

**Future of the Library Task Force
Meeting Six Minutes - Approved
Morrison Regional Library
December 21, 2010**

ATTENDANCE

| Task Force Members | | | |
|----------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| NAME | PRESENT | NAME | PRESENT |
| 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 | YES | Scott Stone | YES |
| Michael DeVaul | YES | Julie Szeker | YES |
| Geneal Gregory | NO | Connie Wessner | YES |
| Andy Heath | YES | Ed Williams | YES |
| Carol Hull | YES | | |
| Non-Task Force Members | | | |
| Cyndee Patterson, The Lee Institute | YES | Barbara Moran, UNC Chapel Hill | NO |
| 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 |

Dr. Jim Woodward, Chair of the Task Force, welcomed Task Force members to the meeting and expressed his appreciation for their service to the community. Dr. Woodward also welcomed the visitors to the meeting and introduced Harry Jones, County Manager and Robin Branstrom, Chair of the Library Board of Trustees. Dr. Woodward commented that both Mr. Jones and Ms. Branstrom have been very supportive of the work of the Task Force.

Dr. Woodward turned the meeting over to Vance Yoshida, La Piana Consulting who gave an overview of the agenda for the meeting and reminded the Task Force that this was their sixth meeting and there were only five meetings remaining.

Mr. Yoshida introduced Harry Jones, County Manager, John McGillicuddy, General Manager, Charles Brown, Director of Libraries, CM Library and Sean Hogue, Vertere Capital Advisors, who together gave an update on the Mecklenburg County and Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Consolidation process. The team used PowerPoint as the framework for their presentation. Copies were given to Task Force members and are available on <http://charmeck.org/libraryfuture>.

Mr. Jones opened the presentation by thanking the Task Force members for their service as private citizens. He commented that the work they are doing is helping the County Manager and the County Commissioners. Mr. Jones explained that the County Commissioners provided funding from a contingency fund and challenged the Library and the County to look at consolidation options. Mr. Jones stated that the Task Force members would see that in the areas that were examined, there are not any significant savings to be realized by consolidation, though there are some moderate savings. Mr. Jones stated that he had met with Mr. Brown separately from the Consolidation Steering Committee and the two have agreed in principle with the recommendations presented in the consolidation report. The details will need to be worked out.

Mr. Jones commented that the County has experience with functional consolidation, primarily with the City of Charlotte in the areas of Parks & Recreation, fleet services and police services and when you engage in these types of efforts, the start can often be “bumpy.” It takes time to work out the details, but if the entities work together, they can make the consolidation work and can smooth out the details.

Mr. Jones commented that if the Task Force looks at his budget method, there is a thread throughout that states that there is a need to think differently about how the County conducts its business. In this economic climate, Mecklenburg County cannot afford the government it currently has. It requires that the County reshape and redesign how they deliver services. This includes Park & Recreation and the Library and also includes all of the departments in the County.

Mr. Brown explained the details of the County-Library Consolidation process. A subcommittee that is composed of representatives of the County and the Library will meet with representatives of the Library Board and the County Commission to finalize any agreements that are made around consolidation.

Mr. Brown commented that he had met with Mr. Jones and both had agreed in principle to the report. The details around the schedule and implementation will be worked out. The first meeting to begin working out details is scheduled for early January. The Task Force will be updated on the progress and the outcomes of the consolidation process.

Dr. Woodward commented that he had read the full report of the Consolidation committee and he thought that it was excellent. The recommendations that have been embraced by Mr. Brown and Mr. Jones will be looked at in detail by the subcommittee of the two governing boards (Library and County) and the boards will ultimately make the final decisions.

Mr. Hogue reviewed the benefits to the consolidation and cost savings realized in consolidating Human Resources and communications functions (\$290,160). In the area of financial management, there are limited opportunities for consolidation. Additional details can be found in the PowerPoint presentation (<http://charmeck.org/libraryfuture>).

Question: Where is the Library's payroll function housed?

Mr. Hogue answered that the Library processes its payroll through the County's Human Resources system.

Question: Will the Library still have own set of policies and procedures?

Mr. Hogue answered yes. The Library will still have its own set of policies and procedures.

Question: So the Library would simply be outsourcing its Human Resources functions to the County?

