

**Future of the Library Task Force  
Meeting Three Minutes - Approved  
Morrison Regional Library  
November 16, 2010**

**ATTENDANCE**

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

Task Force members and guests were welcomed by Dr. Jim Woodward, Chair.

A motion to approve the November 2, 2010 minutes was seconded and the minutes were unanimously approved as written.

Dr. Woodward turned the meeting over to Vance Yoshida and Cyndee Patterson. Mr. Yoshida reviewed the agenda for the meeting. Ms. Patterson gave an overview of the materials provided for Task Force members. Ms. Patterson noted that in the listing of Basecamp documents those in red were recommended reading and those highlighted in yellow were documents added since the prior meeting. A new listing will be distributed each week.

Ms. Patterson reminded the Task Force members to complete the bio forms which were emailed to all Task Force members. In addition, head shots will be taken prior to the November 30, 2010 Task Force meeting. Members are asked to arrive 15 minutes early for that meeting. The bios and head shots will be used to provide consistent information about Task Force members on the Task Force website.

Mr. Yoshida commented that the Task Force has had rich discussion to date and reminded the members to continue to have open, honest conversations. He encouraged members to bring their thoughts and ideas to the table for other to build on, commenting that this will be the way the Task Force will develop good recommendations.

Mr. Yoshida asked Task Force member to review the Task Force Charge and Scope of Work. This Charge and Scope of Work is to be used as the guiding principles as the Task Force moves ahead in the process. Mr. Yoshida commented that when Library Board of Trustees and the County Commissioners review the Task Force recommendations, they will be looking for recommendations consistent with the charge. Mr. Yoshida encouraged Task Force members to keep the charge in mind as they do their work and to let Dr. Woodward know if there are things that aren't being covered or other points that members think should be covered in order to fulfill the charge.

Mr. Yoshida introduced Hyong Yi, Director of Management and Budget for Mecklenburg County. Mr. Yi distributed a Geographic Overlay of Services. The geographic overlay shows County recreation centers and indicates those that have been closed or have reduced hours; county wide libraries and indicates those that have been closed or have reduced hours; and Charlotte Mecklenburg schools that will be closed at the end of the 2010-2011 school year. In addition, the map includes an overlay used by the City of Charlotte which identifies neighborhoods as challenged or transitioning.

Mr. Yi stated that of the 53 park and recreation centers, schools and libraries in the county that have closed or have reduced hours, 30 are in challenged or transitioning neighborhoods. Of those 53 sites, 45 are in the City of Charlotte and 30 are in challenged or transitioning neighborhoods.

Question: What does this data mean?

Mr. Yi stated that at this point the County doesn't have any data around the repercussions of closing Park and Recreation centers, libraries and/or schools. Mr. Yi commented that he supposes there is a hypothesis that there will be repercussions and the closings and reduced hours will have an impact on the community.

Question: Do the closings and reduced hours suggest that usage for that facility is low?

Mr. Yi stated that the County doesn't have that data, it was not collected.

Question: Why did the County Commissioners ask for this data?

Mr. Yi stated that he thinks that the County Commission wanted to ask the School Board to slow down on their recent vote. Each group makes a decision about the closings/reduced hours in isolation. In isolation, the decisions are good ones, but when they are put together we will see that they will most likely have an impact on the community.

Question: Is there a map that shows where the facilities still are – those that are closed and those that are still open?

Mr. Yi stated that all of the Library sites are on the map and most of the Park and Recreation centers are on the map. Only the schools that will close are on the map due to the large number of schools throughout the County

Question: When Library locations were closed, was it a criteria that a certain percentage of population live within “x” distance of another Library?

Charles Brown, Director of Charlotte Mecklenburg Library stated that all of the Libraries that were closed are within 5 miles of another Library.

Dr. Woodward commented that he was at the County Commission meeting where the information that Mr. Yi presented was requested. There was no criticism aimed at any of the entities. The County Commission is the oversight body for all of these entities and wanted to look at the cumulative effect of the decisions.

Mr. Yi commented that the City of Charlotte will have to deal with the fallout from the effect of these closings, for example, they will probably result in an increased need for community policing. There will probably be an increase on the social services needs in these communities. Mr. Yi stated that there is a belief that there will be an impact from the closings/reduced hours, but this hasn't been seen yet and that there isn't any data to date.

