

**MINUTES**  
**REGENTS PUBLIC LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Monday, August 21, 2006**

***RPLAC Members:***

John Szabo	Steve Schaefer
Gial Rogers	Richard Sanders
Greg Heid	Susan Whittle
Diana Tope	Gary Swint
Dusty Gres	Alan Kaye – Telecom.
Kathryn Ames	

***GPLS Staff:***

Lamar Veatch, State Librarian  
Lyn Hopper, Assistant State Librarian for Library Development

***Guests:***

Regent Doreen Poitevint – Telecom.  
Ruth Bruner, GMA Representative  
Ben Riden, Georgia Department of Audits:  
Clair Arnold, Georgia Department of Audits:  
Donna Howell, Mountain Regional Library System  
Joe Forsee, Northwest Georgia Regional Library System  
Gilda Stanberry-Cotney, Peach Public Libraries  
Billy Tripp, Peach Public Libraries

Chairman Schaefer called the meeting of the Regents Public Library Advisory Committee (RPLAC) to order at 10:05am in the conference room of the Uncle Remus Regional Library System. A telephone conference call had been established to permit members noted above to participate remotely in the meeting as their individual schedules permitted. Minutes of the July 14, 2006 meeting were approved as revised and distributed. Introductions of guests were made.

***State Librarian's Comments – Lamar Veatch***

He reported that the budget has been approved. \$38 million was requested for state libraries, state grants and GPLS. \$440,000 was granted for salary increases, mainly to be used for the professional staff positions in the libraries.

Lamar continued with information regarding the construction program. 8 projects from the previous list were the only ones carried forward. They are all in line with the amount approved by the legislative. The University System is making changes in the way they handle construction projects. GPLS will track these changes and make decisions as to how the changes fit into the library's strategic direction. Public library projects are understood to be different and will not require the same type of changes. GPLS will keep RPLAC informed of these changes and they will work together to build the changes into new programs. The new rules will be dispersed as soon as possible. All projects submitted will have to be resubmitted on the next go round and will all be new projects.

He reported that GPLS has hired Gail Gunells as a part time legal assistant. Gail is permanently assigned to GPLS and will advise GPLS as to how to help with public libraries situations. She will assist with policies, procedures and contracts. Any questions from the directors will initially go through Lamar to Gail.

### ***Audit Concerns and Issues – Ben Riden***

Ben Riden, Deputy Director for Audit Operations and Clair Arnold, Audit Manager answered a list of questions. They stated that they perform approximately 38 library audits and have done so since being under the Department of Education. Typically the libraries are done last since they are mandated to do other audits first. The state mandates them to ensure accountability. They mentioned that all audits have to follow the same standards but that the Department of Audits has a greater knowledge of state issues and therefore can do a better job. He added that the possibility of adding charter school audits could cause a strain on the current resources. In order to continue to audit the libraries, increased state funding is needed.

Department of Audits does not have a procedures manual for bookkeepers and library directors. GPLS would need to format a procedures manual and the DOA could review the manual. There is defiantly a need to have the same standards for Capitalization.

Communication is the key to dealing with the frustrations of unfamiliar auditors. Library audits offer a great learning environment and young auditors are sent in order to get the experience on a smaller scale. The frustration really depends on how good the books are kept, good books minimize problems. Clair will update the audit program to enhance training.

DOA cannot continue to prepare the financial reports if they are performing the audit of the financial statements. GPLS will need to provide the templates so the libraries can put together the financial report or a CPA can produce the financial report and the DOA can perform the audit.

An MD&A is required. Not having one does not give a negative; an explanatory paragraph is placed in the audit stating that the MD&A was not available. It is a good thing to have and it is expected to be available with the prior year's numbers listed. The auditor then gives you the current year's numbers and you have 5 days to drop them in.

The DOA does not post independent audits in order to not give the appearance of taking responsibility. GPLS should be responsible for posting the audits.

Ben and Clair gave their email addresses in case there are any further questions.

[ridenbm@audits.ga.gov](mailto:ridenbm@audits.ga.gov)

[arnoldcm@audits.ga.gov](mailto:arnoldcm@audits.ga.gov)

### ***General Comments – Steve Schaefer***

Discussion about the Brooks County letter regarding the 50% - 50% funding match law. There are nine systems that did not have funding equal to State support. RPLAC decided to let systems have until FY2012 (rather than 2010) to comply with the 50-50 rule. RPLAC also recommends that the \$55,000 "conversion figure" should be used to establish the level of required funding in regard to salaries. This will still require hard work to bring up the level of local funding in order to receive State funding. 21(a) has a provision for counties in the bottom third of economic rankings.

### ***Committee Reports***

The Chairman called upon the committee chairs for updates. Work was ongoing. RPLAC decided to add 2 RPLAC members to each of the 3 committees. They are as follows:

- **VISION**, Greg Heid, Richard Sanders, Melanie Jenkins and Alan Kaye
- **FUNDING**, Diana Tope, Kathryn Ames, Gary Swint and Susan Whittle
- **LIBRARY LAWS and POLICIES**, Dusty Gres, Gail Rogers. John Szabo and Steve Schaefer

Greg Heid and Richard Sanders of the Vision committee recommended that we look into purchasing training DVD's relevant to customer service. They will continue to research this idea and come up with specific recommendations.

***Open Discussion of RPLAC Concerns***

Steve Schaefer presented a New Beginnings document that he, Greg Heid and several other RPLAC members have been working on. This \$5.9 million plan details ways to bring all of the libraries together by equalizing the distribution of State funds among counties and population, without regard to organizational model. This plan could eliminate the problem of systems wanting to split into single counties due to different appropriations of funds as well as provide opportunities for poor counties to join together to form multi-county systems. New Beginnings improves and strengthens the rules and polices and therefore will improve library service across the state by increasing accountability, customer service and equality.

RPLAC members showed a consensus of support for the New Beginnings document.

RPLAC decided that Steve Schaefer would make the necessary corrections, write up the philosophy behind the New Beginnings plan and send it out to all the Directors within a week. An optional Director's Meeting will be scheduled for September 8, 2006 so that any questions can be answered.

Steve will also set up a formal presentation and present it at the next House Study Committee meeting.

RPLAC agreed to schedule its next meeting for September 7, 2006, location and time TBA.

Chairman Schaefer adjourned the meeting at 2:33 pm.