Mr. Hogue responded yes. The Library would be outsourcing its Human Resources functions to the County. The County's Human Resources staff would be trained on the Library's policies and procedures and would be responsible for implementing them.

Question: If the Library decides it needs to establish a new position for a particular function. Does the County come in and establish the position and the salary range? Who has the final approval on the position?

Mr. McGillicuddy stated that the County would be managing the process, but the Library would establish the position, do the recruitment and the hiring.

Mr. Hogue explained that in the area of Information Technology, there are minimal opportunities to save cost in an immediate sense. But if there is a continued tight budget, consolidation would allow for greater potential efficiency and cost avoidance over time. The plan recommends that some of the commoditized positions be consolidated with the County, with three positions left at the Library to manage the systems that are specific to Library functions.

Question: Would the hardware and software be maintained by the Library?

Mr. Hogue responded that specific business applications that are non-standard to County would be housed within the Library. Other functions, such as servers and Microsoft Exchange, would be handled by the County, both the hardware and the software.

Mr. Hogue explained that in the area of Capital Projects Management, the recommendation is to consolidate to County's Real Estate Service. Because there are no major capital projects in the near future, there is no immediate cost savings. But Library staff currently performing these duties could be reassigned to core services.

Dr. Woodward stated that this would be the same as the Human Resources function, the Library would make the decisions about capital projects and then they would be managed by the County.

Mr. Hogue stated that in the area of Communications, there are a lot of similarities between the duties core to the Communications positions and the recommendation is to consolidate Communications and Marketing with the County.

Question: Are there other considerations and discussion going on within the County that might ultimately limit the Library's ability to control its future if the consolidation recommendations are adopted?

Mr. McGillicuddy commented that the County has already gone through internal consolidation in all of the areas that have been addressed. Many of the issues that will be raised as this process goes forward are ones that the County has already addressed and managed internally. The County Manager has charged the County staff to examine and determine if additional savings can be realized by further consolidation of back office functions. Mr. McGillicuddy stated that the County is looking at whether it is good for the taxpayers and is it good for the employees. It is an intricate process.

Dr. Woodward commented that there is a need to determine who makes a decision and who processes the decision. The question is whether the processing will be done as effectively if the consolidation occurs. The Consolidation Subcommittee will come up with how the process will be managed and the specifics around who will manage what once the consolidation takes place.

A Task Force member commented that it will be very important for the Library to communicate with its customers as it moves into the future. If consolidation does occur, are we allowing the Library to maintain its independence and creativity in staying ahead in communicating with the public?

Dr. Woodward commented that some aspects of the Communication and Marketing functions could be outsourced, but some need to stay with the Library. He commented that the Subcommittee will most likely look at these issues – how much of the function does the Library keep. Dr. Woodward commented that the Task Force is seeing a very high-level overview of the report, the full report on the Consolidation process contains significant detail.

Dr. Woodward commented that the IT situation is problematic. If an organization has plenty of IT staff with the expertise at the right level, then they should own the IT. If an organization does not have that, which most organizations do not, it is better to be part of a larger organization, if the IT services can be accessed. The details can be difficult, but if an organization is approaching it with the right attitude, the details can be worked out.

Mr. McGillicuddy commented that Mecklenburg County operates in a very decentralized manner. There are decision makers in each department looking at new ways of doing things. There is much focus in the County on e-knowledge. The County is recognized nationally for the innovative ways it uses the internet in the Land Use functions. Partnership with the County would allow the Library to continue to be innovative.

A Task Force member commented that the Library must be intellectually honest with itself when addressing the issue of do they have the expertise needed for particular functions. The Task Force does not have that type of knowledge.

A Task Force member commented that regarding the Financial Management question, it is possible to combine two different software systems.

Mr. Hogue commented that consolidating this function would not save one staff position, but the Library would have to invest in new software and there is not enough cost savings in the end.

A Task Force member commented that full consolidation as a County department was still an option, but what he was hearing was that the decision to consolidate should not be based on the cost savings.

Dr. Woodward commented that it was important for the Task Force to hear the results of the Consolidation Committee, especially as it relates to the other issues of the Library, but the Task Force has no role in what is done with these recommendations. That will be up to the Board of Trustees and the County Commissioners.

