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	NO
Geneal Gregory	YES		Connie Wessner	YES
Andy Heath	YES		Ed Williams	YES
Carol Hull	YES			
Non-Task Force Members				
Cyndee Patterson, The Lee Institute	NO		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

Task Force members were welcomed by Dr. Jim Woodward, Task Force Chair. Dr. Woodward turned the meeting over to Alli Celebron-Brown, The Lee Institute and Vance Yoshida, La Piana Consulting. Cyndee Patterson, The Lee Institute, was unable to attend the meeting due to illness.

Mr. Yoshida commented that the meeting was designed to give as much time as possible to the Task Force for major discussion. Mr. Yoshida reminded Task Force members about the guidelines for discussion and asked Task Force members to think about putting their overall thoughts out for people to talk about; to focus on the interests of other folks and not just their own positions and selling that position; to stay open to the influence of others in thinking about the recommendations that need to be made; and to be mindful of the number of people present so that everyone ahs a chance to share their thoughts with the group.

Mr. Yoshida reminded the Task Force that they will need to make major decisions and develop recommendations with only a little over two months remaining. The Task Force will need to have major discussions and then a subgroup of the Task Force and/or the consultants with Dr. Woodward will put

together recommendations and bring them back to the group to discuss and finalize.

Mr. Yoshida stated that the group needed a process for making decisions. Using consensus for decision making would be ideal, but with a large group, this can be difficult. Mr. Yoshida asked Ms. Celebron-Brown to present a proposed process for decision making.

Ms. Celebron-Brown reviewed the technique of using color-coded cards as a way to using time efficiently, getting feedback from everyone, and determining where everyone is around a particular issue. Each Task Force member will have a set of green, yellow and red cards. When an issue or question in proposed to the group, holding up a green card indicates that the Task Force member agrees with the proposal; a yellow card indicates that the Task Force member is comfortable with the proposal; and a red card indicates that the Task Force member doesn't agree with the proposal, but would like some additional information. Holding up a red card does not totally block progress, but allows time for questions and determining what is keeping the red card holder from a yellow or a green. The goal of the process is to come to the best possible decision based on the resources and information available.

Mr. Yoshida reviewed the agenda for the meeting and turned the meeting back to Dr. Woodward.

Dr. Woodward asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 21, 2010 meeting. The motion was seconded. A correction was made to change a reference to "Mr. Sean" to "Mr. Hogue." The minutes were unanimously approved as corrected.

Dr. Woodward presented A Model for Considering Alternative, using PowerPoint as a framework for his presentation. Copies were given to Task Force members and are available on http://charmeck.org/libraryfuture.

Dr. Woodward stated that the financial model presented by Sean Hogue, Vertere Capital Advisors, in prior meetings, uses dollar figures as the final output. The model addresses, if we close branch "x", how much money would be saved. Dr. Woodward commented that it is difficult to consider alternatives when only dollars are being used. The Task Force has discussed service points, core mission, core services and programming. But a very high percentage of the cost of operating the Library is personnel costs. The model developed by Dr. Woodward and Mr. Hogue uses FTEs (full time equivalent) as its output. This model shows the result of a particular action in FTEs rather than dollars.

Dr. Woodward reviewed the current status of the Library and defined the core mission of the Library: Provide access to information. Dr. Woodward stated that this is not an adequate mission for the Library, but is the "core, core, core" mission of the Library – providing access to information. The Library has its own mission, but this is where you start and then expand the mission as appropriate to the community.

The core mission is accomplished by providing basic library services and programming. Basic library services are the minimum array of services any library or library branch would offer. If you established a single branch and had little money to fund it, these are the things you would provide: Circulation, Reader's Advisory, Information Assistance and Computer Assistance. Dr. Woodward commented that Computer Assistance increasingly means that a Library needs to provide computers, assistance in reserving and accessing the computers, assistance in using some of the basic software, assistance accessing the internet, and basic printing services. Anything beyond these basic services can be categorized as programming – for example, teaching Library users to use Excel. This is an appropriate function for a Library, but is above and beyond the basic library services.

The Library delivers these services at a service point. Dr. Woodward commented that Task Force members should not think of a service point as a geographic location. The Library talks about providing services in terms of service points. Some Libraries have one service point, others have more than one service point.

Currently, the Library has 20 sites with total of 43 service points. This figure includes the Main Library and ImaginOn. Excluding the Main Library and ImaginOn, the Library has 34 service points. The average staffing for a service point is 5.06 FTE, including the Main Library and ImaginOn. Excluding the Main Library and ImaginOn, the average staffing is 4.8 FTE per service point.

Question: Does that include people like Charles Brown, Director, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library?

Dr. Woodward responded that these figures only include the personnel that staff the service points.

Question: Are these figures for the current Library schedule?

Dr. Woodward responded that the figures are for the current Library schedule.

Dr. Woodward stated that the principal assumption in the model is that it requires 5 FTE to staff a single service point in a modified single shift. Dr. Woodward reminded the Task Force that this is intended to be a model to let the Task Force look at alternatives. A modified single shift is not 40 hours per week, but represents 32 to 38 hours per week and the model does not include staffing for programming.

Question: Do the numbers presented assume that the Librarians are only providing basic services?

Mr. Hogue responded that the Library has stated that for the personnel who provide programming, it requires 15% of their time. But not all personnel provide programming. If you average that time across all personnel, it represents about 2.9% of time per person to provide programming.

