

**Pamunkey Regional Library  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
April 26, 2023**

The Pamunkey Regional Library (PRL) Board of Trustees (BOT) met on Wednesday, April 26, 2023, at the Ashland 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:

Pat Jordan – Hanover County

Rodd Wilken – Hanover County

Johanna Russo – Hanover County

William Frame – Hanover County

Pat Franz – Hanover County

Janet Eddy

Christy Schumacher – Hanover County

Caroline Cook – Hanover County

Ashlyn Landrum – Hanover County

Peggy Lavinder – Hanover County

Wendy Northup – Hanover County

Elizabeth Andrews – Hanover County

Wendy Schkeeper – Hanover County

Rachel Levi – Hanover County

Jody Masters

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 10:02 a.m. and welcomed all BOT members and visitors who were in attendance.

## **2. Consideration of Agenda Amendments**

It was requested that the Audit and the Montpelier Branch Update be removed from Old Business.

**MOTION:** J. O'Connor moved that the suggested adjustments be made to the agenda. The motion was seconded by J. May and the motion passed.

## **3. Citizens' Time**

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

### Pat Jordan – Hanover County Resident

P. Jordan spoke on behalf of the Pamunkey Regional Libraries. She brought her sons and her grandsons with her. She stated that hired staff are best to make choices of what we have in our libraries. Citizens do not need to police everyone. She does not believe policing each other's reading materials is the duty of the Board or the staff.

### Rodd Wilken

R. Wilken spoke about the diversity of our community and said we need to learn to embrace and enjoy it. We need to learn to appreciate the safe environments of libraries and schools. Critical thinking will be a great asset for our children. Let's keep it open.

### Johanna Russo – Hanover County Resident

J. Russo congratulated the PRL Staff for the new signage in the libraries. However, she stated that the new signage was subpar at best. She shared example pictures of the signage. Some of the signage were full pages of writing in a normal letter-sized font. Some of the pictures showed signage which was a regular piece of paper with information and was taped to the side of a library desk or cupboard. She asked that the PRL staff try to make the signage more professional and post it so that parents were aware of the signage.

### William Frame – Hanover County Resident

W. Frame said that although he has lived in Hanover County for many years, he is originally from Philadelphia, which is the home of the first public library in our country. The library in Philadelphia is a model for all to follow. It offered and continues to offer freedom to read whatever one wishes. Taking that freedom away is un-American.

### Patty Franz – Hanover County Resident

P. Franz stated that our libraries celebrate the diversity of our community.

### Janet Eddy

J. Eddy stated that she supports the new policy for Collection Development. She said if we limit access to books, there is no freedom for children. She also said parents should not make decisions for other parents.

Christy Schumacher – Hanover County Resident

C. Schumacher stated that when she first approached T. Shepley, the Library Director, in August she now knows she was very naive. Recently, in some of the research she has done she found that T. Shepley has been on the Legislative Committee for the Virginia Library Association (VLA) since 2005 and is currently the Chair of the committee. T. Shepley and the Legislative Committee have lobbied at the Virginia General Assembly and were very instrumental in helping defeat several proposed House and Senate bills including (but not limited to):

- HB1708 – Juveniles: Prohibited Sales And Loans Of Materials Deemed Harmful;
- SB1204 – Obscene: Definition; and
- SB1463 – Public Libraries, Certain; Parental Advisory Label To Be Affixed To Sexually Explicit Materials.

C. Schumacher asked what are the PRL and the PRL BOT connections to the American Library Association (ALA)? She stated that the connections was that all Board members are members of the ALA. She asked that the BOT break ties with the ALA and the VLA.

Caroline Cook – Hanover County Resident

C. Cook stated that she is a former PRL employee and sent an email to Board members on Tuesday evening. She said that she wants all children to have access to all books. She stated that she does not want to see any limiting of books for sexually explicit content.

Ashlyn Landrum – Hanover County Resident

A. Landrum questioned the influence of the ALA on the PRL BOT. She researched and shared several facts she found about the ALA.

- The president of the ALA is a Marxist lesbian as stated in her online President’s Statement.
- A. Landrum feels that the ALA policies are very liberal.

She asked why the BOT are members of the ALA? She stated that this does not reflect the majority of the PRL patrons.

Peggy Lavinder – Hanover County Resident

P. Lavinder stated that she was happy the PRL celebrated National Library Week. She also stated she was happy to see so many citizens attending this meeting to learn about how public libraries work. She said that all libraries are associated with the ALA and that she feels the ALA supports the concept of open ideas. She stated that there should not be labeling and that if you expect to not be occasionally offended, you are wrong. She also stated concern that the “goal posts” of the speakers have moved over the past several months. The discussions started about library displays and have evolved to leaving the ALA. She stated that libraries are not grooming children for nefarious reasons.

