

Future of the Library Task Force
Meeting One Minutes - Approved
Charlotte Convention Center
October 20, 2010

ATTENDANCE

Task Force Members			
NAME	PRESENT	NAME	PRESENT
Jim Woodward, Chair	YES	Leonora Kaufmann	YES
Jeff Armstrong	NO	Gloria Kelley	YES
Bob Bisanar	YES	Bill Millett	YES
Alan Blumenthal	YES	Bernie Simmons	YES
Pamela Davies	YES	Scott Stone	YES
Michael DeVaul	YES	Julie Szeker	YES
Geneal Gregory	YES	Connie Wessner	YES
Andy Heath	YES	Ed Williams	YES
Carol Hull	YES		
Non- Committee Members			
Cyndee Patterson, The Lee Institute	YES	Barbara Moran, UNC Chapel Hill	YES
Alli Celebron-Brown, The Lee Institute	YES	Cordelia Anderson, Library	YES
Jeanne Kutrow, The Lee Institute	YES	Danny Diehl, Mecklenburg County	YES
Vance Yoshida, La Piana Consulting	YES		

Task Force Members and guests were welcomed to the first meeting of the Future of the Library Task Force by Jim Woodward, Chair. Dr. Woodward reviewed the charge of the Task Force and reinforced to Task Force members that the true owners of the Library are the people of this community. The goal of the Task Force is to determine what the people of this community want for the Public Library and to make recommendations to the Library Board of Trustees and Board of County Commissioners based on that determination.

Dr. Woodward introduced Jennifer Roberts, Chair of Mecklenburg County Commissioners. Ms. Roberts emphasized that the work of the Task Force is important to Mecklenburg County and the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) completely supports this work. Ms. Roberts stated that the BOCC discovered that they make better decisions when they call upon the citizens of the community for their input. Ms. Roberts thanked the Task Force members for their time and commitment and encouraged them to be creative, innovative and think outside the box as they carry out their work.

Dr. Woodward introduced Robin Branstrom, Chair of the Library Board of Trustees. Ms. Branstrom thanked Ms. Roberts for her remarks. On behalf of the Library Board of Trustees, Ms. Branstrom thanked the Task Force members and

stated that the Trustees are appreciative of the time the members are devoting to this critical community problem. Task Force members were encouraged to contact the Board of Trustees and/or the Library staff if they need anything in order to accomplish their work.

Dr. Woodward recognized Harry Jones, County Manager and Charles Brown, Director of the Library. Dr. Woodward stated that the Design Team phase of this effort has had extraordinary support from both the County and the Library and he is confident that that support will continue.

Dr. Woodward introduced Cyndee Patterson, President of The Lee Institute and Vance Yoshida, Senior Manager with La Piana Consulting. The Lee Institute will serve as Project Manager for the Task Force and La Piana will serve as Project Consultant and Facilitator for the Task Force.

Dr. Woodward introduced Barbara Moran, Louis Round Wilson Distinguished Professor from the School of Information and Library Science at UNC Chapel Hill. Dr. Moran will serve as Library Consultant to the Task Force.

Task Force members then introduced themselves.

Following the Task Force introductions, Dr. Woodward explained a Design Team was formed whose goal it was to develop a suggested framework within which the Task Force would conduct its work. The Design Team was formed with three representatives from the County, three representatives from the Library and three citizens. Dr. Woodward stated that these individuals have devoted an extraordinary amount of time to their work and thanked them for all they had accomplished. As of this meeting, the Design Team has completed its work and will no longer serve in this capacity.

Dr. Woodward introduced the Design Team members: Mecklenburg County representatives: Leslie Johnson, Rodney Harris & Janet Payne; Library representatives: Sean Hogue, Julia Lantham & Frank Blair; Community representatives: Dennis Rash, Beth Hardin & Marye Pat Kelley. Beth Hardin, Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs at UNC Charlotte served as Chair of the Design Team. Dr. Woodward thanked the Design Team for their work and turned the meeting over to Ms. Hardin.

Ms. Hardin used PowerPoint as a framework for her presentation. Copies were given to Task Force members and are also available on <http://charmec.org/libraryfuture>. Ms. Hardin began by stating that the Design Team was assisted by Lauren Batten and Frances Thompson, Vandever Batten and a UNC Charlotte graduate, Joey Lemmons. Ms. Hardin explained that the purpose of the Design Team was to lay the foundation for the Task Force so that the work of the Task Force can be successful.

Each Task Force member has a copy of the Design Team report in their notebooks and the report is publicly available on the Task Force website.