Dr. Woodward commented that it would be appropriate for the Task Force to consider the cumulative impact of the combined closings/reduced hours in its deliberations.

Question: The schools have a timeline for their closings, but closing a library is not like closing a school. The library does have to deal with budget years, but can make a decision to reopen a location, schools don't have that option. It would be important to see usage rates and density of population for the library locations.

Mr. Yi commented that the analysis presented was a new type of analysis for Mecklenburg County. The County usually looks at the delivery of services on an individual basis rather than on a neighborhood basis. The concept of how services impact a neighborhood and how the County then structures services and service delivery is intriguing to the County.

Question: The closings concern me. When you think of the socially disadvantaged students, like those at Berryhill Elementary which has highest number of students in the CMS system receiving free & reduced lunch – these children have to travel at least 5 miles to get to a Library. Most of these families don't have a computer, these children do need the Library, this does affect a neighborhood.

Dr. Woodward encouraged Task Force members to think of the questions they want answered as it relates to this issue. The Library can get this information for the Task Force – the population served, the services provided by the branches. Ultimately the Task Force can decide how they want to consider the information. This is not a topic that is going to leave the attention of the Task Force.

Mr. Yoshida introduced David Singleton, Director of Library Services, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, Frank Blair, Director of Research, Innovation and Strategy, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library and Sean Hogue, Consultant, Vertere Capital who gave a presentation on Core Library Services: Description, Delivery and Costs. The team used PowerPoint as a framework for their presentation. Copies were given to Task Force members and are available on <http://charmec.org/libraryfuture>.

Mr. Singleton's presentation focused on the basic services offered by the Library: checkout of materials, readers advisory, information assistance and computer assistance. The Library locations are the platform for service delivery. This is where Library staff interacts with customers and is where the Service Points are located.

Mr. Singleton explained that checkout of materials is frequently referred to as circulation. Approximately 7 million items were checked out of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library last year. Mr. Singleton explained that checkout does not just mean items going out the door, there is a lot of processing that has to happen when the items are checked back in. There are many requests for popular materials, items have to be moved through the system, customers need help with their accounts, fines and fees have to be processed.

Last year on average every item in the Library system was checked out 6.8 times Mr. Singleton suggested that Task Force members think of it as merchandise – meaning that the Library had to restock everything in their system 6.8 times. With a 55% reduction in hours, the Library has seen only a 22% reduction in checkouts.

Mr. Singleton stated that Readers Advisory is something librarians have done for a very long time – connecting people with good books, from young children to seniors.

Information Assistance involves connecting people to all kinds of information and encompasses a wide range of things. Mr. Singleton stated that information assistance can range from students looking for help with homework, to requests for information supporting individual interests and hobbies, to requests for consumer, legal or business information. With a 55% reduction in hours, the Library has seen only a 30% reduction in information requests, resulting in concentrated activity during the hours the Library is open.

Question: The kind of examples you gave were very broad. How do you differentiate the capability of the people who provide the responses to those questions?

Mr. Singleton stated that the librarians are not the experts, they are experts at connecting individuals to the information they need. In addition, the librarians can give individuals some information and guidance around evaluating the source of information.

What guides the staffing is the volume of requests. The Library has a staff with a wide range of educational backgrounds.

Question: What percentage of people who work in a branch would have the wide variety of knowledge and skill to do all of these things?

Mr. Singleton stated that that varies from location to location. In the smaller locations, the staff usually does many things while in the larger locations the staff is somewhat more specialized. Mr. Blair and Mr. Hogue will address some of the staffing questions in their portion of the presentation.

Question: How are you measuring information requests?

Mr. Singleton stated that the Library measures actual interactions with staff, which can be by phone, in person or a virtual interaction. Some of the interactions can be informational only: Where do I vote? Others can be more complex. In the past year, the Library has begun tracking the type of information requests, for example, information requests around workforce development and job seeking.

Question: So the interaction can be from seconds to much longer depending on the type of question?

Mr. Singleton stated that this was correct and it makes it very complex to track. The requests are probably a little more detailed than they used to be due to the fact that almost everyone can find basic information using the internet.

Question: Do the 1 million requests include everything from where is the fiction section to job seeking questions?

Yes.

Question: Do you use the same standards for tracking as other libraries?

Mr. Singleton stated that the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library does use national standards.

Mr. Singleton continued by explaining that computer assistance involves helping people to use technology effectively including helping people access internet. The Library has people with all levels of ability coming in to use the computers.