A Task Force member commented that it depends on how you describe basic services and programming, not everyone has the same definition.

Dr. Woodward stated that for this model, the assumption is minimal programming. The model still works if 10% of staff time is spent on programming or if you go to 4.5 FTE as the average. The model is designed for looking at alternatives.

Dr. Woodward reviewed the scenarios for increasing shifts. To increase to a regular single shift, 1 FTE is required per service point. To increase to a regular double shift, an additional 2 FTE per service point would be required.

Question: What is regular?

Dr. Woodward responded that a regular single shift is 40 hours per week and a regular double shift would reflect restoring to pre-cut hours.

Dr. Woodward reminded the Task Force that the model focuses on the staffing required to provide basic library services and does not include programming. Providing programming is appropriate and needs to be factored in and realized. This would include the cost of providing the program, personnel and other costs.

The model allows factoring in the use of volunteers. Dr. Woodward commented that the Task Force has had a good presentation on the volunteers at the Library and the model can incorporate the impact of volunteers. Dr. Woodward stated that the percentage of the required FTE that can be acquired by volunteers is probably around 5%. That figure might get up to 9%, but Dr. Woodward would be very cautious about depending on 9%.

Question: Is 5% the average across the system?

Dr. Woodward responded that yes, 5% is the average across the system.

D. Woodward presented and explained the examples for using the model (see PowerPoint presentation).

Question: What is a regular single shift?

Mr. Hogue responded that a regular single shift means the Library is open 40 hours per week to the public. A two shift model means the Library is open 66 to 71 hours per week to the public.

Dr. Woodward commented that additional working hours are needed outside the hours the Library is open to the public.

Question: Does each service point have room for more than one person to deliver the services?

Dr. Woodward responded that a service point should be thought of as a floor and a desk. The person managing the computer room is at a different location and the person providing information is elsewhere, but this is considered a single service point.

Question: But we're trying to get to a minimum level of staffing for a particular service point?

Dr. Woodward responded that the model assumes that it takes 5 FTE to manage an individual service point.

Dr. Woodward commented that 75% of the Library's budget is personnel costs. With the budget crisis and the cut in the Library's budget, personnel had to be cut and this resulted in reducing hours at the Libraries and closing locations.

Question: What is a full double shift?

Mr. Hogue responded that at the larger locations, a full double shift is 71 hours and at the small locations, 66 hours.

Dr. Woodward commented that the scenarios presented give rough examples of how the model can be used. This information gives the sense that the Library cannot deal with more budget cuts by modifying hours. That has already been done. If the Library goes from operating 32 hours per week to 16 hours per week, the FTE requirements only go from 5 FTE to 3 FTE. But this type of operation doesn't make sense in the long term. Dr. Woodward commented that the question is, "Did I build this branch to operate 32 hours or 16 hours per week?" What the Library did was absolutely the right thing in the short term, but it is not a sustainable model in the long term.

Dr. Woodward commented that the model allows you to examine alternatives and do trade-off comparisons. In addition, it would allow you to examine alternative in other directions: if you want the following, this is what is required. The model can be helpful in presenting alternatives to the decision makers, the Board of Trustees and the County Commissioners.

Dr. Woodward turned the meeting over to Mr. Hogue who gave a presentation on Charlotte Mecklenburg Funding Scenarios. Mr. Hogue used PowerPoint as a framework for his presentation. Copies were given to Task Force members and are available on http://charmeck.org/libraryfuture.

Mr. Hogue reviewed funding information previously presented to the Task Force. In the next fiscal year, the Library will lose the one-time support of the City of Charlotte and the townships, resulting in a $2M reduction. Offsets to the Library's operating budget (unemployment expenses, termed employee payout and retired employee payout) result in $1.5M. Mr. Hogue explained that if the Library receives flat funding for FY12, it will mean that there is still a $500K to $600K reduction in the budget. If the budget is flat, the Library will still have to find ways to cut expenses.

Mr. Hogue reviewed the key decision points for the Task Force (see PowerPoint), as well as the scenario for a 10% reduction in funding. Mr. Hogue commented that using the model presented by Dr. Woodward, the tradeoff becomes the staff.

Question: Does the FTE figure presented represent the current, full-time staff?

Mr. Hogue responded that this figure is very close to accurate, there is some part-time staff, but for the most part this figure is correct.

Question: Taking it up another level, you have $18 to $20M to operate the Library for a community. The question becomes how you operate the Library and what services you provide given this funding.

Mr. Hogue responded that was correct.

Question: How many personnel are providing circulation services at a service point?

A Library employee responded that it depends on the location of the Library. Usually, the Library has two people at the desk and a couple of people behind the scenes.

Dr. Woodward commented that of the four basic services, is there some subset of those that you could eliminate and legitimately call yourself a branch of Library? Currently information is available via print sources and via technology. There could be a branch that offered information via technology only. This would require about three people to operate. That is a legitimate model for a branch for the future.

A Task Force member commented: Let's assume there is no budget cut for FY12. In the no budget cut scenario, we become the Task Force focusing on the future of the Library. We need to look at the long term. How the Library is running now isn't the way of the future.

Mr. Hogue commented that is better to redistribute resources and run fewer branches.

A Task Force member commented that one of the recommendations from the Task Force needs to address the status quo. What's the current configuration? If the Library is looking at flat funding, then where do you go from there? The Task Force member commented that he thought the Library should go to 14 branches at full time, rather than 20 branches running at lower efficiency.