Dr. Woodward asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 7, 2010 Task Force meeting. The motion was seconded. Connie Wessner stated that the description of the financial contributions from the towns needed to be clarified. Dr. Woodward asked Ms. Wessner to provide the wording for this clarification. The minutes were unanimously approved with the corrected wording.

Dr. Woodward distributed copies of information from the comparable cities that will provide context for the Task Force when the benchmarking report is finalized. The data distributed should be considered preliminary. Dr. Woodward gathered the information by doing research on the Internet. The data has been given to the Urban Institute, who will confirm the information and expand on it.

Mr. Yoshida introduced Bob Sink, Vice Chair of the Library Board of Trustees, who gave a presentation on the Role of the Library Trustees. Mr. Sink used PowerPoint as a framework for his presentation. Copies were given to Task Force members and are available on <http://charmeck.org/libraryfuture>.

Mr. Sink commented that the relationship between the Library and the Board of Trustees is a nuanced relationship, unique in the State, which has worked well and with some tweaking, can continue to work well.

Details of Mr. Sink's presentation can be found in the PowerPoint. Mr. Sink commented that the Board of Trustees needs to think about its role going forward. It has focused too much on independence and what the Board's charter says and it needs to think more about making the partnership with the County Commission work. Mr. Sink commented that there is a theoretical independence, but a practical interdependence.

Question: In American society, there have been failures in both the nonprofit and corporate world when it comes to the roles of board members. This has happened in Charlotte in the nonprofit world due to boards not managing their duties properly. Is there a high level of confidence that all of the roles of the Library Board are being fulfilled and managed?

Mr. Sink responded that the Library Board has not been required to do much of this until the recent crisis. The Board has relied on the Library staff to get the answers they needed. The Board is beginning to do better and they will continue to do better. Mr. Sink commented that there has been some timidity due to the open meeting requirement. The Board must get past this and ask the hard questions that they need the answers to.

Question: In the relationship between the Board and the agency that gives them money (the County), have there been lessons learned?

Mr. Sink responded that in the recent events there was not sufficient communication about the restrictions that the County was facing. The Board did not have the conversations they should have about the impacts of the cuts. And the Board was not politically savvy enough to start the conversation with the County Commissioners.

A Task Force member commented that what worried him was that with an independent Board, working for an independent entity rather than a County department, when further budget cuts come along, is the County going to favor its own departments. There is worry that the Library will suffer and how will this be addressed.

Mr. Sink responded that this was a difficult question to answer. The hope is that the funding entity does not look at the Library as a stepchild, but looks at it on its own merits as part of the community. The Library represents 1.5% of the County's total budget. The importance of the Library to the community is disproportionate to its budget amounts.

Question: How does the budgeting process work? What is the relationship between the Board, the Library staff, the County Commissioners and the County Manager?

Mr. Sink responded that the process has been in flux over the past number of years. Normally the Board and Library were asked what their priorities would be if they could add to the budget and what would be eliminated if the budget were reduced. There would be input from all of the entities – the Board, the County Manager, the Director of the Library and the County Commission. But in the era of crisis and the quickness of the crisis, there was not time for that dialogue.

A Task Force member commented that maybe that model no longer works.

Mr. Sink commented that it would be more important to have it work. Everyone needs to know the impact of a 5% cut and the Board need to be asked for suggestions for managing a 5% cut.

Question: In the slides that address the keys to making the governance model work, how do you put that into practice? Especially around the issue of communicating effectively around the budget cuts? If we are really going to do this, shouldn't the Library and the County Commissioners be having those conversations today?

Mr. Sink responded that the Board is beginning to address what would happen with a 5% cut, what would happen with a 10% cut and where the changes would come. They are preparing to talk with the County Manager and the County Commissioners about the impact of budget cuts. The Board is not going to do what they did the first time – announcing that 13 branches would be closed. Mr. Sink stated that there should have been more conversations before the announcement was made.

Question: Is the County Manager and the County Commission committed to not surprising you?

Mr. Sink responded that he hoped so.

Dr. Woodward commented that this is an area where the Task Force is obligated to make recommendations. The Library and the County have incrementally arrived at a place where the budgeting process does not work. The bottom line is that this interface is not working right now. It is a unique situation, but the Board of Trustees is legally obligated to decide what the Library does for the people of Mecklenburg County, but does not control the funding. Mecklenburg County is not legally obligated to fund the Library. This is in contrast to the City of Tampa, FL where consolidation requires the county to fund the Library.