Wendy Northrup – Hanover County Resident

W. Northrup stated that she is a member and president of Friends of the Library. She said she checked out East of Eden by John Steinbeck when she was 12 years old. Her mother used the book as an opportunity to educate her. She stated that there should be open access to information and that she is supportive of the collections at PRL.

Elizabeth Andrews – Hanover County Resident

E. Andrews said that she recently read the book Robert E. Lee and Me by Ty Seidule. She stated that she didn't realize how little she knew until she read this book. She urged all present to read and see what they are missing.

Wendy Schkeeper – Hanover County Resident

W. Schkeeper stated that she has five children and is a foster parent. She recently took her children to the library. Her children found a book in the youth section with pictures of two boys having sex. There was another one that described having sex with an animal. She wondered if others present were okay with children looking at and reading books like this. She stated that books should at least be labeled to help parents with their children's selections.

Rachel Levi – Hanover County Resident

R. Levi told the BOT that she is a parent. She recalled many visits to the library with her children. Fifteen years ago she moved to Ashland. She thanked the Board for providing this resource to the community.

Jody Masters

J. Masters stated that she has five children. She said that there should be labeling on books that have highly sexual content. She agreed that parents are the ones who should have conversations with their children about any highly sexual content, but labeling would help parents know ahead of time about when those conversations are needed. She stated that everything around us has labels – movies are labeled, products are labeled, sport equipment are labeled, etc. She was especially concerned that PRL has book in the youth section about a father molesting his daughter.

## **4. Consideration of the Consent Agenda**

The items on the Consent Agenda were:

1. March 2023 Board Financial Report
2. March 2023 Warrants Report
3. March 22, 2023 Board of Trustee Minutes

M. Smith asked who SIRSIDYNIX AT #774271 was to which a \$68,628.86 check was written to on March 7, 2023. T. Shepley explained that SIRSIDYNIX AT #774271 is the vendor for our catalog system.

**MOTION:** J. Edwards made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda items with the edits made to the BOT minutes. The motion was seconded by J. O'Connor and passed unanimously by the BOT.

## 5. New Business

### A. King and Queen County Letter

A letter dated April 6, 2023, from the King and Queen County Administrator / County Attorney, Vivian R. Seay, was sent to the County Administrators from King William County, Hanover County, and Goochland County. T. Shepley forwarded the letter to the PRL BOT on April 10, 2023.

The letter stated that "...King and Queen County [ ... ] finds itself facing increasingly difficult fiscal challenges and has determined that no longer will it be able to participate in the Pamunkey Regional Library System." "...King and Queen County does hereby request your consent [King William County, Hanover County, and Goochland County] for withdrawal from the Pamunkey Regional Library effective at midnight on June 30, 2023."

Several questions were asked by the BOT.

1. J. Edwards asked how this will impact the other localities in PRL?  
T. Shepley said that the funding from K&Q will go away. 55% of funding from each of the PRL localities goes to operations (i.e., electricity, water, building maintenance, etc.) of the branch and 45% goes to the PRL general funds for collection purchases, internet access, etc.  
Because K&Q's current funding to the General funds is \$164,000, that amount would be split between the three remaining localities as follows:

Hanover County	\$85,000
King William County	\$40,000
Goochland County	\$20,000

T. Shepley also said that two of the remaining three localities have already approved the PRL FY2024 budget before the letter from K&Q was received.  
T. Shepley said that King and Queen County leaving PRL also means a lower amount of state aid for PRL.
2. R. Martin asked if any of the other localities had responded yet?  
T. Shepley said that he had received an informal response from Goochland County stating that they will support the withdrawal. He stated that King William County wants to have more conversations and that he had not yet had a response from Hanover County.
3. As a PRL BOT representative from King William County, J. Edwards expressed concern that K&Q residents will go to the King William branch libraries. He asked if it would be possible to revoke all K&Q residents' library cards if the withdrawal takes place.

