

Regents Public Library Advisory Committee (RPLAC)

December 5, 2012

Bull Street Library, Savannah

Present at meeting:

RPLAC members:

Kathryn Ames – Athens Regional Library System (Urban/Rural Multi-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)
Daryl Fletcher – Conyers-Rockdale Library System (Urban Single County)
Claudia Gibson – Chestatee Regional Library System (Urban/Rural Multi-County)
Lecia Eubanks – Cherokee Regional Library System (Rural Multi-County)
Patricia Edwards – Jefferson County Library (Rural Single County)
Sandy Hester – Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Library (Rural Single County)

RPLAC members online:

Barry Reese – Twin Lakes Library System (Rural Single County)
Carmen Simms – Bartow County Library System (Urban Single County)

GPLS Administrative Staff:

Dr. Lamar Veatch (State Librarian)
Julie Walker (Deputy State Librarian)
Alan Harkness (Assistant State Librarian for Library Development)
Jay Turner (Director of Continuing Education)

Audience:

Anne Bowen	Kathy Griffis	Kelly Lenz	Nancy Tillinghast
Mark Cole (online)	Anne Haimes	Holly Phillips	Susan Whittle
Jennifer Durham	Laura Harrison	Darlene Price	others (?)
Nick Fogarty	Donna Howell	Richard Sanders	
Charles Gee	Christian Kruse	Steve Schaefer	

Minutes:

Minutes from October 3, 2012 were approved as read.

Old Business: none

Committee Reports: none

GPLS update:

Dr. Veatch discussed possible changes to two library systems: East Central Georgia Regional Library System and Three Rivers Regional Library System. Questions were asked regarding logistics, funding, etc. Positions allotted to each county will stay with that county, so the new, as yet unnamed systems, will have the same number of positions based on the current funding formula. Concerns were raised about other large systems breaking up in the same manner. Dr. Veatch confirmed that the moratorium on the formation of new systems is still in effect and that these were special cases in which differences could not be resolved in any other manner. GPLS will continue to support the libraries involved and the final decisions rest with the local library boards and funding agencies.

New Business:

Change to cataloging standards: This issue was referred to RPLAC from the PINES Executive Committee as it has implications for all libraries and is a part of *Requirements for Public Library Grant Funds* and a question on the Annual Report. Currently, all cataloging must be done at the regional or headquarters library level. It was established that changes will need to be made in the *Requirements* first. The entire *Requirements* document was reviewed in 2006 during a year-long process. According to K. Ames, the purpose of the original wording was most likely for financial reason as it was more economical to have one person auto-print many catalog cards for the same item instead of each library creating their own. The main concern of the PINES community is maintaining the integrity of the database, citing the recent, costly database clean-up project. A variety of concerns were expressed on both sides of the issue (those for allowing cataloging in various locations within a system and those against allowing this change). A sampling of those pro/con points follows.

Pro-change:

- Libraries who utilize pre-cat services from are already not meeting the requirement as it is currently worded.
- Cataloging “in the field” reduces the strain on courier services because fewer books need to be shuttled from location to location. As long as the cataloger is trained properly, the location of the desk isn’t important (i.e. the regional cataloger would be free to add items from any location).

- Regional or headquarter libraries can still have oversight in who is allowed to catalog at what level. Wording could be added to give the library system director discretion in the process. Original cataloging could still be done at the regional/headquarters library.
- To maintain PINES database integrity, Bin Lin and/or Elaine Hardy from PINES could issue certificates and/or maintain a list of approved catalogers and their level of authority (i.e. original or copy level).

Against change:

- It is still more efficient to have one person add many copies of the same title than to have each library/branch add their own copies. In these times, with less front-line staff, it seems more economical to continue doing everything at one location. It is easier to insure that one person is properly trained than 4 or more people.
- A trained person still needs to go through donations for each library/branch.
- Concerns were raised about making regional staff, who are already stretched thin, responsible for supervising cataloging staff out in the field.

All agreed that the two biggest concerns with any change are insuring adequately trained and supervised staff and allowing directors to have discretion in who, where and how items were cataloged. After review of item 1.2 of the *Requirements* document dated 06/2012, it was determined that the wording of the requirement was broad enough to allow change. A change may need to be made in the wording of the Annual Report question so that it conforms to the language used in the requirement. PINES policy would also need to be changed to allow for alternative cataloging locations. Suggested change to wording: "Cataloging may be allowed, at any location, by staff with proper training and oversight of the system cataloger at the discretion of the system director." GPLS staff will take these suggestions and make necessary modifications to the Annual Report question and make suggestions to the PINES Community to include a focus on proper training/oversight and allow changes to be made at the discretion of the system director.

Proposed changes to statewide LAN: Emily Almond, Director of Information Technology at GPLS, hosted several webinars regarding the upcoming change in the statewide LAN. A sampling of the questions, comments, and concerns follow.