Individuals come in who are job seeking. Sometimes these are displaced workers who haven't used a computer in their job and we have to teach them how to use the computer.

Question: Can you draw any correlation between socially or economically disadvantaged Library locations and computer usage?

Mr. Singleton stated that the Library finds that in more fragile neighborhoods, Library staff spends a little more time on computer assistance. This can be one on one or in a group setting.

Mr. Singleton stated that the Library has seen a 51% reduction in computer use. This reduction is tied to the reduction of hours the Library is open. There are only so many computers and they can only be accessed during hours that the Library is open.

Question: What is the usage during time the computers are available?

Mr. Blair stated that the numbers represent about 95% usage. The computers are very heavily used.

Questions: Do you make a distinction between using computers to access information versus simply using computers to make a resume or a Word document?

Mr. Singleton stated that the types of usage are very intertwined and the Library doesn't differentiate when tracking the usage. In the past the Library has offered group sessions on how to use Word or how to access information on the computer. Then the staff can focus on providing individual help,

Question: Are the checkouts representative of self-checkout and assisted checkout?

Mr. Singleton stated that these numbers do include the self-checkouts. About 50% of Library checkouts are automated, but all materials must be checked back in manually.

Question: Does the Library track new users of each core service versus repeat users?

Mr. Singleton stated that the Library is not capable of tracking this information at this point. There are currently approximately 300,000 active library cards in the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library system.

Mr. Blair continued the presentation by discussing Service Delivery – how the Library delivers the services.

The Library locations are the platform for delivering services. There are 20 locations around the county. Service Points are the methods for delivery the services within the Library. A Service Point is a public desk supported by a team of staff delivering services.

Mr. Blair stated that in the 20 Library locations there are 43 Service Points. Many Libraries host only one Service Point, but there are Libraries with two and three. The Main Library & ImaginOn are outliers, because of their size they have multiple Service Points.

Mr. Blair continued by explaining that the Service Points are driven by customer demand. At the larger Libraries there are a larger number of information requests, higher circulation and more computers. At the larger Libraries, the Service Points are embedded in the collection.

Mr. Blair explained the Service Point variables. The mix of services and staff at a Service Point depends on the volume and type of demand at a particular location. The layout and size of a branch also drives the staff and Service Points. One service point may have several staff delivering a mix of the four basic services. In a three Service Point Library, the popular materials and high demand items are located near the entrance with a staff that supports materials as well as the circulation of materials. The children's collection is located in a separate wing or floor with the Service Point and staff located near the collection. The adult fiction and non-fiction is located in a separate wing or floor with the Service Point and staff located near these collections. In most cases the computers are located near the adult fiction and non-fiction.

Mr. Blair stated that staffing requires four to six and a half staff at each Service Point in a single shift model.

Mr. Hogue continued the presentation by discussing the service delivery costs and staff requirements.

Mr. Hogue explained that each Service Point requires staff and based on 43 Service Points with the existing hours of operations for the 20 locations, 89.03 staff (FTEs) is required to cover the Service Points, 116.7 staff is needed to meet projected volume, 58.35 staff is needed to process projected circulation volume, resulting in 264.09 total staff needed to meet overall projected volume. Given current staffing level of 223 FTE, there is a 41.09 FTE deficit in staff based on the projected volume.

Dr. Woodward commented that it is an important point to note that if the Library cuts staff, they must also cut Service Points.

Mr. Hogue commented that if the Library cuts staff, they would have to cut volume, either by location or by Service Points.

Dr. Woodward commented that the Library can reduce interactions by reducing the number of shifts – they can go two to one, but can't go to half shift.

Questions: What is a shift?

Mr. Hogue stated that this varies, but on average is 43 hours per week. It depends on how many days and hours the Library is open in a week. All Library

locations are open 66 to 71 hours per week, so a shift varies somewhat from location to location.

M. Hogue commented that the biggest piece of puzzle is circulation. All the material that goes out comes back in.

Question: What takes time?

Mr. Hogue stated that what takes time is checking in the materials, processing in backroom and getting the materials back on the shelf. In addition, when someone comes in and pulls material for use in the Library, these materials must be put back on the shelf and this takes time. And the requests for popular materials and high demand items take time. When items are placed on hold, the staff must find the item, place it on the shelf and hold until the material is picked up. This all takes time.

