

Regents Public Library Advisory Committee (RPLAC)

October 3, 2012

Houston County Library System: Centerville Branch Library

Present at meeting:

RPLAC members:

Kathryn Ames – Athens Regional Library System (Urban/Rural Multi-County)
Carmen Sims – Bartow County Library System (Urban Single County)
Patricia Edwards – Jefferson County Library System (Rural Single County)
Anne Isbell – Lake Blackshear Regional Library System (Rural Multi-County)
Pamela Grigg – Roddenbery Memorial Library System (Rural Single County)
Carrie Zeiger – Flint River Regional Library System (Urban/Rural Multi-County)
Jean Turn – Kinchafoonee Regional Library System (Rural Multi-County)
Daryl Fletcher – Conyers-Rockdale Library System (Urban Single County)
Claudia Gibson – Chestatee Regional Library System (Urban/Rural Multi-County)
Sandy Hester – Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Library (Rural Single County)

GPLS Administrative Staff:

Alan Harkness (Assistant State Librarian for Library Development)

Audience:

Jennifer Durham	Kathy Griffis	Karen Odom	Susan Whittle
Nick Fogarty	Laura Harrison	Richard Sanders	Leigh Wiley
Charles Gee	Thomas Jones		

Officer elections:

On a motion by K. Ames, seconded by J. Turn, Anne Isbell was elected to serve as Chair for FY13. The motion was approved unanimously.

On a motion by K. Ames, seconded by J. Turn, Sandy Hester was elected to serve as Secretary for FY13. The motion was approved unanimously.

Minutes:

Minutes for previous meeting were not available.

GPLS update:

Strategic Planning: Alan Harkness discussed the first 2 of 4 strategic planning sessions conducted in Evans and Forsyth. Sessions are being facilitated by Michael Hourihan, State Government Program Manager, at Carl Vinson Institute of Government (CVIOG). Discussions thus far have centered on challenges facing public libraries. Biggest challenges mentioned repeatedly were money and perception of libraries by the public/elected officials/funding agencies. Specific topics of discussion included the need for a statewide marketing campaign, closer examination of regional versus county-based funding, GALILEO usage, PINES, and inequity in the allocation of funding. M. Hourihan, CVIOG facilitator, predicted that state funding may not increase until 2016.

The last strategic planning session will be held in November. After meetings have concluded, Julie Walker, Deputy State Librarian, will compile results and report back to stakeholders. A. Isbell asked if a summary could be made available by next meeting in December. (* post meeting addition: notes from sessions are available at www.georgialibraries.org). C. Gibson questioned whether RPLAC will have involvement in the final document or resulting decisions that come from strategic planning sessions.

Step Raises: No update. Still no direction as to whether or not GPLS can keep excess GHI money to restore step raises for state-paid librarians.

General Discussion:

TRS: No update on effort to have wording for TRS changed.

Return on Investment (ROI): Lengthy discussion was held on the topic of ROI and its usefulness as a way of demonstrating the value of libraries to various stakeholders. Many commented on the need for the new GPLS Strategic Plan to incorporate ROI and other means of showing value and savings. It was also noted by several that local library systems should also work to demonstrate these savings and value on a local level. S. Whittle mentioned that their efforts in showing the true value of libraries resulted in the restoration of \$10,000 in their budget for Miller County (Southwest Georgia Regional Library).

Zero-based Budgeting: Zero-based budgeting is being discussed by several in state and local governments. This budgeting tool requires an agency to begin with a budget of \$0 and work up by justifying each expense. Using this method requires evaluation of each expense and how it relates to the overall mission of the organization (T. Jones gave a brief

overview based on his training for Bibb County). Interest was expressed in GPLS contacting CVIOG regarding training on this topic.

Miscellaneous: Discussion about the benefits of GALILEO, the vast improvement in usability of its new search feature, and the cost-savings seen by libraries who utilize it (i.e. periodical subscriptions and storage, reference sources, online resources). PINES was also highlighted as a service that can be utilized by all Georgia citizens, even those living in non-PINES regions.

Committee Reports:

Standards Committee: A revised Standards document was placed on GPLS website in June. Several directors across the state have expressed concern that these standards cannot be met, especially with continuous cuts in state and local funding. The question was asked what GPLS will do with these standards and if they will be enforced and/or rewarded. It was mentioned that other states use their standards as a means of dispersing state funding. A. Harkness stated that, at this point, tying standards to state funding would only be punitive since there are no extra funds to reward those systems who meet or exceed standards. Others felt that standards can be useful on a local level to encourage more funding and as a means of self-evaluation.

N. Fogarty expressed that some local funders were frustrated because they are bound by Maintenance of Effort (MOE) while the State continues to cut funding. He questioned whether an MOE waiver is needed every year. A. Harkness explained that GPLS met with Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) to create a more “palatable” MOE agreement. Harkness said no waivers has been denied recently and made a commitment to improve communication between GPLS and library systems regarding waiver status.

New Business:

Change to Requirements for Public Library Grant Funds (can be found in Appendix B of Tools for Trustees: The Georgia Public Library Trustee Manual, 2006)

A request was made to the PINES Executive Committee to make a change in PINES policy as it relates to cataloging. Since the policy in question is part of PLS-6-2-.01 REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC LIBRARY STATE AID GRANT FUNDS and impacts all public libraries in Georgia, the Committee deferred the question to RPLAC for discussion among all stakeholders.

S. Hester recommended that “Requirements” as a whole be evaluated. K. Ames requested the procedure for making changes. J. Walker (via text to A. Harkness) stated that changes are made by replacing current rules. RPLAC and GPLS could rewrite and send them to the Board of Regents (BOR) for approval. C. Gibson recommended waiting for the completion of GPLS’s strategic planning meetings and incorporating changes in “Requirements” with the new strategic plan.

Focus for FY13:

Recommended focus areas include:

- Assisting GPLS with developing a new Strategic Plan that incorporates ROI, adjustments/changes to the Requirements for State Aid, and possible changes to the funding formula after the Strategic Plan is in place (A. Isbell, C. Gibson, C. Sims, P. Grigg);
- Implementing a state-wide marketing/branding campaign that demonstrates how ROI translates into “real life” (P. Grigg);
- Working with GPLS to offer training with Tracy Arner at CVIOG on zero-based budgeting.

Other Topics:

Directors meetings: Several concerns were raised regarding directors meetings including concern over the recent cancellation of the September meeting in Blairsville. Several suggestions for improvement were made, including:

- Sending GPLS staff reports out prior to the meeting and having GPLS staff available to answer questions if needed;
- Adding more time for directors to share (noting the inherent value in sharing experiences among all directors during the meeting as opposed to a few over lunch or dinner);
- Condensing meetings to 1 day by limiting presentations to those directly relevant to libraries and discussions regarding critical changes (i.e. if the Governor requires zero-based budgeting);
- Utilizing the talents and skills among the directors and “in-the-field” librarians as opposed to seeking outside experts.

Libraries as FEMA centers: K. Ames pointed out that libraries are supposed to serve as disaster centers in emergencies. Directors should find out what being a disaster center entails and be prepared.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 5th, 2012, at 10 a.m. in Savannah, exact location TBA.

On a motion for C. Zeiger, seconded by K. Ames, the meeting was adjourned. Meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.