A Task Force member commented that the basic core services of the Library needs to be taken into account – access to information. The Library has a particular need to provide that access to information to those who don't have other resources. The Task Force needs to consider the overlay map that was

distributed earlier that showed the Library, Park & Recreation and school closings across the city.

Bob Sink, Co-Chair, Library Board of Trustees commented that if you look at some of the smaller, disadvantaged Libraries, the traffic is low. And you look at some of the larger Libraries, there is much more traffic. If you close the larger Libraries and force the traffic to the remaining branches, then you have to address where the smaller branches can handle the flow, including the parking demands. Some of these imponderables are difficult to consider.

Question: Of the $21M Library budget, do you have two locations that consume about one-third of that?

Mr. Hogue responded that the Main Library and ImaginOn make up about one-third of the Library's operating budget.

Dr. Woodward commented that the costs associated with the Main Library include a portion of the overhead required for the operation of all of the Libraries.

Mr. Hogue commented that ImaginOn is unique. ImaginOn has lots of programming and have more staff there for programming, but it doesn't provide as many basic services.

Dr. Woodward asked the Task Force to have additional discussion around the option of closing branches and operating the remaining branches at increased hours. This is not something anyone wants to do, but the bottom line is we don't have enough money and we have to do something.

A Task Force member commented that one criteria should be that if you can't get to the branch via public transportation, then you should eliminate the branch. That's why the Main Library is so great, you can get there via public transportation.

Question: Would like to hear more information about the Main Library. How things stand today versus when it was opened? Is it in-step, is it in-sync, is it out-of-sync, has it changed at all?

Mr. Brown responded that he doesn't think the Main Library has changed. The Main Library opened the Job Help Center, showing that it is evolving to meet the needs of the community. The crown jewel of the Library is Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room. The Main Library remains a strong research location. Some of the print resources have been replaced with online databases. The Main Library sees about 500,000 visitors per year and hasn't seen much reduction in the number of visitors since opening. When the Main Library first opened, it was more of a regional resource. The information is now dispersed throughout the County and more resources and services are available in the larger facilities throughout the County, especially in the towns.

Question: When you talk about the uniqueness of the Main Library, what does that mean?

Mr. Brown responded that the Main Library has more online resources, more computers, the Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room for genealogy, more job help resources that any other location in Mecklenburg County, the largest collection and government documents. (A Library employee pointed out that the government documents will be available online in the near future.)

Question: Is there anything about the Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room that requires it to be at the Main Library?

Mr. Brown responded that nothing requires it to be at the Main Library. The only requirement is access, but many of the users of the resources drive, so it could be at another location.

Question: How much offered at ImaginOn is considered basic library services?

Mr. Brown responded that ImaginOn is the Library's center for youth from ages birth to 18.

Question: How much offered at ImaginOn is considered core Library services?

Library employees responded that out of 100,000 square feet at ImaginOn, 40,000 square feet is Library. At ImaginOn, the basic services and the programming are intertwined. Children and teens come in for a program and stay for homework help. Or they come in for a class and get a book and then return the following week.

A Library employee commented that ImaginOn is a destination. It is on the map. It tends to get busloads of youth a time – day camps, schools, preschools, etc. The mission of ImaginOn is a little different as it serves as a epicenter for youth services and serves as a leader for the rest of the branches in the county when it comes to youth services.

A Task Force member commented that ImaginOn is unique both here and elsewhere. But is it sufficiently unique that it should be treated as unique in its funding? What library services would we lose if we lost ImaginOn?

A Library employee commented that 50% of the time ImaginOn personnel is working through programming to serve youth and 50% of the time ImaginOn personnel is working through a desk assisting youth. But one can't exist without the other. Are we a Library? We provide access to information to hundreds of thousands of young people who wouldn't get it elsewhere. It works because it's both – it exposes a new generation to access to information.

A Task Force member commented that as a facility, ImaginOn is so different from anything else the Library does, it needs to find a way to get somebody to give a zillion dollars to run it.

Question: Does ImaginOn have a revenue model beyond the Library budget?

A Library employee responded that the Children's Theater provides about half of the operating costs.

Mr. Hogue stated that historically Children's Theater support has been $600K, the majority of which went to cover security and maintenance costs. Since those functions have been outsourced, this year's support will be $200K. Children's Theater has never provided half of the operating costs.

A Task Force member commented that voters approved bond referendum of $19M for ImaginOn and the final costs came in at $30M. This was a huge overrun.

Dr. Woodward asked that in terms of governance, is this the best model for ImaginOn? The Task Force might want to look at alternatives.

A Task Force member commented that if you look at all the branches you have fewer locations if the Library is operating on a full shift and more locations if the Library is operating on a short shift. Looking at it from a citizen's perspective, the tradeoff is proximity: locations closer and open less, locations further away and open more. But from an operating/cost perspective, there is a huge difference. If you look at it from dollars and cents perspective, it doesn't make any sense to operate 20 locations versus 13 or 14 locations.

A Task Force member commented that some communities are using the branches in different ways. They are using it because of the need for computer access. So the Task Force needs to look at how a particular community is using a location.

A Task Force member commented that you could look at getting rid of print materials and just provide computer access.

Question: Is there enough room at ImaginOn to move administration there?

A Library employee responded that there isn't enough room. The Children's Theater administration is housed there as well as the Library's youth services administration.