Dr. Woodward commented that the problem starts with how the Library is asked to prepare the budget. The Library should be allowed to show what it is planning to do, this is the funding it can get from these sources, this is what should be done to serve the people of Mecklenburg County, these are our priorities, this is what it will cost and we are asking for this amount from the County. The County must allow the budget to be presented this way and not exercise control over moving from one line item to another. Dr. Woodward commented that there is a lot of work to be done in this area and the Task Force must make recommendations. The Task Force will come back to this topic and spend some time with it before developing the recommendations.

A Task Force member commented that hindsight is 20/20. It is easy to say what might have been done differently, but a crisis is a terrible thing to waste. The Task Force member commented that she hopes that the Task Force does not go into incrementalism, but steps back, looks at the big picture, and takes this opportunity to examine and reinvent.

A Task Force member commented that the down side of the current Board of Trustees is that it insulates those who control the purse strings from the ramifications of the decisions.

A Task Force member commented that over the last decade as libraries were built, they became bigger and more expensive to build. As libraries were being built, the process would become politicized – a community would say, “It’s our turn.” Separation could be an advantage. It would separate the process from the politicization.

Mr. Sink commented that the building of libraries has been in response to the needs of the community rather than any political pressure. The disconnect has been between the operating costs and the capital costs.

Question: Is the Consolidation Committee considering making the Library a part of the County?

Mr. Sink responded that this is not being considered by the Consolidation committee.

Question: Is the Board of Trustees on a separate path from the Task Force around how to cut the Library’s budget?

Mr. Sink responded that the Board was on a separate path in addressing budget cuts.

Question: Will the Board of Trustees’ recommendations be presented to the Task Force?

Mr. Sink responded that the Board started the process earlier in December and the Board will provide the Task Force with the recommendations they develop.

Question: Is it safe to say that if the Task Force does not come up with something better, the Board will continue with their process.

Mr. Sink responded that this was a true statement.

Question: What is the timeline for the budgeting process?

Mr. Brown responded that the final budget will be prepared in February. An update on the work of the Task Force and budget scenarios for 2012 will be presented to the County Commissioners at their January 19, 2011 meeting.

A Task Force member commented that we are looking at two things: the immediate budget ramifications if the bottom falls out vs. reinventing the Library and addressing what the Library is doing, what it is providing and what are the core services. We must be very intentional. In the midst of a crisis, if you solve the immediate problem, it feels like you are done – we have made it through another year.

Dr. Woodward commented that the Task Force must establish its own principles that they think will be appropriate for the Library in the long term. The Board will deal with the immediate budget issues.

Ms. Branstrom commented that historically, the Board of Trustees was established to be and acted as a buffer between elected officials and the public, especially around the issues of censorship and acting as advocates for literacy. This system worked well until the budget crisis. The Board has a great deal of responsibility while ultimately having very little control. The Board must be on the same page with the County Commissioners and the County staff and there must be effective communication.

A Task Force member commented, pretend everyone who is a library user checking out a book is no longer reading a physical book. they are reading a computer book. It will take years to get there, but when I signed up for the Future of the Library Task Force, that is what I signed up for. One of our tasks is looking to the future and identifying those things that will revolutionize the Library and make it more competitive.

A Task Force member commented that he was in agreement. it would be great if the Board of Trustees could say we are going to cut this, but we are not going to cut this, because in the future this is where we are going.

A Task Force member commented that the Task Force must look at the population that is coming at us. No current college student is going to read a physical book.

A Task Force member commented that the Task Force needs to look at the old method too, those people who use that method cannot be abandoned.

A Task Force member commented that the discussion being held was good, but the Task Force must decide what services the Library is going to provide and agree on the mission of the Library.

Mr. Yoshida stated that these are two of the discussions the Task Force will be having – defining the core services and priorities of the Library and what the Library needs to be doing for the future.

Dr. Woodward commented that the Task Force will have to address making recommendations for the long term around the appropriate utilization of technology and innovations. Dr. Woodward asked the Task Force to think about the information it needs to discuss this topic and develop recommendations.

