines from the Library of Congress and the ALA. T. Shepley said he would do some research to determine whether we could create such an advisory committee. R. Martin gave support to the idea of a citizens' advisory committee. The BOT will revisit this proposal at our April BOT meeting.

J. Edwards asked a question about a meeting that he has heard about that will be attended by County representatives from the four PRL counties. Jim Taylor, Hanover County Deputy County Administrator, said the meeting is to discuss the concerns that are currently being expressed at the PRL libraries and Board meetings.

C. FY2024 Budget Process Update

T. Shepley reported that he has heard back from both Hanover County and King William County about their contributions to the FY2024 PRL budget, but has not yet heard back from King and Queen County.

D. Montpelier Building Update

T. Shepley reported that there will be a ground breaking ceremony at the Montpelier site in mid-April and then the construction will begin.

E. West Point Building Update

J. Edwards reported that plans for the renovations to the current Police office building and the move of the West Point Library to that facility have been finalized. The funding is now contained in the town budget. J. Edwards will be presenting the budget to the Board of Supervisors and hopefully will receive approval in the next month.

6. New Business

A. Board of Trustees Structure

M. Smith discussed that in the current Board structure we have the full Board, an Executive Committee, and a Personnel Committee. He would like to see the Board reinstate a Finance Committee. B. Young agreed that this was needed. This will be included in the meeting agenda for the April Board meeting.

B. Movie check-out policy

R. Martin expressed concern that he had been informed by a patron that their 12 year old child had checked out an R-rated movie with no questions asked by the library's staff. He asked if we have a policy to address this. T. Shepley said the libraries do not use the movie ratings as those are not from a public entity and that what movies a child checks out are the responsibility of the parent.

7. Report of Library Director

T. Shepley reported:

- The only additional building project is the consideration of relocating the Upper King William branch library to some King William County property in the Central Garage area.
- T. Shepley conducted a staff training day on Friday, March 17th. There was a large focus on customer service and on NoveList. R. Martin asked about the frequency of staff training. T. Shepley said that there is not a scheduled time for training, but that it is offered as a need is determined.
- There is still an opening at the Upper King William Branch for the library branch manager.

B. Young reminded Board members that the Board Member Self Evaluations are due at or before the next Board meeting.

J. May reported that the Personnel Committee will have at the April meeting the evaluation forms for Board members to complete for the director's yearly evaluation.

J. O'Connor reminded Board members of the upcoming PRL Employee Milestones Reception to be held at the Atlee Branch Library on Saturday, March 25, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

T. Shepley announced that he would conduct a tour of the King and Queen Branch Library at the close of the Board meeting.

9. Adjournment

The April 2023 BOT meeting will be held on April 26, 2023, at the Ashland Branch Library at 10:00 a.m.

Having completed the business of the PRL BOT, Chair T. Simpkins adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m. by acclamation of the Board.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Young
PRL Board of Trustees' Secretary

ATTACHMENT A: Proposal to Address Sexually Explicit Materials in the Children and Youth Sections

Proposal of a Way to Address Sexually Explicit Materials in the Children and Youth Sections of the Pamunkey Regional Libraries

Establish a PRL Board Advisory Materials Review Committee

This committee will review only those materials that have been flagged by PRL staff, library patrons, or by the publisher as having sexually explicit content and/or illustrations.

- The committee membership will consist of:
 - Four non-staff patrons selected by the Hanover Board of Supervisors to represent Hanover County
 - Two non-staff patrons selected by the Goochland Board of Supervisors to represent Goochland County
 - Two non-staff patrons selected by the King William Board of Supervisors to represent King William County
 - Two non-staff patrons selected by the King and Queen Board of Supervisors to represent King and Queen County
 - Two non-voting PRL Board of Trustees members
 - Two non-voting PRL staff (not the Director of PRL)

Committee Responsibilities:

- Read completely any book that has been recommended for review or review any materials which have been recommended for review
- Discuss the review of the material with the committee – be willing to contribute evaluation of the material and be willing to listen to other committee members
- Be willing to participate in the committee scheduled meetings (initially meetings may be as frequent as once a month)
- Determine if material recommended for review should remain where it is currently placed or be moved to a higher age group
- Select a representative(s) from the committee to present the committee's recommendations to the BOT as needed. The representative(s) should be able to explain why specific recommendations were made.
- Keep a running record of all materials reviewed and all recommendations.

Board of Trustees Responsibilities

- Allow for the committee representative(s) to have time during the regularly scheduled BOT meetings to present their recommendations
- Be willing to listen to the recommendations presented by the committee members
- Vote on whether to accept or reject the recommendations.