

Marshes of Glynn Libraries

Brunswick-Glynn County Library St. Simons Island Public Library

Minutes of Meeting Approved September 11, 2013

- Meeting:** Called Meeting
Marshes of Glynn Libraries Board of Trustees
August 21, 2013 at 5:00pm
- Location of Meeting:** Auditorium of the Brunswick-Glynn County Library
208 Gloucester Street
Brunswick, Georgia 31520
- Trustees Present:** Matthew Permar, Chairman
Robert Doud-Williams
Gloria Burns
Benjamin Bryson
Jeff Fluck
Mary Ann Nichols
Joan Campbell
Sandra Turbidy
Paul Fisher, Jr.
- Staff Present:** Geri Lynn Mullis, Director MOGL
Lori Lasson, Manager, BGCL
Carole Sharp, Manager SSIPL
- Special Guests:** Julie Walker, Deputy State Librarian
Steve Schaefer, Director Uncle Remus Regional Library System
- Minutes:** Chairman Matthew Permar called the meeting to order.
- Recap of Committee:** The first item on the agenda is the recap of today's meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee. Ms. Nichols advised that copies of the report were being made to give the Board members. Mr. Permar asked her to go ahead and begin the report. He then welcomed our special guests, Julie Walker, Deputy State Librarian for Georgia Public Library Service and Steve Schaefer, current Director for the Uncle Remus Regional Library System and former interim Director for the Three Rivers Regional Library System. He thanked them for taking time out to come down and assist us in our planning process.
- Ms. Nichols advised that the committee had given a recap of it's initial meeting for the benefit of Ms. Walker and Mr. Schaefer.

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She advised that we were taking a look at other system's plans so that we weren't trying to reinvent the wheel. At that point copies of the committee report were handed out to the Trustees. We had a roundtable discussion and Ms. Walker and Mr. Schaefer provided useful information that we could use in the planning process. Just as a coincidence one of the books that Ms. Walker was going to suggest we use, Ms. Nichols reported that she had already requested for hold through the PINES system. She picked it up just prior to the meeting and it's called "the New Planning for Results: A Streamlined Approach" by Sandra Nelson for the Public Library Association. One item that she shared with the board was three basic assumptions that the book is built upon: (1) Excellence must be defined locally – it results when library services match community needs, interests and priorities. (2) Excellence is possible for both small and large libraries – it rests more on commitment than on unlimited resources. (3) Excellence is a moving target – even when achieved, excellence must be continually maintained. These three items really set the tone of what we are really trying to accomplish. These basic assumptions are really the whole intention of doing planning. She advised the Trustees of how lucky we were to have Ms. Burns on this committee with her background in city planning.

Ms. Nichols went on to add that there was a list from one of the books that we will be following in our process. The steps are (1) Prepare, (2) Imagine, (3) Design, (4) Build, (5) Communicate, and (6) Implement. These are listed on the handout with their tasks associated with each step. It was suggested that copies of this book be provided to all the committee members. She advised that Ms. Burns will be formulating a Glynn County 101 component, Ms. Mullis will be compiling a Library Services and Needs component and the committee are recommending these items to be available at a retreat for Saturday, September 28, 2013. Ms. Walker noted that it was very exciting for them to see how enthusiastic our Board is with this planning process and our fresh new beginning. Mr. Permar noted that in all his time on the board that we had never discussed having a strategic plan. Then there was discussion regarding the time frame for the retreat and if it would be scheduled around football season. Mr. Fisher asked about how long this "retreat" meeting lasting and it was suggested that it would be from 9am to Noon.

Library Issues:

Mr. Permar noted that he had a couple of items that he had spoken with Ms. Walker about back when we first started planning for them to come down for a meeting. One of them was the Support Fund. There have been some changes there and we have had a preliminary meeting with some of the Support Fund members. The consensus was that our existing agreement with the Support

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Fund is that it needs to be updated and renovated. We have members from the Marshes of Glynn Libraries Board, Robert Doud-Williams and members of the St. Simons Island Support Fund, Linda Muir working on making changes to the agreement. We are waiting to see what the two individuals are able to come up with. Ms. Walker added that the State would be happy to look at the document that is presented to make any comments or suggestions. She further noted that it was good that the document was being reworked since it was not entered into with the Marshes of Glynn Libraries. Mr. Permar noted that the initial document had been reviewed by past State employee Susan Roberts and he felt like it would be valuable to have their input. Some insight on the initial agreement was given by Mr. Pat Donahoo. Mr. Permar advised that the only other topic that he had was the Friends groups. He asked the audience who was here in reference to the Friends of the St. Simons Island Public Library. Two ladies from the audience raised their hands, one of which was Dee Taylor who had worked closely with the former SSIPL manager to get the group started. Mr. Permar noted that we had been talking about a friends group for the island and that they had also spoken with representatives from the St. Simons Island Literary Guild. The "Guild" had advised that they wanted to continue to remain autonomous from the Library. Mr. Permar advised that he still wanted to have a Friends of the St. Simons Island Public Library. Ms. Mullis had provided the Board with a packet titled "Libraries Need Friends – A Toolkit to Create Friends Groups or to Revitalize the One You Have". Mr. Permar referred to the handout and thought it seemed self explanatory, but wanted Ms. Walker to comment on this topic.