Mr. Yoshida introduced Bob Stephens, Library Counsel who gave a presentation on Potential Governance Models for the Library. Mr. Stephens used PowerPoint as a framework for his presentation. Copies were given to Task Force members and are available on <http://charmeck.org/libraryfuture>.

Mr. Stephens commented that one governance model is the current model. Mr. Stephens commented that current model works if the trust between the Board of Trustees and the County Commission is re-established.

Mr. Stephens commented that the current dilemma was not caused by the way the Library has been governed. It was not caused by the Trustees exercising their powers or the decisions they made. It was not caused by the corporate structures of the Library. Mr. Stephens commented that the current model is not broken and he does not believe it needs to be fixed, other than to modify it pending the services the Library offers in the future. It should be modified for communication and for reliable funding for the Library.

Details of Mr. Stephens' presentation can be found in his PowerPoint (<http://charmec.org/libraryfuture>). In addition, Mr. Stephens reviewed other governance models and the legal requirements for those models. In most instances, the Board would become an Advisory Board.

Question: In an alternative governance model, could the County Commissioners grant responsibilities to the Board that they currently have?

Mr. Stephens responded that the County Commissioners could not grant the right to own real property, but could grant the responsibility to prepare the budget and present it to the County for approval.

Question: But isn't that what happens now?

Mr. Stephens responded that yes, this is what happens now with the County's portion of the Library's budget.

Dr. Woodward commented that in the models presented, a Board of Advisors would have various degrees of authority dependent on the model.

Mr. Stephens commented that in his opinion, the governing model is not broken, but the funding is broken. The corporate structure is not broken.

Mr. Stephens stated that the advantage to the Multi-Jurisdictional Model would be multi-jurisdictional funding. When talking about the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, you are talking about Mecklenburg County and the City of Charlotte providing funding. The City of Charlotte originally funded and still funds the Library at \$2,500 per year. Another option would be multi-jurisdictional funding from Mecklenburg County and the surrounding towns. A glimpse of that was seen over the past year with \$1.4M in City funding and \$750K in town funding.

Mr. Stephens commented that with interlocal agreements with the County involving resource sharing, the governance would be the same with some modifications.

Mr. Stephens stated that if the current governance model is changed and the corporate structure was changed, the State statutes would have to be changed. In addition, real estate would have to be transferred, contracts would have to be

re-assigned, employees would have to be transferred to the new entity and there would be other associated needs and changes.

Dr. Woodward commented that regarding the County's obligation to fund the Library, the County can choose to fund the Library. Dr. Woodward asked if there was a legal obligation for the County to fund the Library.

Mr. Stephens replied that the only legal obligation around funding is that the City provides \$2,500 per year.

Question: Mecklenburg County is the only county in the State that is set up like this and that is because of the historical way the Library was established. Is there anything different about Mecklenburg County that causes us to do it differently than the other 99 counties?

Mr. Stephens responded that there is no reason for Mecklenburg County to be unique.

A Task Force member commented that he was looking for the reasons to continue to have the current structure.

A Task Force member commented that many governments in North Carolina do not tend to be on the cutting edge of technology. Many libraries operating under a county experience frustrations, like having to use the county website to get information out.

Mr. Sink commented that the recommendation in the Design Team report was that in the short- and mid-term you do not want to do away with things in the Library's infrastructure that might have a modified use in the future.

Mr. Yoshida introduced Charles Brown, Director of Libraries, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library who made a presentation on the Guiding Principles for Making Budget Decisions that were developed and presented to the Library Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees approved the Guiding Principles at their last meeting. Mr. Brown used PowerPoint as a framework for his presentation. Copies were given to Task Force members and are available on <http://charmeck.org/libraryfuture>.

Mr. Brown commented that the Library was hoping for the best regarding the budget, but was planning for the not so best in case of mid-year reductions or cuts in the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2011.

Mr. Brown explained that the guiding principles will be used for what budget decisions are made and how those decisions are made. They were established to give a clear understanding around all of the budget decisions.

The detailed guiding principles can be found in Mr. Brown's PowerPoint (<http://charmeck.org/libraryfuture>).

Question: Is the 15 minute/5 mile figure a standardized number across library systems?

Mr. Brown stated that this is fairly standard.

Question: This is not something Charlotte came up with?

Mr. Brown responded that it is not something Charlotte came up with.

Question: Is this somewhat more than the previous standard?