A Task Force member commented that these are incredibly expensive buildings to be used to house administration. The Task Force member didn't know ImaginOn was part of the Library system until he joined the Task Force. The Task Force needs to discuss the use of the Main Library. It is shocking that the Main Library has 1 ½ floors that are unused. The Task Force member commented that he would like to hear about Imaginon – what was the goal of Imaginon when it was built?

Mr. Sink explained that ImaginOn was an experiment in moving all of the youth services to a separate facility and partner with the Children's Theater. This allowed adult services in one place and youth services in another place. The

move resulted in a change to the configuration of the Main facility. The question became, why do we have this valuable property and not do something with it? We were on track with finding better use of that space with the Spirit Square study.   The plan was to shrink the Main Library and lease the valuable space. The administration would be moved elsewhere.   But the discussion stopped with the downturn in the economy. Mr. Sink commented that the primary point of the Main Library access. Imaginon was a fairly imaginative concept that moved children away from adults. The children feel safer and come in more often and come in with their families.

Question: Is there an issue with safety at the Main Library? Did we move the children out because we wanted to get them out of the Main Library?

Mr. Brown commented that the level of security at the Main Library is unique. The Main Library has the only public restroom in the uptown area, unless you go to a restaurant. The Issue with ImaginOn was not about security with children, it was about creating a more exciting environment for them.

A Task Force member commented that if you were looking at ImaginOn today, you wouldn't build it. When you look at two facilities within a block of each other, that consume 1/3 of the budget, maybe you need to look at alternatives. ImaginOn has done some really interesting, unique things and is a unique community resource – and a valuable one. The Children's Theater is having its own budget issues. When ImaginOn was constructed and opened, there was a question as to exactly how it fit within the Library system as a whole in terms of the overall organization. There were complaints from some places that it took too much of the Library's budget, and required too much of attention.

A Task Force member commented that different people in different neighborhoods expect different things from the Library. It would be interesting to find out from survey – would you be willing to drive further to access library?

Dr. Nancy Burnap, MarketWise, responded that the survey is asking tradeoff questions: would you be willing to do certain things even if meant closing the branches closer to them. The data can be sliced and diced to determine what people in certain neighborhoods are willing to do.

A Task Force member commented that you could look at a mix of Libraries, with some providing all of the services, and some providing a portion of the services. The system could be recast in those terms. ImaginOn is at the forefront of the programming side of the Library. It serves no purpose if we think the future of library is more electronic than programming. Could you address Children's Theater's use of the space? Move out the administration? Reconfigure? Could you close the Main Branch and consolidate what you can to ImaginOn? Could the model be used to address those options?

Mr. Hogue commented that if funding stays flat, then you could re-engineer. If there is a 10% cut then you have to make tradeoffs. If there is a 20% cut, then you have no option but to cut staff – the choices become very limited. You could re-engineer some, but you would have to close other branches.

A Task Force member commented that operating fewer branches at an optimal level is a no brainer. There is no better example of that than ImaginOn. It's creative and innovative; it is a true example of innovation.

A Task Force member commented that financially it makes perfect sense to close more branches and have more hours. But what would the citizens of Mecklenburg County say? What did Mr. Brown hear when the Library was looking at closing locations?

Mr. Brown stated that the Library heard over and over again, that the community wanted its branches; don't close the branches – even if they are only open two hours.

A Task Force member commented that if you're going to let public opinion rule, then of course that's what you're going to hear.

Dr. Woodward returned to the question about the Main Library. The issue is about how the Library is currently serving versus what it was designed to do. Dr. Woodward asked Mr. Brown, if you were designing that building today, what percentage of the current space would you have?

Mr. Brown responded that there are two issues: practicality and community image. The Main Library is an iconic image of a city. When thinking about what would be built today, it is far different from what we have today. There would be coffee shops, restaurants, a world-class lecture room, a larger Robinson Spangler room. The Library would be the same size, but the space would be much more flexible. It would be a very different design.

Dr. Woodward commented that Wake County did not build a Main Library.

David Singleton, Director of Library Services, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, responded that Wake County had the money to build a Main Library, but made the decision to depend on the colleges and universities in the area for the research aspect of the Library. Wake County wanted more Library locations throughout the county.

A Task Force member commented that if you were building the Main Library today, you would build it at 40% of what it currently and reposition ImaginOn as the iconic image. You want to bring in children and families.

Question: What about access and convenience to ImaginOn and the Main Library?

A Library employee responded that ImaginOn has 86 dedicated parking spots under the building. The Main Library has no dedicated parking.

Mr. Sink commented that Charlotte has a different emphasis on how we've structured our city. There's more of an emphasis on the Center City and not as much on the suburbs. A Library presence in the Center City is important.

Dr. Woodward asked for clarification around the question of if you built the Library again, would you build it the same size?

Mr. Brown responded that he would build it the same size, if he could utilize the space differently.

Dr. Woodward responded that that was a different question than if you were building the Library now, what would you build? The children's services have been moved out of the Main Library and that space is not currently being used, so by definition the space would be smaller.

Question: How much space does the current administration use?

Library employees responded that the current administration uses somewhere between 5,000 to 10,000 square feet.

Mr. Brown stated that the Library is looking at moving some of the back office functions out the Main Library that could be housed anywhere.

Question: When the original Library was built, was some of the space not going to be used as a Library?

A Task Force member responded that originally 100,000 square feet was allocated to the Library.