Question: Do we expect circulation to decline regardless of the operating hours and due to technology? Is it natural to have circulation decline?

Mr. Hogue stated that he would argue that circulation is up. During the last ten years circulation has gone up. He suggested that based on the reduction in hours, the reduction in circulation is not proportionate and suggests that circulation is up.

Charles Brown, Director, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, commented that nationally, libraries are busier than they have ever been – especially since 2008 with the decline in the economy. Libraries are evolving and are now a place to go for the most up to date technology.

Question: Can we assume that all of the core services provided by the Library are not duplicated by anyone else?

Mr. Brown stated that the core services are not duplicated free of charge by any other entity in the community. The four core services are provided in any community with open access to anyone.

Question: Is the shift for a service the same number as before reductions?

A Library representative stated that the closed locations represent five Service Points. The Library had done some consolidation prior to the closings to address the budget reductions.

Question: Has the effectiveness of the Service Points diminished due to this?

A Library representative stated that the demand on the Service Points has increased. There are more people in the Library locations when they are open. The staff is juggling a lot of things.

Mr. Hogue commented that traffic between Library locations and the logistics around this traffic is a backline cost. Holds placed on materials require



transport between locations. In addition, when materials are dropped off at different locations, they have to be transported back to the originating Library.

Mr. Brown commented that the Library has moved to something called a shared collection, meaning that most of the Library's material is not assigned to a specific location. If something is returned to the South County, it stays at South County. But if someone requests an item and wants to pick it up at South County, the item has to be transported there. This system has cut down somewhat on transport.

Dr. Woodward stated that Mr. Hogue's presentation is a model based on the best estimates he could come up with. The model is based on Mr. Hogue's analysis of what has happened in the Library. It is a good model, but it is based on best estimates.

Mr. Hogue commented that the total public service staff needed is 264.09 FTEs. This is the staff needed to process books and handle information. The Library currently has 223 FTE. The difference is made up with volunteers. Putting the books back on the shelves takes a lot of time. In every hour of every day 458 items are returned to the largest locations, 50 items to the smallest locations.

Karen Beach, Director of Community Engagement, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, stated that the Library now has 5000 volunteer hours per month across the system. This number has doubled with the current situation.

Question: During the Design Team Report the Task Force was told that the Library had fully leveraged volunteers and increasing volunteer efforts was not the answer. Have we leveraged volunteers that to full effect?

Mr. Hogue commented that managing the volunteers puts in another layer of responsibility and time needed.

Question: Is the issue the recruitment of volunteers or managing the volunteers?

Mr. Hogue commented that recruitment is not an issue in certain areas. The staff number presented backs in the number of volunteers, it doesn't address what the volunteers could provide. The Library doesn't know the "sweet spot" for the optimal number of volunteers.

Ms. Beach commented that the Libraries in Cornelius, Matthews, Davidson and Mint Hill have maximized the number of volunteers based on the number of staff. Due to space limitations you can only have a certain number of people in the Library at a given time. And the staff is maximized with regard to managing the volunteers.

Ms. Beach commented that two hours per week is the average of what a volunteer will give you, although some do go beyond this number. There are studies which have shown that volunteers can be expected to do 20-30% of a staff member's job, they cannot do the entire job.

Dr. Woodward stated that it is clear the Task Force needs more information around volunteers – especially if there are other libraries that have been identified that have maximized the use of volunteers. The Task Force would like written information around volunteers and staffing. If the Library is at capacity with volunteers, show the Task Force what this looks like.

Question: What is the number of part-time employees? What is the benefit load? Where do you see a drop down on benefit load due to part-time employees?

Mr. Hogue stated there is a 30.6% benefit load and there are 41 part-time staff members.

Question: What is the actual cost to deliver services?

Mr. Hogue stated that \$19M of the \$25M total Library budget goes toward service delivery.

Question: Is there a directional feel of where people are spending their time? If you go back to the November 2<sup>nd</sup> Task Force meeting, we heard about a lot of other programs. We were told that 5% to 65% of a librarian's time is spent on the other stuff. How do you measure that? How do you factor that in?

Mr. Blair stated that lots of it is incidental, lots of it is efficiency. Group classes that are provided are efficient and leverage staff time.