- A. Isbell – There is no guarantee that we will save the expected 1.9 million. There are some libraries who have already taken the step of leaving the state network but there were no real test cases. Some libraries have great coverage and some barely have residential coverage. E-rate will be much more complex than for other services (i.e. phone service). It's distressing to talk about hiring someone to help make this transition work when we have no guarantee of savings.
- D. Howell – Mountain Regional has already branched out on its own but there are still many concerns with the process. Staff positions have already been depleted by state cuts and now there will be added responsibilities of monitoring a network, providing filtering, and insuring that everything is working smoothly. The network is the backbone of all that is done including PINES, GALILEO, etc. If further state cuts are passed down, it would mean the loss of technology staff and it will be impossible to add these responsibilities with no tech staff. Other concerns include consistency of services and user experiences, especially within PINES.
- S. Schaefer – Some have great access to services (i.e. TVA in some areas) while others don't. There may not be a market solution for some libraries. While market solutions do exist with the current carriers (AT&T & Georgia Public Web), libraries will be trading in AT&T (or GPW) with state assistance for AT&T without state assistance.
- D. Howell – Loss of network monitoring, filtering, and support are big concerns for moving away from the statewide network. The extra bandwidth is great and for a fairly reasonable price. The cost in two counties is \$250 per month/ pre e-rate for 10 megs for fiber; \$30 after e-rate.
- Dr. Veatch – These concerns are all valid and will be addressed. The state will offer assistance to libraries who need extra "muscle" to get the local project going. Kirk Carver and his IT group have committed to helping with this process. The bottom line is that the current model is unsustainable with no additional money. OPB is still committed to keeping that IT money in the budget, especially since it is the bulk of matching funds for LSTA. The future of e-rate is uncertain. With the new model, libraries should be able to get a better price locally.
- S. Whittle – Is the University System moving to this model? If so, can we be added on?
- Veatch – No, the University System only has 32 campuses to provide service to so libraries would be way down the list. BOR is committed to taking on school systems.
- Entire room – many dissenting voices and opinions were expressed!
- J. Walker – BOR will be using the same model with school systems, finding local providers. Libraries were a part of the initial plan and waited 14 months with no change. Immediate needs for more bandwidth from libraries prompted GPLS to move forward without BOR.
- A. Isbell – The current model may not last long into the future. With surges in wireless delivery via cell phone towers, etc., spending millions of dollars on something that won't last is concerning.

- Veatch – The library in Habersham County just made the move to a local provider at a cost of \$99 per month. GPLS was paying approximately \$450, post e-rate per T1 line. Changing the model now will make libraries more nimble and able to adapt to future changes.
- J. Walker – GPLS is not getting out of the IT business. Plans are still being made to deploy a statewide “Geek Squad” to assist libraries with technology issues.
- J. Durham, et. al. – Assistance is needed in coming up with an RFP and assessing the bids as to what is acceptable and what is not. Using a local provider could be good marketing to tie into to “Go Local” initiatives. A clearing house of information would be helpful, with info ranging from how much each system pays to what constitutes a reasonable bid and reasonable services.
- S. Whittle – 28 counties in Southeast Georgia already utilize a “Geek” man, Shannon Smith, to provide IT services. This consortium could be used as a model for others.
- N. Fogarty – What is the time table?
- J. Walker and Dr. Veatch – GPLS will be hiring a consultant in January. Those systems who have already made the change can expect reimbursement to begin in January. GPLS will continue providing service until the library system gives the go-ahead to “turn off” the T1 lines. OPB already supports a fourth grant line item for IT.

Issues with Regional Constitutions and Bylaws: All constitutions and bylaws submitted are now available online.

The inquiries were just surveys and information gathering, not to suggest changes.

Statewide Publicity Plan: Requests have been made for more help from David Baker, GPLS Communications Director, in preparing more items for publicity and branding. Requests were made to have some of these in black and white (not grayscale) for ease of copying. J. Walker stated that there would be a program on that topic at the directors meeting.

Return on Investment for Library Services: There was much discussion on the need for a way to express the value of public libraries, on the local level and on the state level. Various comments included:

- Need to highlight economic impact of libraries not just savings
- Develop outcome based package that demonstrates how libraries change lives; follow up is needed to show the value of some services (i.e. did the resume prepared with assistance from library staff lead to a job for the patron.); Need to reinvent ourselves for the future, show how we can compete with Google
- Need good graphics to show how we got where we are today, showing how loss of library funding equals library closings
- New branding opportunity (LibraryAware) will be presented at directors meeting and publicity will be on GA Council Agenda
- Need to change the perception that libraries are becoming obsolete and shouldn't be funded at the same levels
- Each library should find their niche in their communities (i.e. Lee County Library is seen as a conference center)

GPLS Strategic Plan: Appreciation was expressed for the 150 + attendees of the planning workshops. Information gathered at these workshops will help GPLS form the basis of the Plan. RPLAC should serve as the editorial board for the Plan by helping to tweak the wording when necessary. The Plan will show what GPLS is doing and where funding is going at the state level. The Plan should begin on a local level by answering questions like: “Why are the 400 libraries across the state important to their communities and what is their purpose?” and “What is the purpose of the 21st century library?” GPLS can then move in the direction of those areas identified as important. The Plan shouldn't be about GPLS but articulate why libraries are important and how GPLS can support local libraries (i.e. via statewide branding, tech support, library board development, core services, etc.). Focus could be on education, life-long learning, access to technology and improving these resources across the state. A tentative timeline of 6 months has been established, with a completion date of July 1, 2013. The document should be succinct and tie into the Governor's plan. A. Isbell charged each RPLAC member with bringing back bullet points on what libraries do and the benefits to their local communities.

Other topics: Questions were raised about restoring state-paid librarians to the teacher pay scale by reinstating step increases. J. Walker stated that it wouldn't happen this year but GPLS has been given permission to ask for enough funding to bring everyone up to date maybe next September. Several expressed how the important of having state-paid librarians back on the teachers' pay scale, not only as a recruiting tool but also because librarians are becoming more and more the “teachers of the community” and supporting schools is a big part of what we do.

A doodle poll will be sent out to plan the next meeting, possibly in conjunction with the next PINES Executive committee meeting. A tentative location was set for the State Archives in Morrow.

On a motion for L. Eubanks, seconded by several, the meeting was adjourned. Meeting adjourned at 11:49 a.m.