Dr. Woodward commented that for a healthy Center City, there needs to be a Library presence. Currently, that presence is provided by the Main Library and ImaginOn. But it doesn't necessarily have to be both. ImaginOn is relatively unique. Are there alternative funding sources for ImaginOn? Or is this an issue presented to the decision makers for their consideration?

Question: ImaginOn has auditorium space. With the other non-Library auditorium space in the Center City, how much is that utilized? How big is the ImaginOn auditorium space?

A Library employee responded that ImaginOn has two auditoriums, one holds 250 and one holds 570. Both are used quite frequently. By comparison, the Knight auditorium holds 1,200.

Question: Does the Library rent those spaces?

A Library employee responded that the space is rented. And it is used to host the Library's big events. If the space wasn't available, the Library would have to pay to hold the events elsewhere.

A Task Force member commented that if more money is requested to get the Library through the short term, there needs to be a vision for the long term.

A Task Force member commented that the Main Library could be sold resulting in $18M to $20M in revenue. The money could be used to create capital upgrades in some locations and to create new locations with alternative technologies.

A Task Force member commented that given the current political and economic conditions, he doesn't think the Library can go to the County Commission and say, the Library is so important, give us more money. The Library can't say we're different or better than the school or Parks and Recreation.

A Task Force member commented that he wasn't going to recommend the Library ask for less money. The difference in cost to keep the Library at flat funding is minimal and that can be done. But the Task Force needs to come up with something visionary. The future economic condition will be better than it is right now. The Task Force needs to look at that and look at the needs of the community and the needs of the Library.

Dr. Woodward asked what would be your elements of a visionary vision?

A Task Force member commented that the Task Force needs to talk about what we would do if we were starting over in terms of facilities and services. The Task Force is both an evaluator and advocate of what's being said. The question of whether you have that much money invested in Center City real estate is valid. The question of whether you provide full service points at every location is valid. Do you just put a computer at some locations? Efficiency is not the final test when providing public services and we're providing a public service. We need to keep this uppermost in our minds, but public service is experiencing financial difficulties too, and we have to look at that. It is foolish to keep Libraries open part time.

Dr. Woodward commented that the Task Force needs to develop recommendations for the next two to three years, but in thinking about the long term, the Task Force needs to address what would we do if we were starting from scratch.

A Task Force member commented that he wouldn't assume the same amount of funding. The Task Force has been asked to come up with something sustainable, so we have to come up with something that can expand and contract. We need to come up with something flexible.

Question: Why did the Library get the hit?

A Task Force member responded that he believed it was because the County isn't responsible for the success of the Library. He doesn't think it's inevitable that the Library will take another cut.

Dr. Woodward commented that the Task Force will need to present the information to the decision makers so that they have the information they need to look at the tradeoffs.

Question: We're spending time looking at the short term. Isn't the Task Force supposed to be looking at much longer term also? Aren't the Board of Trustees and the Library administration looking at the short term?

Dr. Woodward commented that the Task Force's charge is to define what the Library should be in the future. But, the Task Force also needs to make recommendations that in the short term could be implemented to achieve the vision for the future.

A Task Force member commented that in the presentation of different scenarios, the hot potato is closing the Main Library, especially with the Robinson-Spangler Carolina room, and the fact that the Main Library acts as a homeless shelter.

A Task Force member commented that he agreed that the Task Force needs to look at the long term, but if the Task Force doesn't make recommendations for the next 12-24 months, then the Task Force has blown the marketing opportunity. We can't just say we have a great Library system and we need to maintain that. That's not going to fly.

A Task Force member commented that this isn't an either or choice, we need to figure out the vision. Unless we know where we're headed, it will be much more difficult to figure out the steps needed to get there. We need to present something about the positive future – and then go back to the short term and present the options. But say if you do "this" (i.e. cut a certain thing) – then you need to say "this" is what will happen.

A Task Force member commented that the Task Force needs to consider that the Library does not exist in a vacuum and is an overall part of a community growth pattern. The Task Force needs to consider how closing a branch factors into the overall city plan. As we consider the issue of closing branches and moving forward with a paradigm shift of what our library is going to be, we need to remember it is a part of the whole – a part of something. We need to look at growth patterns and other factors.

Ms. Celebron-Brown commented that in the Center City Partners 2020 Visioning Plan, they are looking at an urban campus as being a concept of the future. University and college locations would be physically linked in addition to information sharing. There is some discussion around having the Library be a part of the urban campus.

Question: What would Center City Partners think about us closing the Main Library?

Mr. Brown commented that he is a member of 2020 Vision Group. When there was talk about redeveloping Main Library and Spirit Square, there was much excitement. The Main Library is viewed as a central component of the uptown area. Central libraries are being viewed as an iconic part of a Center City.

A Task Force member commented that it is a quality of life issue - a Main Library makes things better. If you want to be a city, you have to have a center public library.

A Task Force member commented that he liked the strategy of looking at two, three and four years. We want the community to consider, as we do, that the Libraries are assets to community. We don't want to lose the opportunity to market what a Library can provide to community – what an asset it is. ImaginOn is about the experience that it provides. In the scenario – can you have 16 locations and still create that experience while you are shrinking.

Dr. Woodward commented that is so easy to make arguments about why we should keep or expand Library facilities. All are valid arguments. But if we come up with a plan that doesn't incorporate fiscal reality, then it isn't going to work. The Center City Library issue – can you imagine Charlotte not having Center City Library? No, but we have two. We must consider – we have to have a major presence – but in a single presence. How do you get to a single location that serves the Center City and has a presence? But how do you do that without taking away ImaginOn? I don't know.