Question: What I'm struggling with is: isn't there a place where we can re-engineer? I'm trying to understand all of these programs, the cost of these, they aren't free, they take time. If you're running these Libraries, do you really want your highest paid people stocking books? How do we get comfortable that we are looking at all of the opportunities to re-engineer? Because if we don't, we will have to cut the given the budget.

Mr. Hogue stated that the hard dollar cost of running these programs is \$200K, but the Library still runs FTE deficit. Mr. Hogue suggested that it needs to be determined if there are other efficiencies.

Dr. Woodward commented that there is problem in the way the Library presented the programs it provides. It is misleading about all of the time and energy that is put into these programs and services. The Library talks about the programs and services a lot, but it doesn't take a lot of time to do them. Dr. Woodward stated that what he heard was that when you cost out these non-core service programs the cost is minor. Dr. Woodward inquired if he was hearing that correctly?

Mr. Hogue commented that the biggest factor in readjusting cost is controlling volume. Volume is the biggest component of system that drives cost.

Question: What is the core number that defines the volume of taking books off the shelf, sending them out, and restocking?

Mr. Hogue replied that it is staff FTEs.

A Task Force member commented – what is the definition of a core service? Libraries are evolving institutions. The Pre-K reading program – for young mothers and young fathers the Pre-K reading program is a core service. The Library has a hugely diverse audience. The Library is pre-birth to death. Don't think you can retreat to just the core services, that looks like the library of old.

A Task Force member commented that you can look at some fusion of services. Sustainability is the key. There needs to be some fusion between a traditional library and the new library.

Mr. Singleton commented that the Library has done a study that looked at the program costs associated with the summer reading program, one of the Library's largest programs. The Library can share that study with the Task Force members.

A Task Force member commented that the current model of checking materials out and then checking them back in is labor intensive.

A Task Force member commented that the Main Library has a huge volume of space and this is very pricey real estate. The Library may need to address changing the model of how it delivers books to people.

A Task Force member commented that she would like to give additional attention to the definition of core services. What are the core services of a library, specifically this Library? What becomes core service creep? What is it we want the library to do? What does this branch do that it requires all of this space? What determines when a branch is needed? And where? And all of that speaks to core services. And from there you figure out how you're going to fund it.

A Task Force member stated that he was shocked at the space in the Main Library that is not even used. The Virtual Village is closed and space is not used.

Question: What do you do with the space?

Mr. Hogue stated that he would post data points for some of the questions raised during the meeting.

Dr. Woodward commented that the Task Force has heard the composite best judgment of how our Library defines core services. If the Task Force is going to look at priorities, the best place to look is at the definition of core services and the additional information they've given the Task Force. The Task Force must be able to quantify what it costs to provide a bundle of core services. But also those other programs the Task Force defines as critical.

Question: What is success? What is a quantifiable measurement of this county's Library system? Is it literacy, the number of clients serviced, the way we serve clients?

Question: What is a Service Point and do you need to have every set of services at every location? You may want to consider having checkout and computers only at some locations.

Question: Have we isolated this cost of check-in and checkout? We need to look at the cost for this and then all of the other things. This is the real issue, dealing with the number of people required to do this service. Are there alternatives to this?

Dr. Woodward stated that the Task Force needs further conversation about that. The Task Force needs to see what other libraries are doing to reduce costs. The Task Force needs to know more about check-in, checkout and restocking books and where savings might be had. What are some of the alternatives? Are there technology alternatives resulting in a reduction of staff costs?

The Task Force took a 10 minute break.

Mr. Yoshida introduced Dr. Barbara Moran, Louis Round Wilson Distinguished Professor, School of Information and Library Science, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. Moran gave a presentation on Evaluating Public Libraries using PowerPoint as a framework for her presentation. Copies were given to Task Force members and are also available on <http://charmeck.org/libraryfuture>.

Prior to beginning her presentation Mr. Moran commented on the issue of how Libraries have addressed re-engineering. In the past, Libraries processed new materials in-house to get them ready for circulation and had in-house cataloguing of materials. Now many Libraries outsource these activities. Materials come shelf-ready. Having common collections is another way of cutting down on staff costs. Libraries need to continue to look for ways to cut down on costs.

Dr. Moran began her presentation by stating that Libraries have recognized the need to show how good of a job they are doing. Libraries must show that they are good stewards of public money. Libraries are called upon more and more to be accountable for the money they are spending. It can be very difficult to do some quantification. Much of what a Library does is intangible.