Mr. Brown responded that is was. The previous standard was that the majority of people in the County be located within three miles of a Library. The Library looked at 1 mile, 3 miles and 5 miles when developing the principles. The 15 minute/5 mile figure can be a challenge for those relying on public transportation.

A Task Force member asked for clarification around the development of the principles. Mr. Brown stated that the principles were developed post-crisis and they were approved by the Board in early December.

A Task Force member commented that he was stuck on the issue of the core mission of the Library and the proposed core services presented by Mr. Brown. The Task Force member commented that he imagined a model where core service is access to information, either electronically or physically. If he had to focus on a mission, he would focus on access. All of these things are great things, but the Library does not have all the money in the world. Can we define all of these as core services? Or should volunteer organizations and nonprofits use the Library facilities to provide some of these services – like how to use a computer. For example, Parks & Recreation provides a volleyball court, but it does not teach you how to play volleyball. We have to determine if we want 20 points with access to information or eight points with access to information with souped-up information and services.

A Task Force member commented that access to information is embedded in some of the services.

A Task Force member commented that 15 minutes is tactically, based on the assumed status quo. What if we assume access to information is the core? Every time you add an “and”, it costs more.

Question: Are computer access and computer assistance being related to access to information?

A Task Force member responded that they were because there is a large part of the community that does not have access to computers.

A Task Force member commented that he agreed with the computer access as part of access to information, but where he drew the line was training.

A Task Force member commented that this issue speaks to the unique nature of a Library branch in each community. When you strip it down to its essential parts, it becomes access to information in some way that you can take hold of. The next tier is someone there to help you and show you how to access the information. The third tier is advisory and the fourth tier is enrichment. If we could come up with something like that, then we could look at the Library locations and the communities they are located in and determine which tiers are needed in each community.

Question: Is it fair to say that in the Library branches in fragile neighborhoods, those customers use the libraries in different ways than those in middle class neighborhoods?

Library staff responded that this is somewhat true. Technology is used heavily at the Morrison branch, for example. The Library is not sure if the computers are being used for convenience rather than necessity.

Question: Are the libraries being used for additional, supplemental services in fragile neighborhoods?

Mr. Brown responded that in the fragile neighborhoods the libraries are being used for computers and, in many instances, to complete homework assignments where a computer is required. Some of the services the Library offers are more essential in some communities.

Question: The Guiding Principles are very logical, but are somewhat reactive to past data. This is the opportunity to reinvent how the Library is going to be. We are somewhat anchored by brick and mortar, but we need to address how we reach more people in different ways? Are we thinking creatively?

Mr. Brown responded that during the facility master planning process, the Library found that 94% of individuals queried wanted a physical location for their Library. When addressing location and looking at closings, they found that people want the Library in their neighborhood.

A Task Force member commented that people are conditioned to what they have - you are going to have resistance because it is change. But, we have to look at the future or we will end up having this discussion again in 5 years.

A Task Force member commented that we need to look at what a community means by saying it wants a physical location and look at personalizing the Library for each location based on what is necessary for that community.

Question: Has the Library worked on taking computers to other locations outside Library facilities?

David Singleton, Director of Library Services, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, responded that the Library has done some of this, taking computers to fragile neighborhoods and senior centers. This effort is usually programmatic rather than just giving people access to the computers.

Dr. Woodward commented it is important for the Task Force to determine what the Library's core services are and the staffing requirements for those basic core services, so cost can be determined. Then, additional services can be added based on the needs and requirements of the particular community.

Dr. Woodward commented that the Task Force has an obligation to speak to the mission of the Library and the services that can be offered. The Task Force must have a perspective on what can be offered and what we can afford. The Task Force has two roles: how to get through the crisis and how to meet the future.

Mr. Hogue commented that the Task Force will most likely spend a lot of time around the platforms for delivering the services. What is done in the short term will affect the long term.

A Task Force member commented, how do we as a community define success? Is it literacy rate? Is it circulation rate? Is it the number of volumes read? Is it computer hours?

Mr. Yoshida distributed copies of a handout that outlined the major decision points the Task Force faces and the proposed timeline for making those decisions. Mr. Yoshida reviewed the key decision points and reminded the Task Force that they were charged with looking at the short-, mid- and long-term. Mr. Yoshida proposed that the Task Force look at the short- and mid-term together and then address the long-term, four years out, since the economic situation is not likely to change over the next few years.