A Task Force member commented that there is a document that talks about the County's level of prioritization, how the County made decisions and where the Library fit in terms of those decisions and priorities. It shows how the Library got the level of cut it did.

Dr. Woodward responded that the elected officials were asked to categorize the various services the County provides and the Library ended up in the bottom category. It was a composite decision of the elected officials that the Library ended up in the bottom. But it comes back to, if you don't own it, you don't have same level of commitment. And that comes back to the governance structure. The Library has probably have paid a price due to the governance structure. Not because people are against the Library, but because more is given for those things that the County has immediate responsibility for. Also the Library and Library Trustees could have worked the system a little better and been advocates for the Library.

Dr. Woodward asked the Task Force, what are characteristics of a Library of the future? How do we get there?

Mr. Yoshida commented that a number of groups have already looked at libraries of the future. Rather than trying to reinvent the wheel, that information can be gathered and used as a starting point.

Mr. Yoshida commented that the Task Force needs to determine how you position yourself to be necessary in your community and not just nice to have.

A Task Force member commented, should we really have library every three miles? Certainly not in the current configuration, but we could possibly have a touch point every three miles or so. We keep getting caught up in the bricks and mortar and the current configuration. Does a new configuration look

different? Does it feel different? Possibly. Do you create a more invested constituency or community by doing that?

A Task Force member commented that if you look at non-profits in Charlotte, you see a lot of mission creep. All of the programs the Library provides are great. In the ideal world, these programs would be funded, staffed and run by non-library people.   You invest your resources in bringing in people to do these things. Like all non-profits the Library is trying to provide all of this.

Dr. Woodward commented that this could be a concept for the future. The Library provides the location and brings in others to provide the programs. You could then identify the short term needs to get to that concept.

Question: In the figure listed for holds at the Main Library, 1.2M, is this for the Main Library or for the entire system?

A Library employee responded that this is for the entire system.

Question: Is there a different way to provide pick-up of holds and shrink the physical space of the Library? I am a strong believer that a service point doesn't have to be in a Library.

Mr. Hogue responded that that was a great question. You could have checkout and pick-up locations elsewhere – in the Wachovia Atrium, at Harris Teeter locations.

Question: What is the conclusion around the consolidation issue?

Mr. Sink responded that the functional consolidation subcommittees from the Board of Trustees and the County are reviewing the consolidation report and haven't acted on the recommendations yet.

Question: Have we seen the report that is going to that group?

Mr. Hogue responded that the information was presented at the December 21, 2010 Task Force meeting.

Question: Part of that recommendation was not rolling the entire Library system into the County?

Mr. Hogue responded that the Functional Consolidation Committee did not address this issue and no recommendations addressing this issue are included in the report.

Mr. Yoshida asked the Task Force to consider if they had time to put together a vision for the Library of the future? Or should they look at some key things to give to the County Commission to say these are things you need to look at for defining that vision?

Dr. Woodward commented that the Task Force must arrive at what they think are the key characteristics are for a Library of the future. That will give us something to relate recommendations for the short term. Dr. Woodward asked the Task Force to each submit two to four characteristics. The results will be compiled and presented back to the Task Force.

Question: If we define the Library as technologically contemporary. What would that look like for 2020?

A Task Force member commented that he didn't think it would be a lot of bricks and mortar. There would be a lot of eBooks.

A Task Force member commented that the stacks would shrink and there would be tech labs, community rooms, virtual reference, computer reference, study space.

A Task Force member commented that there is cost in staffing – but it's really about how you use the space.

A Task Force member commented that more technology actually does require a lot of staff. It is much more labor intensive, but you can do virtual help.

A Task Force member commented that is not profitable for the Task Force to predict the technology five years from now. Let's use Jim's idea and focus on the characteristics of the Library of the future. It's about serving as a place for free, public access to information and about innovation.

Mr. Yoshida asked if the Task Force could ask for help from Dr. Barbara Moran, Louis Round Wilson Distinguished Professor, School of Information and Library Science, UNC Chapel Hill.

Dr. Woodward responded that the Task Force could, but he felt that there was a need to get unfettered information and the Task Force has enough information to identify the characteristics.

Mr. Sink commented that there is a value to the role of librarians in collection management and collection guidance that isn't available electronically. This shouldn't be left out. Librarians collect valuable, relative information and evaluate that information.

A Task Force member commented that it wasn't being suggested that we don't need skilled librarians and other personnel. It's about how we deploy that staff. The Task Force is calling into question how you use that resource and make it more valuable.

A Task Force member commented that one part of the discussion needs to be around building finances and sustainable funding. If locations are closed, the Library could rent buildings for a funding stream, rather than selling the locations. As technology increases, there will be a need for additional assistance in finding information, accessing that information and evaluating the

information. The Library handles people from birth to death and provides them with services that are basic services to them, for example, job help.

A Task Force member commented that in terms of programming it is more advantageous to teach ten people at one time, rather than one at a time.

The Task Force took a twenty minute break.

Mr. Yoshida welcomed the Task Force back and turned the meeting over to Dr. Woodward.

Dr. Woodward presented some examples of questions to be answered by the Task Force.