Dr. Moran stated that Libraries are going beyond metrics for internal use and are moving to metrics for accountability to show the public how they are doing. The public wants to know they're getting a good return for their investment. The public invests a huge amount of dollars in public libraries.

For many years Libraries looked at inputs, e.g., money, size of collection, but these don't really tell how well a Library is doing. In the 70s and 80s Libraries moved to an emphasis on output measures.

Dr. Moran stated that output measurements are collected fairly commonly. There are national standards and every state requires that these be reported. Most are tied to basic services such as library use, annual use, card holders, computer usage, and virtual uses.

The problem with output measures is that they are not sufficient. They measure what libraries do, but they don't tell you the values or benefits constituents receive from the services. You want to know the impact services and programs made.

Dr. Moran stated that comparative measures look at how library is doing in relation to other libraries. Hennen's American Public Library Ratings produces national rankings of libraries and the Library Journal Index of Public Library Service produces star rankings of libraries. Dr. Moran commented that both of these rankings are beauty contests. In some ways you can say the libraries that are ranked highly are doing better, but these libraries are typically well-funded. Sometimes the smaller, poorer libraries are providing services needed in the community.

Dr. Moran stated that another measure used is benchmarking. Many libraries find benchmarking very helpful, but every library is very different in its mission, funding, and people it serves. To find comparable libraries and benchmark performance against them has been very helpful. For example, can find best practices library for using volunteers. This can help create efficiencies and lower costs.

Dr. Moran stated that libraries found this still was not enough so they turned to economists to do a cost/benefit analysis. Libraries that do this analysis typically don't do them themselves. Dr. Moran stated that it is very difficult to do this type of analysis.

Dr. Moran stated that another type of measure is return on investment studies. Many states and cities have done this type of measure. The problem with these studies is that they are making progress towards valuing libraries, but still are not there. Every library is different, every community is different. The benefits are so intangible, for example, young mothers learning to read and it is very difficult to measure these things. Each of the studies tries to use uniform techniques, but everyone slightly different so can't compare the studies. And every library is funded differently.

Dr. Woodward commented that Wake County has a balanced scorecard. The Wake County Library, which is a department of the County, has therefore implemented some measures that fit within the balanced scorecard concept. This might not be the best method, but it is at least accepted.

Dr. Moran stated that many libraries are using a balanced scorecard.

Mr. Brown stated that the Library is using this method in relationship to Mecklenburg County's balanced scorecard

Mr. Blair stated that Mecklenburg County uses a balanced scorecard. The County does a customer satisfaction questionnaire every year with Mecklenburg County residents. The scorecard addresses if a department has achieved what said it was going to do and then gives a red, yellow, green light. In addition it addresses what the department is going to do in the next year to achieve its goals. The Library uses the County's scorecard, it doesn't have an internal scorecard that the Library has developed.

A Task Force member commented that the return on investment analysis can be used to make an argument. The Library currently spends \$28 per capita. Can define how many children's books an individual has access to via the Library and compare this to the market value of those books. The library dollars go much further. This puts it in a context that an individual can understand.

Mr. Blair stated that the Library has a return on investment analysis that they are testing now. It is available on the Library's budget page online.

A Task Force member stated that this is a great way to express the use of the Library – visits, circulation, computer time. This is a powerful tool that can be used to help people understand the Library.

Cordelia Anderson, Deputy Director, Marketing and Communications for Charlotte Mecklenburg Library stated that some of the information on the study conducted is already on Basecamp. Staff will put it in a category on Basecamp where it can be accessed.

A Task Force member commented that this is a tool that will help the Task Force and will help the Task Force use those measures to allocate resources.

A Task Force member commented that the data gives exposure to non-library users and he hadn't thought of that before. "I'm already paying for it, I might as well use it."

Dr. Woodward stated that the Task Force needs to determine the appropriate parameters for measuring what the library does that provides the County Commissioners and Administrators with the information they need.

Dr. Woodward requested that the Mr. Blair provide the Task Force with the information that is measured.

Question: The information that was presented is sometimes hard to get your head around. Although we were given the library card number, I would bet a lot of people who come into the Library and use the services such as the internet don't have a library card. Can we track this information? Who's using the library? We need to get that information.

Mr. Yoshida stated that the Task Force needs to determine the purpose of the measures. What are you going to use the measures for? There are kinds of data you can collect. Ultimately, why do you need it and what are you going to use it for? What measure do we need to influence commissioners around the funding? Will need to come back and define what you want to measure.

