

Regents Public Library Advisory Committee (RPLAC)

February 8, 2013

Northeast Clayton/Forest Park Library

Present at meeting:

RPLAC members:

Chair: Anne Isbell – Lake Blackshear Regional Library System (Rural Multi-County)

Kathryn Ames – Athens Regional Library System (Urban/Rural Multi-County)

Pamela Grigg – Roddenbery Memorial Library System (Rural Single County)

Carrie Zeiger – Flint River Regional Library System (Urban/Rural Multi-County)

Daryl Fletcher – Conyers-Rockdale Library System (Urban Single County)

Lecia Eubanks – Cherokee Regional Library System (Rural Multi-County)

Patricia Edwards – Jefferson County Library (Rural Single County)

Carmen Simms – Bartram Trail Regional Library (Rural Multi-County)

Keith Schuermann – Troup-Harris Regional Library (Rural Multi-County)

Secretary: Sandy Hester – Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Library (Rural Single County)

RPLAC member(s) online:

Claudia Gibson – Chestatee Regional Library System (Urban/Rural Multi-County)

GPLS Administrative Staff:

Dr. Lamar Veatch (State Librarian)

Julie Walker (Deputy State Librarian)

Dustin Landrum (Administrative Assistant – GPLS – tech)

Audience:

Janine Cline Linda Kean Lee Moon Alison Weissinger

Nick Fogarty Adrian Mixson Claudya Muller several online

Minutes:

Minutes from the December 5, 2012 meeting were approved.

Old Business:

Possible change to cataloging location requirement: This issue was addressed in full at the last RPLAC meeting on December 5, 2012. It was determined that the wording of the cataloging requirement was broad enough to allow for cataloging at alternate locations. GPLS will make necessary changes to the wording of related questions on the Annual Report. The PINES Executive Committee may make changes to PINES policy with the understanding that any change must be made at the discretion of the system director.

Committee Reports: none

New Business:

Strategic Plan: All planning session feedback is on the GPLS website (www.georgialibraries.org). Ideas and issues were divided into broad groups or focus areas:

- Advocacy – The need for more advocacy is great. Training for library board members and staff would be helpful. We need front line people to be able to effectively communicate with legislators.
- Marketing/Branding – Many libraries don't have the time or money for adequate marketing. It was suggested that GPLS (via David Baker) create some core marketing materials that libraries could adapt for local use. The need for state-wide marketing was also highlighted. Some libraries are currently testing a product called LibraryAware. This software facilitates the creation of a cohesive marketing campaign across various media formats. During this pilot phase, GPLS is cost sharing with libraries of various sizes to see if this product will help with the marketing needs of Georgia's public libraries.
- Consortia building- We need to explore ways to work together to take advantage of scalable resources (i.e. technology, cataloging, etc.).
 - o Technology – Some libraries are falling behind in technology because they lack resources like a tech person to maintain and expand for the future. Technology needs are complex. It was suggested that state money be used to make up for that inequity across the state. Technology consortia are much more feasible now with the ability to access, diagnose and fix computers remotely. A recent suggestion was made to the FCC that a certain amount of bandwidth be set aside for a sort of ubiquitous broadband/wireless access. This idea was supported by companies like Google and Microsoft, but opposed by companies like AT&T and Verizon.
- E-resources – In addition to e-books, there are other e-resources that we could use to target the business community. E-resources, like Morning Star, Wall Street Journal, etc., are expensive for individual libraries but could be purchased at the state level for all to use. Reaching out to this community is essential, as we now

depend on them more than ever for assistance. Assistance from GPLS could also be used for e-government services that libraries are already offering, such as access to social services, child support services and tax forms.

Questions for GPLS: The discussion took a brief interlude from the strategic plan and moved to a few questions for GPLS.

- Competitive mini-grants - Questions were asked about the competitive mini-grants that used to be provided via LSTA funding. Despite being relatively small, these grants did spark creativity among libraries. Some were concerned that some libraries would not be able to participate because they now lack staff to apply and create new programs. Some of the previous grants were not competitive so libraries only needed to apply (i.e. firewall grant). It was noted that no “pot of money” exists to fund such grants and most LSTA money is tied directly to services currently being provided to all libraries.
- WebJunction change – Questions were asked about the change in WebJunction (subscription based, staff training site). Only 15 states remain with WebJunction and its content isn’t meeting the needs of the Georgia library community. BOR’s purchase of Skillsoft made it possible for GPLS to buy in for a lot less than was being spent on WebJunction. Skillsoft offers much more content and resources for staff training. The contract allows for unlimited credits and should help libraries who need training in core competencies, as well as other.

Strategic Plan: Discussion returned to the strategic plan with a few more focus areas.

- Training – Any support that GPLS could give in core competency training would be greatly appreciated.
- B4 Project– The focus on early education is promising and is something that most libraries would be willing to embrace and utilize. GPLS pulled together a committee to work on ways to assist local libraries in reaching young children (under the age of 4). The committee was charged with creating tools and resources that staff, trained or not, could use and build on for early childhood programming. One of the proposed resources would be story kits which would contain everything a library staff person would need to do a themed storytime. “1,000 books before kindergarten” is another promotional idea that could be used across the state. The goal is to tie these new programs to the Governor’s initiative to reach young children. Hopefully, this project can help secure new money for libraries.

GPLS’s vision for the Strategic Plan: The plan will cover 3-5 years. The foundation of the plan should focus on what local libraries do and why they are important. RPLAC should come up with a brief document or bullet points that describe what libraries are doing and why. GPLS can then tie its efforts to those main ideas/services and work more effectively with each library system. For example:

- o Boards of trustees and community leaders should be advocates for quality library service in their community.
 - GPLS Strategic Plan tie in – GPLS will provide training and other resources on advocacy on the local, state, and federal level.