4. J. O'Connor asked what will happen to the K&Q contents currently in the library?  
T. Shepley said that the contents (i.e. books, magazines, etc.), all equipment (i.e., computers, printers, etc.), and all internet access are purchased for all the branches with the shared General Funds. All these items are owned by PRL and will be removed.
5. J. May asked if there was possibly a way that we could leave the door open for K&Q to rejoin at a later date?  
J. Edwards said if they do not get permission from the other localities to leave immediately and have to remain for two years before they can leave, they will have to pay, but they are already not paying.  
J. O'Connor suggested that maybe they could still pay just the per capita amount and not have a Branch Library in the county. If they did that, the citizens would still have access to other PRL branches.
6. R. Martin asked what would be the difference between them K&Q leaving PRL now and leaving in two years? Which would be better for PRL?  
T. Shepley answered that it would be better for PRL if they left now.

T. Shepley stated that PRL has not had much communication from K&Q until now. There is concern that K&Q may think that they can run their own library, but they will not have a collection, technology equipment and technical support, or staff.

T. Simpson stated that we need to wait to see how the other localities vote. The BOT agreed that we will wait.

#### **B. Letter from Hanover County**

T. Simpkins, Chair of the PRL BOT, and the Hanover Appointees to the PRL BOT received a letter on April 10, 2023, from the Chairman of the Hanover County Board of Supervisors. T. Shepley forwarded the letter to the remaining PRL BOT on April 10, 2023.

The BOT had several comments and questions about the letter.

J. May asked that the Board keep working to help our children with their use of the PRL Libraries. She also stated that the Board needs to continue to explore ways to help the parents. She then addressed the citizens who were attending the BOT meeting and asked them to send short letters to the Board with suggestions of how the Board could possibly make our Libraries better.

J. Edwards said that he felt our new Collections Policy was good but that we do need to improve the signage at the libraries.

R. Martin noted that the letter from Hanover was written after the new Collections Policy was passed by the BOT.

M. Smith asked if the BOT needed to address the letter. J. O'Connor stated that he did not think that the Board needed to respond to the letter. After several suggestions for the next steps, it was decided that the letter would be moved to Old Business.

### **C. Reestablish the Finance Committee**

**MOTION:** M. Smith made a motion to reestablish the Finance Committee beginning July 1, 2023. The motion was seconded by B. Young.

R. Martin said that since he was fairly new to the BOT and had not been a member when the Board previously had a Finance Committee, he asked what the committee would do. M. Smith explained that the Finance Committee is responsible for close review of all financial aspects of the PRL. When the BOT Committee structure was redesigned two years ago, it was felt that the new Executive Committee would take over the role of the Finance Committee. Because of the amount of business that the Executive Committee handles, there has not been enough time for detailed review of the finances.

A vote was then taken on the motion and the motion passed.

## **5. Old Business**

### **A. FY2023 Budget Update – Amending FY2023**

T. Shepley explained that grants from the ARPA Grant via the Library of Virginia (LVA) and from the Emergency Communications Funding (EFC) grant to cover the second year of hotspot were awarded in FY2022, were spent in 2022, but the actual funds from the grants were not received until FY2023. It is standard practice that a grant awardee must spend the funds and then be reimbursed.

Physician Dr. Carroll Hamill retired to Ashland in 1992. He passed away August 16, 2022. The library has received two disbursements from his estate at this point totaling \$250,000.

T. Shepley stated that it is projected that PRL will have approximately \$500,000 funds coming forward to FY2024 but the grant money received had already been spent and the \$250,000 from Dr. Hamill really came to the Ashland Branch Library and should be designated for that library. This will really leave about \$100,000 as the true amount coming forward to FY2024.

**MOTION:** J. May made a motion to approve the amended proposed budget for FY2023. J. Edwards seconded the motion, and it was passed by the BOT.

### **B. FY2024 Budget Process Update (Approvals)**

T. Shepley stated that while there are a number of decisions to be made depending on what King and Queen County does, PRL is well positioned for dealing with it in FY2024 and moving forward.

**C. West Point Branch Update**

J. Edwards reported that the future move of the West Point Branch from its current location to the former Police station is moving forward.

**D. Proposal to Address Sexually Explicit Materials in the Children and Youth Sections**

J. O'Connor asked that the proposal presented at the March meeting by B. Young as a way of addressing sexually explicit materials in the Children and Youth sections of the PRL be withdrawn. He stated that the members of the Board are all citizens of the four localities, and he didn't feel we needed additional citizens to help with the Board work. He said that the proposal stated that the proposed group would make the decisions as to where books in the libraries would be located. B. Young stated that the intension is that the proposed citizen's group would only be an advisory group and all final decisions about materials in the library would be the responsibility of the Board. J. Edwards said he did not see that stated in the proposal. B. Young reminded him that the document is a first draft and is open for revisions.