1. Relative to peer libraries, was the CM Library <u>overfunded</u> prior to the recent budget cuts?

   Dr. Woodward commented that the best information available is the Public Library Data Service Statistical Report that came out in spring 2010. It allows the Task Force to access data that would permit us to answer that question. The report collects and aggregates data on libraries similar in size to the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library and the Task Force can use that data to answer the question and express a view.

2. Relative to peer libraries, was the CM Library <u>overbuilt</u> prior to the recent budget cuts?

   Dr. Woodward commented that the Library can use the same report to look at square footages across the country and come to a conclusion.

3. Relative to comparable communities, was the reduction in County funding provided to the CM Library excessive?

   Dr. Woodward commented that the study being conducted by the Urban Institute will help the Task Force answer this question.

4. What are the pros and cons associates with the Library becoming a unit of Mecklenburg County?

   The Task Force has talked around this issue, but needs to put on paper the pros and cons around the issue. This may not lead to specific recommendation.

5. What are the alternate governance/ownership structures for ImaginOn?

   The Task Force needs to comment on this issue.

6. If branches are closed, what alternatives are available for using the facilities?

Dr. Woodward commented that if the Myers Park branch was closed or branches in the townships, there might be a nonprofit group that would step in to run the facility. This might not result in a full service library. In the townships, the Library could be more of a community center.

7. What is the relative importance of more full services sites with additional branch closings versus the current system of limited service sites?

8. What criteria and approval process should be utilized for the selection and offering of programs?

Dr. Woodward commented that it is absolutely appropriate for the Library to have programming, but an approval process for deciding on the programming needs to be developed.

A Task Force member commented that some communities have outsourced operations to private organizations. The Task Force needs to at least voice its position on that.

Dr. Woodward proposed that Ms. Celebron-Brown will follow-up with the Task force via email and ask members to provide any other questions they think needs to be answered.

Dr. Woodward introduced Jeff Michael, Director, UNC Charlotte Urban Institute and Eric Caratao, Social Research Specialist, UNC Charlotte Urban Institute. Dr. Woodward commented that Mr. Michael and Mr. Caratao will share preliminary results of the benchmarking study. It is important for the Task Force to see the direction they have taken and if there are questions, they can be addressed. Copies of the preliminary report were distributed to Task Force members.

Dr. Woodward turned the meeting over to Mr. Michael. Mr. Michael commented that the study was undertaken to provide data to the Task Force for the public decisions that it needs to make.

The intent was to benchmark this community with peer communities around the country. Part of the process was to reach out to the City, County, Library and the Chamber for information on cities and communities they use for comparison and benchmarking. The 13 communities included in the study are a combination of the places used by those entities.

Mr. Michael explained the methodology used for the study. Much of the data could be collected online, but the process was begun understanding that there would be gaps in the available information. The Urban Institute is now filling in those gaps by calling specific libraries and communities. In addition, they are verifying any questions they have about the data collected.

Mr. Michael explained that the original decision was to approach the data by looking at actual budgets – not just the adopted budgets, but those that have been amended. The best way to get actual budgets is looking at audited reports. But those are not always available, especially for recent years when the

audit hasn't yet been conducted. The current data presented to Task Force members is a combination of actual and amended budgets. In discussions with Dr. Woodward, there was a concern about the discrepancies and it was decided what need to be looked at was trend lines, not actual figures. The decision was made to present adopted budgets. The Urban Institute is in the process of converting all of the data to adopted budgets.

Dr. Woodward commented that this was an important point. What the Task Force is interested in is trend lines, so looking at adopted budgets will give us that information.

A Task Force member commented that it is imperative that the Urban Institute get any data and numbers presented absolutely right. The Task Force does not want to have to deal with any questions raised because the information used to make a decision or recommendation was incorrect.

Mr. Michael stated that the Urban Institute was present at the meeting to hear the Task Force's questions and input and they would also like feedback regarding the format of the report.

Question: Are these numbers comparable at this point? Are we looking at the same thing in these numbers? For example, do we know if a particular library pays its own utilities?

Mr. Michael stated that Mr. Caratao would address this and turned the meeting over to him.

Mr. Caratao reviewed the information presented in the packet and commented that the data presented has been collected online and represents what is publicly available. Different communities present their budgets differently. The Urban Institute wanted to make sure that it is pulling data that is comparable. The decision was made to use the adopted budget if it is available. If it is not, then a decision will be made to as to what to use – most likely it will be the recommended budget.

Page 1: Presents the General Fund for the entity that provides operating funds to the library.

Question: The last column in the table shows the percentage change. Would it be helpful to see the average change for all 13 communities so that can be compared to Mecklenburg County's average change?

Dr. Woodward commented that the table shows the percentage change over the four year period presented, but he has asked the Urban Institute to look at the percentage change from year to year.

Page 2: Presents the Library's share of the General Fund
Page 3: Presents the Library's share of the General Fund in percentages

Question: Do most of the libraries get the majority of their funding from the funding entity?

Mr. Caratao responded that most do get the majority of their funding from the funding entity, with the exception of Tampa, which has a dedicated tax.

Mr. Michael stated that the final report will include detailed footnotes.

A Task Force member commented that it would be helpful to see the population for each community.

Mr. Caratao commented that the Urban Institute is planning to use per capita numbers, which will probably be presented in separate tables.

A Task Force member commented that Wake County has the lowest share of the General Fund except for Mecklenburg County in 2011 due to the budget cuts. Tampa has the highest share of the General Fund, due to the dedicated tax.