Mr. Yoshida turned the meeting over Dr. Woodward who addressed Benchmarking. Copies of Dr. Woodward's PowerPoint were given to Task Force members and are also available on <http://charmeck.org/libraryfuture>.

Dr. Woodward stated that with the benchmarking, you must first define why you're doing the benchmarking. Once that is answered, you can identify against whom want to benchmark.

The Task Force exists because of revenue shortfalls to the County and the subsequent reduction in the Library budget. The Task Force has to deal with that and has to come to some kind of view about whether the original funding level was appropriate and whether the reductions made sense.

Dr. Woodward stated that he would present a collection of possible benchmarking communities and would make a recommendation but the Task Force must make the final decision. The Task Force must feel this is the right group of communities to help answer the questions presented to them.

Dr. Woodward presented the list of possible communities for benchmarking. He explained that he asked the Chamber of Commerce for the communities they identify as the ones they principally compete with. He asked the County for the counties against which they compare themselves with in the balanced scorecard. And he asked the Library for the communities they use for benchmarking.

Dr. Woodward presented data that was gathered from the 2010 Statistical Report presented by the Public Library Association. Dr. Woodward pointed out that the 2010 report includes data collected from FY 2008-2009.

Dr. Woodward explained that the data presented does not show who pays for what is inside their budget. Who pays for maintenance and utilities, what other entities the funding entity funds? For example, Mecklenburg County provides the funding for Charlotte Mecklenburg Library but also funds schools. Charlotte Mecklenburg Library pays its own utilities bills while Wake County doesn't pay for its utility bills out of the presented budget. You must go to the individual libraries to find the specific information around who is paying for what in their budget.

Dr. Woodward stated that one of the big things in the Charlotte Mecklenburg situation is that capital costs are paid for by Mecklenburg County. There is no debt service against which the Library's expenditures go.

Dr. Woodward stated that these absolute numbers don't tell you a lot until you start looking at trends and what's paid for in these numbers. The Fort Worth

report that the Task Force was given gives the data that was used for their study.

Dr. Woodward stated that it is critical to identify what communities to include in the study and what questions should be asked.

Dr. Woodward stated that he met with the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute to generally talk through what type of studies could be conducted. He asked them to find out how much information they could find online and then bring back a proposal for the work. Dr. Woodward is interested in trend lines, what's happening over time. The Urban Institute can do the work, the proposal submitted needs to be worked on.

Dr. Woodward stated that including 20 locations in the study is too many, but 12 to 13 locations seem reasonable. The Task Force must feel comfortable with the locations chosen and the questions that need to be asked.

A Task Force member commented that the Task Force should identify what arguments would resonate best with the county commissioners? The Task Force member has experience directing economic development for the Charlotte Chamber. When Royal Insurance moved to Charlotte, what separated Charlotte from other communities was better child care service and the fact that the public library was number one. The Task Force member works with corporations now and they are asking what's happening? Corporations are looking at the situation with the schools and libraries. The Task Force member agreed that from the standpoint of what would resonant with funding sources, this is exactly way it would be targeted.

Question: Why are we just looking at southern cities?

Dr. Woodward responded that the list was given to him in an unbiased way. He asked the groups to give him the communities that they consider to be Charlotte's major competitors.

Question: There are libraries in the rust belt that are still surviving. They have had to do some serious rearranging in order to survive. I would be curious about what they've done, how they've done it, how they've re-engineered? There may be some lessons or information from the challenges that these cities have overcome.

Dr. Woodward responded that he sees that as an operational question. Another example would be the question around volunteers. The Task Force won't restrict the operational issues to these communities. The Task Force would go to those who have dealt with those issues. The list presented would primarily be a financial analysis.

A Task Force member stated that Charlotte and Mecklenburg County compete with different cities for corporate headquarters and manufacturing sites and the lists hits those cities. The Task Force member agrees with the list as presented.



Dr. Woodward stated that another example of looking at communities for different questions is King County, Washington. King County has a designated tax for its library. If the Task Force wanted to look at that, it would at other communities with designated tax.

A Task Force member asked for clarification around the list of communities. Will the Task Force be looking at all of these?

Dr. Woodward responded that the communities would be: Atlanta, Austin, Baltimore County, Dallas, Jacksonville, Memphis, Nashville, Orlando, Tampa, Durham County, Forsythe County, Guilford County and Wake County.

