

Library Advisory Board
August 16, 2007
Milton, Florida

The Library Advisory Board met on the above date with the following members present: Chairman Peggy Toifel and members Martha Lyle, Michael Sandler, and Pat Rose. Also present were the County Administrator (Hunter Walker) and the Human Resources Director (DeVann Cook). Toifel called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Toifel moved approval without objection of the minutes from the March 15, 2007 meeting.

Director's Report

Cook handed out a monthly statistical report concerning use at all Santa Rosa County libraries. (Attachment) He briefly discussed the statistics on the report. Cook said these statistics were used for library budget preparation. He said he felt these statistics are a good indicator of how things are operating within the library system.

Toifel said this statistical report is impressive. She asked about the new library hours. Cook said the plan is to change library hours for all Santa Rosa County libraries effective September 1, 2007. He said all libraries will have the same hours. Cook said Santa Rosa County libraries will be open Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and will be closed Saturday and Sunday. He said this decision was made as a result of budget cuts. Cook said staff has received complaints about the new hours.

Rose said she has received calls about the libraries being closed on Saturday. She said there are people who can only come to the library on Saturday. Rose said it is a shame libraries will not be available to these people. She said she felt other changes might be possible. Rose said she felt the number of hours the library is open per week can remain the same, but daily hours need to be revised. She suggested library hours she felt will work better for Santa Rosa County citizens.

Walker said he has received complaints about the new library hours also. He said more library personnel are needed but budget issues are preventing additional employees in all County departments. Walker said he felt changing the library hours on Friday and opening on Saturday might have merit. He said staff can discuss changing library hours with the Library Director, Linda Hendrix. Walker said staff's plan is to go from month to month evaluating what works and what needs to be reconsidered. He said these hours were based on library use statistics.

Lyle said closing the libraries at 4:00 p.m. on Friday will not allow enough time for students to use the library because students do not get out of school until 3:00 p.m. She said there are people who work during the week that can not get to the library except for on Saturday. Lyle said even if there are not a large number of people who use the library on Saturday, she does not want those people to be closed out of the library completely. She said she supports changing library hours on Fridays to afternoon only and opening the libraries on Saturday morning.

Toifel said she heard from a Navarre family that stated the only time they can bring their children to the library is on Saturdays because of their work schedule. She said she understands the budget concerns, but felt the libraries can be creatively staffed to allow library hours for Saturdays.

There was discussion on the best hours for the libraries to be open.

Cook said part of the reason for the operating hours being changed is because of anticipated additional budget cuts next year. He said the statistics provided show the best days to cut library hours. Cook said staff will talk with Hendrix about changing the library hours. He said staff is trying to work out libraries having as many open hours as possible with library personnel available.

Sandler said he is in favor of some type of library services being available on Saturdays.

Toifel said there is active use of library meeting rooms on Saturdays. She discussed groups that regularly use the library meeting rooms. Toifel said she is aware the County is trying to accommodate these people at other times.

Sandler said there are a lot of non-statistical uses at libraries. He said people come in on Saturday and might not check out books, but they do actively use other library services. Sandler discussed weekend programs offered at libraries. He said he felt the Friday and Saturday hours can be worked out without extra cost to the County.

Walker said the biggest cost at the library is personnel. He said rearranging hours should not have a great affect on operational costs. Walker said staff will check on possible changes to library hours.

County Administrator

Walker said the Pace Library is open and usage has increased at all libraries. He said he felt separating from West Florida Regional Library was a good decision. Walker said the cost of operating libraries in Santa Rosa County after separating is not significantly more than when the County was associated with West Florida Regional Library. He said the library budget is approximately \$2.5 million. Walker said this includes a large amount of money used to open the Jay and Pace libraries. He said State shared funds are up this year, and the projected State shared funds to be received by Santa Rosa County next year are approximately \$400,000.00.

Toifel said she felt Santa Rosa County is doing very well for a new start up system, but County libraries have a long way to go to get off the bottom of the State ranked list of libraries.

Walker said he hopes citizens feel they now have more ownership in Santa Rosa County libraries.

Library Foundation Update

Toifel said the Library Foundation received good news; the foundation is now a 501C3. She said the foundation will have a kickoff meeting soon. Toifel said there is a tentative kickoff fundraiser being set for either the winter or spring.

Toifel said all "Friends of the Library" groups, except for Jay, have agreed to purchase 2 self-checkout machines for each library. She said she felt this will be a major help to library staff.

Toifel said the "Friends of the Library" groups are planning a workshop with the Florida State Library Consultant for this area sometime in September. She said it will be a joint "Friends of the Library" hosted workshop held in Milton. Toifel said the topic will be on how the "Friends of the Library" groups relate. She said she felt this will be a good opportunity for everyone to get together to compare notes.

Rose said her "Friends of the Library" group has not agreed to purchase 2 self-checkout machines. She said the group has discussed self-checkout machines. Rose said she felt the group will purchase at least one self-checkout machine, but she hopes she will be able to convince them a 2nd machine is needed.

Toifel said the Milton "Friends of the Library" group felt the self-checkout machines are needed despite the cost. She said her group does not currently have all the funds needed but will come up with the extra money for this important service.

Sandler said the self-checkout machines will lessen the workload of library staff.

Lyle said libraries are not substituting machines for library personnel. She said checking in and out books is not the greatest use of a librarian. Lyle said allowing people to self-checkout books will free up library staff to do other important services.

Cook said the point of the self-checkout machines is to help provide good customer service at libraries. He said some people want to get a book and checkout without waiting in line or dealing with library personnel. Cook said he has used the self-checkout machines at the Pace Library, and he said the machines are great. He said these self-checkout machines will free up library staff and allow them to help library patrons who need it.

Other Business/Next Meeting

Toifel said she would like input on changing the Library Advisory Committee meetings to quarterly instead of monthly. She said she would also like input on deciding on a new Library Advisory Committee Chairman.

Lyle said she felt quarterly meetings will be sufficient. She said if a special meeting is needed one can be scheduled.

Walker said there is no problem with going to quarterly meetings instead of monthly meetings.

Toifel discussed her thoughts on when the meetings should be held. There was discussion on when the Library Advisory Committee should change to quarterly meetings. Toifel suggested the next Library Advisory Committee meeting be held in October. She said after the October meeting, the committee can meet in January and then every three months thereafter.

Toifel moved to accept the new Library Advisory Committee meeting schedule as she suggested above; Sandler seconded, and the vote carried by unanimous vote. (4-0)

Toifel said she has been the Library Advisory Committee Chairman for two years, and she felt someone else might want a chance to be Chairman. She said the Chairman also serves on the Library Foundation Board. Toifel said most Chairman work is associated with the Library Foundation Board. She said she felt the Library Advisory Committee needs to consider whether or not the committee needs to be restructured in January. Toifel said committee members who tend to miss a lot of the committee meetings need to be contacted to see if they are still willing to serve. Walker said typically committees reorganize themselves in January.

Walker said the next Library Advisory Committee meeting will be scheduled for October 18, 2007.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Library Advisory Board at this time, the meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.