Question: Can you put Charlotte Mecklenburg in rank order according to the percentage change, put all communities in rank order and rank on every page?

Dr. Caratao responded that the Urban Institute can look at doing this.

Question: What is the structure of Forsyth and Durham Counties?

Dr. Woodward responded that they are countywide, but are very small.

Mr. Michael commented that if the County didn't include them in their comparable communities, then they wouldn't have been included in the study. The Urban Institute may take the six cities identified by the Chamber and look at those separately.

Page 4: Presents the Funding Entity's Total Revenue

> Mr. Caratao commented that these figures include a lot of flow through money, but it is important to present total revenues for these communities. These figures can be affected by federal decisions – money for public schools or Enterprise funds. There could be capital money included in the figures. No conclusions can be drawn by looking at total revenue, but it is presented for completeness. These figures include a large amount of earmarked money over which commissioners have no discretion on spending.

Page 5: Presents the Library's Total Revenue, not just the General Fund revenue

Page 6: Presents the funding entity's Total Expenditures, using Total Revenue

Page 7: Presents the funding entity's Total Expenditures, using General Fund only

Page 8: Presents Library's Total Expenditures

Page 9: Presents percent change in General Fund and percent change in Library's funding year to year

>   Mr. Caratao commented that these figures allow a year to year to comparison.

Matrix of Services: Presents what types of services the funding entity pays for that might compete with library funding.

Selected Library Expenditures: Presents whether library pays for utilities, building maintenance and/or building security.

>   Mr. Caratao stated that this information is more difficult to get and requires a phone call to collect.

The remaining materials presented are the supporting materials for the data presented and provide additional detail. In the final report, this information will be presented as an appendix.

Question: Can we get the percentage of library funding that comes from a public entity?

Mr. Caratao responded that it would take a lot more time to get that information.

Dr. Woodward commented that the report will show total revenues and revenues from local funding source, so that will be an easy number to calculate.

Question: Do these numbers include capital costs?

Mr. Caratao commented that some of the figures may include capital costs, if it is considered part of the annual budget. Mecklenburg County does not include capital costs in its operating budget.

Mr. Caratao commented that some of the information is more difficult to get and takes more time to collect.

Mr. Caratao commented that the Urban Institute will read the financial audit reports to look to see if there are any major changes and any additional explanations for the changes in a particular community.

Mr. Michael commented that if the Task Force has any additional questions once they have had a chance to look at the information, to please let them know.

Dr. Woodward asked Task Force member to direct any questions to Ms. Celebron-Brown and she will communicate with the Urban Institute.

A Task Force member thanked Dr. Woodward for the personal time he has invested in this effort and the approach he has taken. The information will be very valuable for the work of the Task Force and will give it validity.

Question: Does the County know this study is being conducted?

Mr. Michael responded that the County does know that the study is being conducted and the Urban Institute is trying to anticipate the kinds of questions the County will want to ask. The final report will include footnotes and references to all of the sources used for the study.

Dr. Woodward stated that prior to the next Task Force meeting, he and the consultants will use the 2008-2009 report to get the data that will position the Task Force to get answers to the first two questions he presented. (Relative to peer libraries, was the CM Library <u>overfunded</u> prior to the recent budget cuts? Relative to peer libraries, was the CM Library <u>overbuilt</u> prior to the recent budget cuts?)

Between now and the next meeting, the Task Force should identify other questions that need to be addressed and some of the key characteristics that should be incorporated into the future Library of this County.

Dr. Woodward commented that the degree to which a county or community invests in its library – and how they choose to do it (programming, branches, regional libraries) – is important. This tells us the extent to which a county is willing to invest, but doesn't tell us how a library uses this investment. In the report the Task Force makes, we should examine those two questions. It is reasonable to ask the County to invest and if you make that investment how do you do it in the future.

Dr. Woodward commented that is in an issue of basic services versus programming. It is the programming that attracts criticism. What the Task Force can do is come with recommendations around how programming decisions are made and what criteria ought to be used to make those decisions. There needs to be an understanding around the direction the Library is marching and the boundaries around what can be done to get there. If I'm on the County side, I would feel a lot more comfortable with this. High level direction and then approval once the budget is in place.

Dr. Woodward commented that at the last Task Force meeting there was a discussion about small groups. Small groups can be difficult and can be difficult to staff. Between now and the next Task Force meeting, Dr. Woodward and the consultants will pick one or two topics to assign to small groups. One could be the topic of programming and criteria and there might be one or two more.

A Task Force member commented that he liked the idea of small groups. They bring something to put on the table to start the discussion

Question: Is part of this whether or not the Library should be part of the County? Some of the Library's function falls in the category of social services and should this be part of the County? If it is part of the County, could the Library provide more services?

Dr. Woodward commented that this would be a good topic for a small group.

Dr. Woodward asked Dr. Burnap to give an update on the survey.

Dr. Burnap stated that the survey was launched on Monday, January 3, 2011. Interviewers were trained, practiced and then made some calls. The data that is collected will help in making decisions. The data will represent an unbiased opinion, rather than a "public outcry."

Dr. Woodward reminded Task Force members to send their ideas for the key characteristics of the Library of the future so this information can be presented at the next meeting. Dr. Woodward thanked Task Force members for their time and service.

The meeting was adjourned. The Task Force meeting will be held Tuesday, January 18, 2011 from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Morrison Regional Library.