B. Young reminded the BOT that when she shared the proposed citizen's group to help review books that were questioned because they might contain sexually explicit text or illustrations at the March BOT meeting, it was recommended that T. Shepley have the document reviewed by Hanover's Legal office. She asked if this had been done. No answer was given.

J. Edwards stated that the size of the proposed citizen's group is much too large.

**MOTION:** J. O'Connor made a motion that the Board withdraw the proposal to create a patron's committee to assist the Board with the review and analysis of library materials that might contain sexually explicit content or illustrations. J. Edwards seconded the motion.

Both J. May and R. Martin spoke against the motion stating that they were in favor of creating the patron's committee.

J. Edwards asked for a report from Director T. Shepley about whether any recent Requests for Reconsideration were made. T. Shepley responded "No."

J. O'Connor stated that he felt we should give the new Collections Policy time to see if it would work by itself.



B. Young spoke against the motion. She pointed out that in the letter from the Chairman of the Hanover Board of Supervisors dated April 3, 2023, they stated specifically that “Pamunkey Regional Library should provide tools and clear processes to support parents who choose to manage access to materials that they may deem inappropriate for their children.” B. Young stated that the new Collections Policy, which she voted against at the March 2023 BOT meeting, does not offer any route to parents to help them manage library materials for their children. She said, in fact, she felt it gave them less assistance than before.

B. Young stated that she had done some research recently about the front matter and the book blurb (book description) provided online and/or on the book jacket or the back of the book for many of the books currently in question. Not one of the descriptions she found contained any information that would tell the parent there was sexually explicit information in the book. As a parent herself, she stated that she did not have the time to read completely every book her child checked out and she pointed out that at a previous Board meeting the Board was told by library staff that they did not have time to read completely every book that came into the library. B. Young also pointed out that the Hanover County Attorney, Dennis A. Walter, had provided a document titled Materials Challenges in Libraries: Legal Considerations. In this document, there is a very clear definition of pornography and a statement which said “...that most pornography – at least for adults – is protected by the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment.” However, “Child pornography [is] - treated differently (not protected by the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment.)” B. Young expressed concern that we are currently not providing tools for PRL parents to assist them in helping their children select what the parent personally deems appropriate.

M. Smith cautioned the Board to be careful about getting involved in the daily operation of the library.

**AMENDMENT TO THE MOTION:** J. May proposed an amendment to the motion that instead of withdrawing the committee proposal, the BOT pass the proposal to the Executive Committee. J. Edwards seconded the amendment and the amended motion passed.

#### **E. Arrangement of Books at Libraries**

T. Shepley stated that if the library has decided the location for a book somewhere, then that is where it stays. They do not move books to change access.

M. Smith asked if books were put where they would get the most circulation. T. Shepley said yes.

#### **F. Other Aids to Help Parents Help Their Children Select Books**

1. Signage – M. Smith suggested that the signage be put in plastic holders. It was also suggested that the library staff improve the current signage.

2. Reconsideration Form – M. Smith asked if patrons were given information about the Collection Policy and the Reconsideration form. T. Shepley stated that parents can get a Reconsideration form by asking for one from Library staff. He also stated that the form can be found on the PRL website.
3. Board members made a request to T. Shepley to add a monthly report of the Requests for Reconsideration received by PRL Administration to our Consent Agenda.
4. T. Shepley said that information about NoveList is posted at each library.

#### **G. Report of the Library Director**

T. Shepley gave the Library Director Report.

1. T. Shepley stated that he has spoken with Goochland County and King William County Boards of Supervisors about the letter from King and Queen County.
2. He stated that groundbreaking has occurred for the new Montpelier Park Recreation Center and Library.
3. T. Shepley said that he has had conversations with the King and Queen Staff about the letter from the King and Queen County Administrator. M. Smith asked if PRL could possibly absorb the staff from the King and Queen Branch library. T. Shepley stated that maybe some of the staff can be absorbed by PRL.
4. T. Shepley stated that PRL is currently holding off on hiring a new Upper King William County Library Manager.

### **9. Adjournment**

The May 2023 BOT meeting will be held on May 24, 2023, at the Upper King William Branch Library at 10:00 a.m. The next Executive Committee meeting and the next Personnel Committee meeting will both be held on May 17, 2023 at the Ashland Branch Library. The Executive Committee will meet from 10:00 to 11:45 a.m. and the Personnel Committee will meet from 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m.

Having completed the business of the PRL BOT, Chair T. Simpkins adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m. by acclamation of the Board.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Young  
PRL Board of Trustees' Secretary