Ms. Walker noted that she and Ms. Mullis had spoken about this toolkit that had just been offered by the American Library Association. In her opinion it seems clear that based on other conversations that a friends group is wanted for both libraries and not just one overall for the Marshes of Glynn Libraries. She advised that in her experience that most folks are interested in supporting their own local library but it's no problem having two separate groups. There are no rules for friends groups and GPLS are only here to assist. At that time, Mr. Permar stated that he would be interested in hearing from some of the attendees in the audience. Mr. Paul Pieschel, President of the St. Simons Island Literary Guild offered to give some information regarding their group. He stated that in doing this it would give a little bit of background on how their organization evolved into being. First he asked that we not confuse them with the St. Simons Island Support Fund. Previously their organization was the friends group. They have approximately 500 members and their objective is to support the literary arts on the Island and the surrounding

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community. When you think about the literary arts the library is the first organization that comes to mind. They are an independent 501c-3 with the objective of supporting the literary arts with other organizations. They have financially supported the Ferst Foundation, the Great Read, the Imagination Room and other such organizations. Mr. Pieschel noted that he had spoken with Ms. Mullis and they would like to see a clear delineation of responsibilities and were not opposed to having a separate friends group. They have been running the books sales and utilize over 80 volunteers for that program. We can continue that program with the commitment to pledge all revenue minus expenses to the St. Simons Island Public Library. They have other fundraiser and sources of funds such as membership fees that could possibly become other donations to the Library. They run two author events a month and have a film series that runs approximately every other week. They are not in the business of managing but in the field of programming. We certainly want to be considered as fulfilling some of the functions with the Library and giving contributions.

Ms. Muir asked to make a general statement and Mr. Permar gave her the floor. She advised that she had heard a lot of talk about having another “friends” group but not a lot of clarification on how it would be different from the “Guild” in what it does and its function. She indicated that it was her opinion that everyone in the room was really dedicated to the success and sustainability and excellence of our two libraries. It is an exciting opportunity to get a fresh start and new beginning. She went on to state that it seemed like everyone is operating in a sense of goodwill and wants to do things in the very best way. She also stated that since we have a Strategic Planning meeting coming up and that she was sure that we would be discussing the stateholders and what the role and responsibilities of the friends groups are going to interrelate with the staff. How that whole community of support can be coordinated so that everybody is working towards common goals. She further advised that she would hate to see the progress that’s been made begin to fray because of misunderstanding. So it seems that the Strategic Planning session could take up the question of whether or not the St. Simons Library really needs a new separate friends group. Maybe it does and maybe it doesn’t. She advised that it might be helpful before going right to the formation of a new group to look at the “Guild” and see what they are willing to do going forward. If you look at the things you would normally see a friends group doing you see that the “Guild” is already doing a lot of those things. Maybe they do 90% of what a friends group does but they also do a lot of other stuff too. Just because they are separate and independent maybe you can have your cake and eat it too. Maybe there is a way to have the “Guild”

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function as a friends group but not under the purview of the Library. Mr. Fisher asked for clarification on the Support Fund and what it supports. Ms. Muir replied that the actual name for the organization is the St. Simons Island Public Library Support Fund Inc. It was the organization that historically operated the SSIPL. It was the organization that the previous agreement was entered into with the Library. Mr. Fisher asked where their funds came from. Ms. Muir advised that the sole purpose of the Support Fund was to support the SSIPL and the funds came from contributions over decades. The substantial funds are being maintained and cared for by the Support Fund. From time to time some of those funds are used to purchase items for the SSIPL. Ms. Campbell inquired as to if the Support Fund was still fundraising and Ms. Muir replied that it was not currently doing any active fundraising. Ms. Campbell went on to ask Mr. Pieschel how much do you think you would raise and contribute to the Library? Mr. Pieschel stated approximately \$15,000.00 annually. It was also stated from Mr. Humphries that the Guild is the name change from the old St. Simons Island Library League that was the friends group of the Island Library. He stated that they were still listed on State Library of friends as the official friends group. There was some discussion regarding the role of the Guild either as a standalone autonomous group or the official friends group of the SSIPL. Ms. Muir then went on to state that this was something for the Board to think about. With a membership roster of 500 people on a small area like SSI the question is if you form yet another group with the same objective when you already have an organization that is ready willing and able to perform the duties, who are the people that are going to have the same passion as those that are already members of the other organizations? She advised that at some point you are going to have diminished returns. She proposed that there be some sort of agreement between the Guild Board and the Library Board to see how the Guild might be able to function in a friends capacity and do the things that a friends group might do to support the Library. Mr. Pieschel went on to say that the Library is their primary focus. He feels like he and Ms. Mullis could work out some kind of agreement for the Guild to work with the Library. He did understand that given our history that both parties might want an easy exit strategy in the agreement. There was further discussion regarding the roles of both Island entities between the board members and the attendees representing the Guild and Support Fund.