Ms. Hardin reviewed the elements that were addressed during the Design Team's work:

- Application process – developed and implemented strategy to identify the members of the Task Force
- Funding – assessed the resources that would be necessary for the Task Force to be successful; identified the places from which those resources could be gained; determined the approximate cost of the resources, created a budget; and worked with principals in the community to fund that budget
- Communication – developed a communication plan that addressed the critical need for communication in this public process
- Framework – developed a comprehensive, integrated and actionable plan for the work of the Task Force

Ms. Hardin reviewed the Design Team's process map, which outlines the proposed process and content for Phases I-V, culminating in the final recommendations of the Task Force.

Ms. Hardin then reviewed a number of issues that the Design Team had wrestled with during their work and the conclusions they had drawn regarding the issues: Common Misconceptions:

- *The Library is stable in its current form.* Approximately \$5M in current operating funds are from one-time appropriations from the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County and other towns in the County. Another reason it is not stable is due to the protracted period of uncertainty which causes people to seek other forms of employment.
- *There is a quick fix.* The economy is not likely to rebound quickly which means Mecklenburg County (primary funder of library) is not likely to see a steep increase in revenues.
- *Philanthropy can fill government funding gap.* When looking at libraries nationally, there are a handful that are fully endowed; others that raise money in annual funds or have an endowment of which a portion can be spent annually. Vast majority of libraries have a government funding source. There is a role for philanthropy, but it is not likely that it can fill the entire funding gap.
- *There are funding replacement alternatives.* Due to status as a Carnegie Library and as a state chartered library, there is a limit to the fees that can be charged for services.
- *Outsourcing alone will fill the \$5M funding gap.* Consolidation and outsourcing are very valuable and efficient tools, but alone are not capable of filling the full gap.
- *Volunteers can fill staffing needs in the long term.* Volunteers are extremely valuable but volunteers alone won't be able to sustain the current operations of the library on a long term basis.

Task Force members asked for clarification around Carnegie designation and State Charter. Ms. Hardin and others explained that the Carnegie designation is a historic designation established by Andrew Carnegie in the early 20th century. The state charter is a state designation and can only be changed by legislative action. As a state chartered institution, the library cannot charge for basic

services. More information will be provided about these designations during the "Library 101" and "Governance and Organizational Structure" discussions.

A Task Force member asked if there were any libraries, especially in North Carolina that charge for any services. Mr. Brown replied that except for certain services (photocopies, meeting rooms, etc.) libraries do not charge Mecklenburg County residents for services. Non-Mecklenburg County residents are charged for services.

Dr. Woodward stated the Task Force would like more clarity around basic services and which services are provided for a fee.

Ms. Hardin reviewed the budget, which is included in the Design Team report. The proposed total budget for the Library Task Force is \$225,000, which includes project management, communications, logistics, community/civic engagement, expert resources and a contingency. To date the Foundation For The Carolinas Catalyst Fund has committed \$75,000 for this effort. The FFTC Catalyst Fund has been asked for an additional \$75,000, with the remaining \$75,000 coming from Mecklenburg County and the Library – 90% from the County and 10% from the Library, representing the current funding model. The Library has committed to the requested funding; final approval has not been received from the Catalyst Fund or the County.

Dr. Woodward introduced Hyong Yi, Director of Management and Budget for Mecklenburg County. Mr. Yi reviewed the Impact of the Recession on the finances of Mecklenburg County. Mr. Yi's PowerPoint, *Impact of the Recession on Mecklenburg County*, can be found on the Task Force website.

Dr. Woodward introduced Sean Hogue, Consultant from Vertere Capital. Mr. Hogue has worked with the Library for the past 6 months to help address the budget issues. Mr. Hogue reviewed the Library finances with an emphasis on the operating budget of the Library (not assets). Mr. Hogue's PowerPoint, *Historical Operational Growth of Charlotte Mecklenburg Library System*, can be found on the Task Force website.

Dr. Woodward stated that there is national data on libraries available that looks at everything from the size of the community served, to the number of books checked out. This information will help the Task Force look at trends, but will not give much information on how other communities have dealt with the economic downturn. Since there is no national source of current information, Dr. Woodward has asked the Chamber of Commerce to identify the cities it considers major competitors to Charlotte. In addition, Mecklenburg County has certain counties they use as benchmarks. The Task Force will focus on getting current data and information (governance, financing, size, population served, operating budget revenues, etc.) from libraries in these communities.

A Task Force member suggested that the Task Force look at whatever's working in any community, not just those cities that are similar to Charlotte. Look in detail at how other communities have dealt more successfully with cuts.