Question: Is the point of this discussion to procure an additional study? Will we use the current pot of money or will additional money be requested?

Dr. Woodward stated that the current funding for the Task Force would be used. No additional money will be requested.

A Task Force member stated that she had been interested in a community that had gone through a recession in the early 2000s. She did a lot of reading and found that the dot com bust affected Austin, Texas. She used the "Ask a Librarian" function on the Austin Library's website and found that Austin did not get their budget cut during the recession, but had to do a lot of groundwork. The Austin library is willing to talk with the Task Force about their experience.

Question: Are you recommending that we use the communities the Chamber the County uses, but not the communities the Library uses? Are we going to get tripped up in the future if we don't use those the Library uses?

Dr. Woodward responded that Baltimore County and Atlanta, which are on the Library's list, are included in the Chamber & County's lists. Dr. Woodward stated that he has talked with Mr. Brown about using not using the Library's full list. Dr. Woodward feels that it is important to go to another source and not a list that might affect the information collected.

Dr. Woodward stated that there will be two phases in the work. There will be the benchmarking of where the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library is and where the libraries of the other communities are. The second round of discovery will be to identify best practices and used to determine realistically where the Library can be and what the Library can do with the available money. In that round, it might include some of the libraries on the Library's list.

Dr. Woodward stated that the Task Force must identify questions that it wants answered in order to complete the task. Some of those questions can be answered by this study, but some won't be. Those questions can be pursued later.

Dr. Woodward commented that one of the big challenges is to give the county commissioners some context for their discussions around funding the library. It will be important to look at what the Library's competitors do and where they

are. The Task Force must make a case to the County Commission to provide funding for basic services.

Question: When conducting the research with other locations, is there a way of determining if a certain arrangement impacted the funding decision for a library? Is the library a City department, a County department or neither? Is it incidental that the library doesn't work directly for the county manager? When you talk to other people was the fact that it is a City department solidify its funding, or affect its funding?

Dr. Woodward encouraged the Task Force to think about the questions they want answered and through Mr. Brown's contacts can get honest responses. Questions should be sent to Alli Celebron-Brown at The Lee Institute. The questions will be collected. If they can be incorporated into this study, we will, if not, we will figure out how to get the information.

Question: Are you looking for multiple years and trends? Some of these cities took hits at different times. It will be important to have multiple years.

Dr. Woodward replied that the study will probably look at this year plus three to four previous years.

Question: If you're the County Commission and you're making budgeting decision, the libraries and parks were about their only options for cuts due to mandated services. We need to know that same information when collecting this data from other communities. What is seen as discretionary versus mandated services?

Mr. Yoshida stated that the work with the Urban Institute needs to get started very soon. He requested that Task Force members send any additional questions to Ms. Celebron-Brown by early next week.

Mr. Yoshida commented that the study will give the Task Force some good underpinnings around funding when going to the county commissioner. More than likely will need to go back to the communities after the initial study with more questions.

Mr. Yoshida stated that there are many articles in Basecamp addressing best practices, especially in operations, and identifying libraries that are doing cutting edge stuff. If more information needs to be gathered, we can begin to figure out those questions and who to talk to. It is important to have updated info around funding because so much has been going on.

Mr. Yoshida stated that the Task Force needs to think of any additional questions they have around the benchmarking studies, questions for or other information from The Charlotte Mecklenburg Library here and other information from specific libraries that you want us to dig deeper on. Mr. Yoshida requested that Task Force members send any questions around the benchmarking studies or for the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library by early next week.

A Task Force member requested additional information about library foundations in various communities.

A Task Force member commented that there have been articles written about the severity of state budget cuts. This is a continued reminder that we have a big, big problem that we are going to have deal with. We are not going to have the money to run the library in fashion we have in the past and we have to figure out what we're going to do.

Dr. Woodward commented that yes, this is an opportunity for us to truly re-engineer libraries. There is probably more willingness on the community's part around changes than there would be in good financial times.

Mr. Yoshida commented that the Task Force will address how you are going to reinvent, position for the future. The Task Force needs to remember that the Library is in a competition for the funds. If the Task Force really thinks of future, it will put the Library in a better position.

The meeting was adjourned. The next meeting of the Task Force will be held Tuesday, November 30, 2010 at 3:00 p.m. at the Morrison Library.