We need to prepare answers for the question: “Why is what GPLS doing at the state level important to libraries on the local level?” GPLS can then say, “We are asking for more state money because libraries need to do X.” Articulating the “why” is the basis for developing a strategic plan. We should be able to say, “Here are the services being provided by Georgia’s public libraries with 80% of the resources coming from local funding and the remainder coming in the form of state and federal dollars used for economy of scale resources.” A committee of directors from the northwest geographic area (Carmen Simms, Lecia Eubanks, Keith Scheurmann, Nick Fogarty and possibly Susan Stephens, Susan White, Delana Hickman, Brigid Broderick, and Roni Tewksbury) will create a “Top 10” list to be presented to RPLAC members, who can then take the list to the groups they represent for discussion and tweaking as necessary.

GPLS update:

Legislative Update: Dr. Veatch gave a brief status update on the state budget. The process is moving quickly and may be complete by mid-March. The FY13 budget is expected to be voted out as is. For FY14, the same cuts are expected to continue. Concerning 20 year bond funds, the Governor did not recommend any public library construction projects in his budget but other sources made it clear that there is capacity in the bond fund for construction projects. Dr. Veatch is working with representatives from the areas that have projects on the list, asking them to champion these projects and try to have them added. Perry (Houston County) has the top project on the list and the Majority Leader of the House is from that area. Concerning 5 year bond funds, Chairman Ehrhart was impressed by the amount of work that was done with MR&R funding in FY13. A relatively small amount of money was used to touch many different libraries. A second list was presented for inclusion in the FY14 bond funds. The list contains approximately \$1.7 million with 50/50 local matching funds. Sparked by a question from Kathy Ames regarding the use of bond funds to purchase computers, it was discovered the Governor had made such a recommendation in the Community College Budget. A brief list of why computers are important to libraries was presented to Chairman Ehrhart, stressing that, with \$2 million, we could purchase 3,000 computers for public libraries.

The House Budget Office and OPB had no issues with the inclusion of these funds for computers. Everyone should contact their legislators and ask for their support. If the funds make it into the FY14 package, there will most likely be a separate line item in the BOR section of the budget under MR&R and the 5 year bond section.

Network: Julie Walker gave an update on the network shift from a state-wide internet provider to local providers secured by individual library systems. If systems are happy with the bandwidth they have now, there is no need to rush into a local contract. The state contract is up for renewal this year. GPLS IT department will help libraries by looking over any proposal to insure that the necessary components have been included. Reimbursements for the post e-rate cost will begin as soon as the library system's T1 line is turned off. Reimbursements will probably be quarterly. Filtering may be an issue with some service providers but is mandatory for CIPA compliance. GPLS will assist as much as possible. Current technology funds are secure since they are tied to directly to LSTA funding.

Archives: Tim Hines, President of Clayton State University, is chairing a transition committee to pave the way for the Archives to move from the Secretary of State's Office to the Board of Regents. It is not clear what moneys will follow this transition. The Governor has put \$4.5 million in the budget to keep the Archives running at some minimal level. This also includes the State Records Center. A decision has yet to be made as to where the Archives will "live" under the BOR. Possibilities include Clayton State, USG, GPLS, or directly reporting to a vice chancellor. A bill is being issued out of the Governor's office, to call for the transfer.

Increase in health benefits costs: Handout (O.C.G.A. 20-2-880). Line (3) of this document places regional and county library employees under the Department of Community Health's rules regarding health insurance and eligibility. If public libraries, collectively, want to go forward with finding relief and changing the various issues related to health insurance, now is the time. The ACCG (Association of County Governments) is very interested in partnering with libraries to affect change, either by making changes in the regulations or by going through the legislature to make changes in the law. BOR wants to stay out of this battle. Dr. Veatch recommended that representatives from GCPL (Georgia Council of Public Libraries) work with ACCG and take advantage of their legal team and lobbying strength. ACCG would be better suited to choose the right legislators to push the issue through.

Step raises/ professional pay scale: Dr. Veatch recently spoke with the Education Director from OPB, who indicated that there has been a lot of discussion around the state about pay raises. The Governor is moving the discussion back to the agencies, allowing the flexibility to give pay raises but not providing new money to cover the cost. If GPLS chooses to restore professional librarians to the teachers' pay scale, changes to the existing funding formula will be required. There is still no definitive answer on whether or not GPLS can keep the savings from the SHBP shift.

B4: Dr. Veatch, Alan Harkness and Elaine Black met with professors from Georgia State University's Department of Education: Early Learning to discuss ways in which that department could help with the B4 project currently in development. Hopefully, having these professors serve as advisors to the B4 project will give it more credibility and increase the chance of securing funding. Veatch feels that the best way to possibly bring in more funding is to present "shiny" new projects, especially those that tie into the Governor's initiatives and build on services already being provided by public libraries across the state.

Various other topics:

Brief discussions on several topics: GCPL's lobbyist participation in the discussion with ACCG regarding health insurance changes, HB259 – would prevent counties from adding a tax bill line item for public libraries, success of GCPL's Hot Dog Day at the Capital, list of state representatives are now on GCPL's website (www.gcpl.net), GPLS is developing a one page ROI (return on investment) document that Representative Penny Houston (Berrien County) is willing to distribute to other legislators

The next meeting date and time is TBA.

On a motion for K. Ames, seconded by several, the meeting was adjourned. Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.