The Task Force agreed to add mission to the discussion around Library services and move the discussion to the January 4th meeting. Mr. Yoshida stated that if the Task Force develops recommended guidelines around Library services, it would be left to the Library to make decisions around prioritizing additional services.

The Task Force agreed that the Library/County relationship and governance issues should be considered together.

A library representative stated that the County has asked the Library to prepare budget scenarios for the next fiscal year addressing a flat budget, a 10% decrease and a 20% decrease. The Library will use the guiding principles that have been developed to make the decisions. The scenarios will be shared with the Task Force.

Mr. Yoshida introduced Dr. Nancy Burnap, President, MarketWise who gave an update on the survey being developed.

Dr. Woodward commented that Dr. Burnap will review the research objectives that have been developed for the survey. She is working with the consultant team to develop the specific questions for the survey.

Dr. Burnap commented that there are a lot of topics to cover in the survey and it will be difficult to cover all of them. She is working to make sure that the survey is designed to make sure that there are questions to address the buckets of information that is wanted.

Dr. Burnap reviewed the objectives for the survey:

- To determine priorities for County funding. Dr. Burnap explained that the County is conducting a separate study that addresses this issue and will share that information with the Task Force; therefore, questions addressing this issue will not be included on the Library survey. Dr. Burnap is working with the County on the funding survey.
- Quantify the level of importance of the Library to individuals and to the community as a whole.
- Determine the impact of the cutbacks.
- Determine service priorities.
- Explore tradeoffs if additional locations must be closed.
- Determine the importance of offering more than the basic (core) services.

Dr. Burnap stated that the survey will be a mix of unaided questions, ratings, yes or no questions and those with an option to add additional information, which engages the participants in the process.

Dr. Burnap explained the methodology that will be used to conduct the survey. There will be a random digital dial of landline and cell phone numbers to obtain a random sample of 400 Mecklenburg County residents, including both users and non-users. There will be continued sampling in order to reach 400 users. The questionnaire length will be approximately 15 minutes for Library users, less than 15 minutes for non-users.

Question: What breakouts will you use to analyze the information?

Dr. Burnap responded that she will be able to use race, ethnicity, gender and age.

Dr. Burnap stated that the introduction to the survey will state that the survey is regarding Mecklenburg County and to determine County priorities. It will not state that this is for the Library because it would skew participants towards Library users.

Dr. Woodward stated that once the survey is finalized, it will be shared with the Task Force.

Question: Is there a geographic tie in the demographics to address different needs in different communities?

Dr. Burnap responded that the survey will capture zip codes.

Questions: Will there be questions addressing the time people are willing to wait in the Library to get help.

Dr. Burnap responded that wait times is more of an operational question and the survey is designed to gather information to guide the decisions of the Task Force.

Cyndee Patterson, The Lee Institute, commented that the original survey was 28 minutes long, which is too long. The survey had to be pared down to address the issues that have been talked about at today's meeting – core services, locations, hours, etc.

Question: Are you asking what library branch person identifies as their library?

Dr. Burnap responded that the survey will ask which Library the individual uses most and whether it closest to their home.

Question: Are you asking how they prefer to get information?

Dr. Burnap responded that the survey asks questions about which services individuals use.

A Task Force member commented that this feels like an important question.

Dr. Woodward commented that it is the trends – the printed book in a relative sense is decreasing, electronic book in a relative sense is increasing. The Library must be prepared to address the growing demand for technology and electronic books.

A Task Force member commented that the number of people who do not have access to computers will decrease.

A Task Force member commented that access to computers is an economic issue.

A Task Force member commented that it is about access to information and the Task Force needs to define that. How do you codify that, so that every time you make a decision you ask if it speaks to what it is we are doing as a Library?

A Task Force member commented that once you decide what it is you want to be – then it will be easy.

A Task Force member commented that we need to create a Library that is nimble. We need to do a lot more leases, so we do not have to worry about what we are going to do with a building when needs change.

Dr. Woodward thanked the Task Force members for their service and enthusiasm.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting of the Task Force will be held Tuesday, January 4, 2011 at the Morrison Regional Library. The Task Force will meet from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m.