Library Advisory Council Meeting Minutes January 19, 2017

This meeting was held by conference call and was called to order by Mike Richman at 10:00 AM.

Members present were: Amy Olsen, Jennifer Hart, Sara Blow, Paul Putnam, Mike Charron, Pam Durant, Tom Frank, Bob Lanoue, Tracy Roux, Linda Goodspeed, Barbara Buchanan, and Mike Richman.

The minutes for the October meeting were read by Amy. Bob made a motion to accept them as read, and the motion was seconded by Mike Charron.

Mike then introduced the council’s three new members: Pam Durant, Tom Frank, and Bob Lanoue. Pam said that she had been in Vermont since 1990 and really appreciated the services provided by the special needs library. Tom told the group that he is now president of the VABVI board of directors and serves as a trustee of the Milton Public Library. He said that when Scott was hired the library was in turmoil and that it was in great shape when Scott left. Bob said that he has been blind for sixteen years and now serves on the VABVI board. The talking book program was his first positive experience, and he likes giving back for the services he has received.

Mike announced that BARD Express is now available. Users just have to download the program.

Mike then introduced Scott Murphy. Scott told the group that his official title was Assistant State Librarian for Library Advancement. He will oversee the Special Services Consultant. The job posting will go out next week and will be advertised for five weeks. Scott said his primary focus will be hiring staff for now. There are two candidates being considered for Jennifer’s position, and Scott hopes to fill this job in two weeks. He is hoping Jennifer will stay for another two weeks to help train the new person. Scott also confirmed that Marty Reid was not reappointed. He ended by telling the group that he will fight to keep the State Library. He said that some services might change but that the Department will remain.

Jennifer reported that Utah uses prisoners to record books. They have a recording studio in one of the prisons and get their books produced at no cost to the library. She also said that she and Scott are considering the possibility of sharing books with the CNIB Library since one of our library’s users requested some books in French. Scott added that he liked the idea of working with Corrections and thought it would be a good project for our new Special Services Consultant. Mike then brought the new members up-to-date regarding the Library’s program for recording books by Vermont authors.

Scott then said it would be a great idea to invite one of our legislators to a meeting to make our representatives more aware of the needs of our program. When he asked who would be the best choice, Amy said that she would be attending a legislative breakfast soon and will mention the Department of Libraries.

There was then a discussion about how Vermont’s public libraries could better serve people with special needs in their communities. Mike Charron said that he would be glad to advise libraries how to make their space more accessible. Pam said that if the libraries’ web sites were more accessible blind and visually impaired patrons could find out more about what each library offered and listen to information available on these web sites. Tom suggested that computer training for people with special needs should be available at the public libraries. It was also agreed that each library should have someone trained to help show special needs people how to download books from the BARD web site. Amy pointed out that many libraries use volunteers almost exclusively so the training would have to be ongoing. She also said that this issue had been discussed at many of our meetings and that perhaps our new consultant could get it back on the agenda.

Jennifer asked if everyone would email her their phone numbers and email addresses so that she could prepare a new member list. Mike said that our next meeting would be Thursday, April 20 at 10:00 AM in the conference room at the Berlin library. He will bring coffee and goodies.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Barbara Buchanan, Secretary