The Task Force took a 10 minute break.

Dr. Woodward welcomed members back and stated that it is critical in this project to determine what the citizens of Mecklenburg County want of their libraries. The Task Force does not have a lot of time to gather this information. The project managers and consultants will begin planning the process of how the information will be gathered and during the next meetings the Task Force will identify what information needs to be gathered. Communication with the citizens of Mecklenburg County is critical. There is much concern and support in the County for the Library. Dr. Woodward wants the citizens of Mecklenburg County to know that the Task Force works for them not the BOCC or the Board of Trustees of the Library.

Dr. Woodward again introduced Cyndee Patterson, President of The Lee Institute. The Lee Institute will act as Project Managers and as experts for civic engagement – engaging the broader community to understand what they want.

Ms. Patterson introduced the team from The Lee Institute: Alli Celebron-Brown and Jeanne Kutrow. Ms. Patterson briefly reviewed the structure of the Task Force and the civic engagement portion of this effort. Ms. Patterson explained that there will be a telephone survey, a web survey and two to three town hall meetings. The town hall meetings will be geographically placed throughout the County. The meetings will not be public hearings, but will be designed to gather information about the Library and the services it provides from the residents of Mecklenburg County.

Ms. Patterson introduced members of the Communications Team: Cordelia Anderson from the Library and Danny Diehl from Mecklenburg County. The Communications Team will work with the Task Force and the Project Managers and Consultants to support and enhance the work of this effort. The website for the Task Force is already established on the County's website: www.charmeck.org/libraryfuture.

Ms. Patterson introduced Vance Yoshida, Project Consultant and Facilitator, La Piana Consulting. Mr. Yoshida encouraged the Task Force to draw on the knowledge and the resources represented by the members of the Task Force and the consultants to the project. In addition, Mr. Yoshida complimented the Design Team on the work they accomplished and stated that it is a great framework for the Task Force to begin with.

Mr. Yoshida stated that the Task Force needs to make sure that they are not just looking at what needs to be done now for the Library. They need to look at where the Library needs to be in five years and ten years, positioning the Library for the future and making sure it is sustainable.

Mr. Yoshida discussed an article prepared by La Piana titled Convergence, which addresses five major trends that are occurring and how the convergence of those trends will impact nonprofits. Copies of the article will be sent to each Task Force member.

In addition, Mr. Yoshida reminded the Task Force that the Library is operating in a very competitive environment, so it is important that the Task Force considers the competition. What will the Library's competitive edge be as they move forward? Why are people going to come to the Library for its services? Why will the County give money to the Library rather than other entities?

Mr. Yoshida stated that the process the Task Force uses as it moves forward will be very important. It is critical that the Task Force gains public trust as it move forward. Mr. Yoshida recommends that the Task Force be as transparent as possible. The Task Force will have far more integrity if it is transparent in what its doing and the decisions that are made.

Mr. Yoshida encouraged the Task Force to think of themselves as one team – all bringing different expertise to the team. The Task Force should act as one cohesive body – with one team the work moves forward. If the Task Force is one team – How do the relationships need to be built? How does the Task Force operate as a team?

Cordelia Anderson explained Basecamp, a document sharing tool that the Task Force will use.

Dr. Woodward reminded the Task Force that all emails the Task Force sends to one another are public record. Task Force members were encouraged to save all emails related to the Task Force. All meetings will be open to the public. There will be media coverage, which is needed to carry out the process. It is critical that the Task Force have open and honest deliberations during the meetings.

Ms. Patterson reviewed the basic contents of the notebooks prepared for the Task Force members. Notebooks and materials will be updated at each Task Force meeting.

Dr. Woodward stated that in order to determine what the community wants for the Library, it is important to define the array of services provided by Library in terms that the community understands. Library staff is currently working on the terms and definitions of each term and is using the article included in the notebook, *2007 Public Library Service Responses*, as a framework for coming up with this specificity.

Task Force meeting times and locations were discussed. The proposed schedule is for the Task Force to meet every other week on Tuesday afternoons, with Morrison Library agreed upon as the meeting location for the first few meetings. Once meeting dates, times and locations are confirmed, Task Force members will be notified and the schedule will be posted on the website.

Task Force members made the following comments about meeting locations:

- Use different branches for the Task Force meeting locations; it is important to be there when the library is open, to see people interacting and using the library.