Ms. Walker commented that it is really wonderful opportunity for a fresh start and she is so happy that the Libraries have so many friendly faces that want to support them and contribute. She added that whatever direction we choose to go with the SSIPL

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group is to have an agreement. She feels confident that an agreement could be worked out with Ms. Mullis and Mr. Pieschel. One thing she urged is to make sure that the Library has some idea of what is committed to them from year to year and the strings attached. She went on to say that she knew that a hard dollar figure was not really a possibility but that the Library just needed an idea of what your committing to. As long as both sides understand and agree to that she does not anticipate any issues. Mr. Schaefer added that the Director could appreciate a very clear delineation between who she can ask for for what so that she doesn't create a problem between the groups. He suggested a guide to assist the Director in who to ask for what. He did agree with Ms. Walker that an agreement could absolutely be reached between the Library and the Guild.

Ms. Mullis commented that she had already asked both groups for assistance with needs for the Libraries. She went on to say that in her conversations with representatives from both groups that she envisioned large scale donations, such as, grant matching funds coming from the Support Fund and needs such as purchase of Georgia Peach Award Books coming from the Guild. She sees them as providing more of the day to day needs of the Library. Ms. Walker pointed out that Friends groups are always good for food type needs with meetings, holiday parties, etc. because State funds can never be used for those types of needs.

Mr. Permar noted that we are working on a written agreement with the Support Fund and that he has a pretty good grasp on how all of that is set up but that we don't have any such agreement with the Guild. His concern is down the road when none of the current folks on either board are still around and someone decides that they don't want to support the library anymore. There is a ton of goodwill today but what if that goes away? The agreement is needed to make sure that both parties are protected. Mr. Fluck asked Ms. Walker what limitations and obligations are opposed on the Guild if they are the friends group. She advised that we can agree to anything we want within the purview of the county attorney. Ms. Walker did add that they have IRS regulations that they are required to follow as a friends group and that if they are under the direction of the Marshes of Glynn Libraries Board of Trustees then they have to work within the legal limitations of what the Board is required by State law to work within.

Ms. Sharp advised that there is a file that she found with information on a group of individuals that joined the Friends of the St. Simons Island Public Library. They joined for one year and there are receipts showing they paid their membership dues so technically they are still members. She added that she had no

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knowledge of what was done with their membership dues. Mr. Permar added that this was one of the reasons that he wanted to discuss this. At this point there was some discussion about what the previous manager had done to get the friends group started. It was determined that the group that was formed when we were still a part of the Three Rivers Region may need to sit down with the Guild and Ms. Mullis to figure out their role in the new Marshes of Glynn Libraries.

Ms. Turbidity volunteered to work with the Guild and help in figuring out an agreement. Ms. Nichols added that we would be looking at all of this information in outlining our stakeholders in the planning process. There was discussion regarding identifying the roles each group represents so that we know how they will fit into our plan going forth. There was further discussion from Ms. Dee Taylor who was instrumental in forming the previous friends group about what they had wanted to do in support of the Library. She commented that they just wanted to do whatever they could to help out the SSIPL.

There was further discussion regarding the possibility of the current friends joining in with the Guild to be the portion of their organization that concentrates on the SSIPL. Ms. Campbell asked the Guild representative if their donations were for both libraries and Mr. Pieschel responded that they would primarily be for the SSIPL. He added that there was already a great spirit of cooperation between the Brunswick Friends and the Guild. He also stated that he thought they raised a lot more money than the Guild was able to. Mr. Fluck asked the members of the former friends group to provide their name and contact information so that they could be contacted at a later date. Ms. Lasson advised them that she had a sign in sheet and that they could put their information on that. Ms. Nichols added that she wanted to make sure that the Strategic Planning committee was not going to become a mediator in the agreement process. Ms. Mullis stated that the friends of the SSIPL, the Guild and Library Staff would meet to discuss the next steps in the process.

Mr. Permar asked Ms. Mullis to announce that the SSIPL currently has an excess of donation books and at this moment in time we are going to donate those items to the Literary Guild for their book sale. They have agreed to donate the proceeds of that sale to the SSIPL minus the overhead costs. We are making a onetime agreement for the October book sale. Some of the books that are part of the sale were donated to the Guild and all of the proceeds will go back to the Library.

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Announcements: Mr. Permar announced that the next meeting of the Marshes of Glynn Libraries will meet on September 11, 2013 at 5:00pm in the auditorium of the Brunswick-Glynn County Library.

Ms. Lasson announced that Glynn County had the new Marshes of Glynn Libraries signage had been installed on the front on the building earlier in the day.

Mr. Permar announced that there would be Trustee Training in the auditorium tomorrow morning at 9am.

Mr. Permar adjourned the meeting.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lori Lasson.