- Encouraged fellow Task Force members to visit different branches. Task Force member has already visited three different locations and plans to do more of the same. Visits were very informative.
- Location of town hall meetings may dictate where the Task Force needs to have some sort of presence. If a town hall meeting is not held on the west side of Charlotte, may need to have at least one Task Force meeting at a west side library.

Dr. Woodward opened the meeting to Task Force members for comments and initial thoughts on how to proceed with the work of the Task Force. The following comments/requests were made:

- Information regarding the assets of the Library (balance sheets).
Response: The balance sheets for the past three to five fiscal years are posted on the library website. This information will be provided to the Task Force and posted on Basecamp.
- Information regarding the use of the library as a community center. What is the overlap in services and/or physical facilities with other community centers, City/County facilities, etc? Response: This information will be addressed by specifically defining the array of services provided by the Library.
- The role the Davidson Library provides in the community is different than the role the downtown Charlotte Library provides.
- Request for numbers other than personnel per square footage – i.e., number of contacts, circulation. Response: can look at usage of Libraries a number of ways – electronic door counts, books checked out. This information will be provided.
- Does library have past information from citizens (focus groups, surveys)
Response: Facilities master plan prepared from data collected during first quarter 2009 is posted on Basecamp. A survey was conducted (telephone, online and community meetings) to address how important physical location was in terms of public library offerings.
- At what point do we start to formulate what we think the library should do? When on timeline do we get to that? And should we include some of that in our survey? Response: Need to include whatever questions and topics that would help us reach a conclusion. Task Force will need to begin to discuss the array of services and what is valued in that array of services before the survey is completed.
- The charge of the Task Force is to do something in the short-term, but also intermediate and long-term. It will be helpful to look at the vision of what we want to provide – both in short-term and long-term.

Ms. Hardin commented that the view of the Design Team is that this will be a non-linear process. The heart of the discussion regarding the immediate, short and long-term will happen when the Task Force hears where the Library is now and what's happening nationally. The Design Team has stated that the citizen feedback process will be the most challenging element of the work given the timeframe of the Task Force's work.

Additional discussion was held with the following comments/requests from Task Force members and the Project Management team:

- Is there an outstanding library that you can think of? Response: All libraries are undergoing challenges in this economic environment. Each year the Library Journal selects an outstanding library. This year the Columbus, OH library was selected. The article that describes the Columbus library will be provided to the Task Force.
- Much of the published library data was collected before the current economic environment. Data pertinent to the work of this Task Force will be collected via personal conversations.
- Does the Library have a mission statement? Is it listed any place what the library does? Response: The Library does have a mission statement which is included in the Library's most recent strategic plan. The current strategic plan is included in the notebooks. Comment: The strategic plan was done in a different economic environment.
- What is considered long term? Response: three to five years maximum.
- Was there a time in the early 2000's where another community had a local recession and had to react? Response: Look at the Detroit libraries.
- Libraries that are doing well now may have done some planning during the last recession.
- Mr. Yoshida commented that is difficult to look beyond two to three years in strategic planning; but also important to have some type of vision that goes beyond that – develop a bigger picture around where the Library should be beyond the three years.
- It is important to determine where you want to be if the funds and opportunities are available. The challenge will be figuring out the Library's role given the reduced circumstances. The Library will want to provide services to the community that are essential, that aren't being provided by someone else and will want to do it excellently. The additional challenge is resources if the Library continues to depend on County funding. Need to address the untapped resources of the community.
- This is circular problem. Can look at best practices, but this is really looking at a change in the finance structure. The survey is central to the Task Force in crafting the vision, growing the base of support and defining how people use the Library.
- Task Force needs to focus on what people want and need.
- The challenge will be in wrestling with finding out what people need and giving it to them.
- Library has traditionally been about being a repository of information - a place where information resides. Does the Library want to maintain that role of being a repository of information to anyone who wants it whenever they want it? Hesitant to focus on what people say they don't want and therefore we're not going to do it.
- It is important to focus on the core of the Library.
- Need to be conscious of what has happened regarding technology changes and what that looks like in the future and how the Library adapts.
- The mission includes the essential core of the Library and making sure that it's done well. Important to keep the word flexibility out there for the future. Task Force must realize that we are dependent on elected

officials, especially the County Commission. Must have excellent communication with them and have a groundswell of support from them. We need the community leadership talking about the Library.

Dr. Woodward concluded the meeting by stating that in his conversations with community leaders and elected officials they have indicated that they want to know what the community wants and want to make the right decision. If the Task Force does good work, the leaders and elected officials will use that information to make the right decision.

Dr. Woodward thanked everyone again for their time and commitment and adjourned the meeting.