

Meeting of the Working Group on the Status of Libraries in Vermont

Topic: Report Writing

October 13, 2023, 9:03am to 11:09am

Meeting Minutes

Working Group members present: Maria Avery, Catherine Delneo, Denise Hersey, Kelly McCagg, Karen McCalla, Susan O'Connell, Wendy Sharkey

Department of Libraries staff members present: Tom McMurdo, Janette Schaffer, Josh Muse, April Shaw, Lauren Kelley, Karen Gravlin, Joy Worland, Jonathan Clark, Lilly Talbert, Kevin Unrath, Gina Hruban

Guests present: Margaret Woodruff, Charlotte Public Library Director

Link to Recording: *(coming soon)*

Call to Order [00:00:09]

Working Group Chair Catherine Delneo called the meeting to order at 9:03am.

Roll call of the Working Group members and Department of Libraries staff in attendance.

As a reminder to the public and Working group members, the Working Group website can be found here: <https://libraries.vermont.gov/services/initiatives-and-projects/working-group-status-libraries-vermont>

Written comments can be found at: <https://libraries.vermont.gov/services/initiatives-and-projects/working-group-status-libraries-vermont/written-comments-working>

General Public Comment [00:05:05]

Delneo called for public comment.

Margaret Woodruff, Director of the Charlotte Public Library, shared comments on the Staffing and Salaries Survey created by the Working Group. Woodruff conveyed that the duties performed by library staff at different institutions can vary and that it is important to bear that in mind when comparing staff salaries across institutions.

Delneo clarified that the Staffing and Salaries Survey is the product of the Working Group, and not the Department.

Delneo explained that the Staffing and Salaries Survey questions and broad job descriptions were developed cooperatively by the Working Group members in public meetings and recognized that the job descriptions of specific positions at individual libraries likely do not match exactly.

Approval of Minutes [00:18:02]

Possible action to approve minutes of the Working Group meeting of September 22, 2023.

Supporting document:

https://libraries.vermont.gov/sites/libraries/files/documents/2023_09_22_Minutes_Working%20Group_Draft.pdf

No changes to the minutes were requested.

Wendy Sharkey made a motion to approve the minutes. Karen McCall seconded the motion.

Delneo called for a vote to approve the September 22, 2023 meeting minutes as written. Seven members voted in favor; the motion passed unanimously.

Report Writing Review [00:20:42]

Delneo shared an update on the Working Group report writing.

Working Group members were provided with drafts of all the chapters of the report prior to the meeting and had provided feedback to the Chair directly prior to the meeting.

Delneo provided information on the feedback comments that have been documented and accepted and integrated into the report.

Delneo shared the report approvals received from each Working Group member:

Christopher Kaufman Ilstrup gave full approval of delivering the full Working Group report as written to the legislature via email.

Karen McCalla reviewed all chapters and gave full approval of the report with no revisions suggested.

Kelly McCagg suggested revisions in several chapters, those changes have been accepted and incorporated into the report.

Maria Avery reviewed all the chapters and gave full approval of the report with no revisions suggested.

Susan O'Connell suggested revisions for the Continuing Education, Technology, and Staffing chapters. Those revisions have been accepted and incorporated into the report.

Wendy Sharkey gave full approval of the report.

Denise Hersey gave full approval of the report.

Jeannette Bair gave full approval of the report.

Meg Allison gave full approval of the report.

Andy Kolovos had suggested minor edits via email on October 12th (unable to attend the meeting.)

The group discussed suggested revisions that were more substantive in nature and came to consensus as follows:

Structures and Organizations chapter:

Vermont's municipal public libraries were typically formed by municipalities to provide library services. (It should be noted that Vermont has traditionally had "community libraries," which are municipal libraries that are housed in schools and serve as school libraries. The number of community libraries has decreased significantly and only a few of that type of combined school/public library remain. These combined school/public community libraries fall within the municipal library category. There are also some public libraries in Vermont that are *not* joined public/school libraries but have the word community in their name.)

Also, the following revision was agreed upon:

Finally, the Working Group heard that in addition to a common desire to consolidate some aspects of their operations, Vermonters also value the independence of their public libraries and the ability to respond quickly to community needs. In other words, the Working Group heard from Vermonters that they desire *both* the freedom of independent control and the unity of shared systems."

Executive Summary:

Online resources, meanwhile, can be ephemeral as libraries must continually pay to maintain access to them and their availability from publishers can change over time.

Social Services Chapter:

The group agreed on the following revision:

Certainly not all unhoused Vermonters suffer from addiction and mental illness, nor are all those suffering from addiction or mental illness homeless. However, these factors, independently or in combination, cause widespread impacts on libraries. The housing crisis in Vermont, in conjunction with Vermont's overtaxed, often geographically limited network of social service providers, means that not all those in need can find assistance. Public libraries, as safe, warm, free spaces, often become a refuge for those without homes. Weber and Smathers outline the challenges their institutions face in response to the needs of their unhoused patrons who suffer with mental illness. Testimony from Hysko echoed much of what Weber and Smathers shared and also described the strong local support system available to the Brownell Library and the training opportunities open to the staff, highlighting the great variation in resources across Vermont.

Recommendations to Department regarding the Minimum Standards for Vermont Public Libraries, no changes.

Delneo asked the group if they had any further questions or comments to discuss about the Working Group report. There were no questions or comments.

Wendy Sharkey made a motion to submit the Working Group report as written with the approved revisions.

Denise Hersey seconded the motion.

Catherine Delneo called on each member to state their vote. The Working Group members voted as follows:

Maria Avery: in favor of the motion.

Catherine Delneo: in favor of the motion.

Denise Hersey: in favor of the motion.

Kelly McCagg: in favor of the motion.

Karen McCall: in favor of the motion.

Susan O'Connell: in favor of the motion.

Wendy Sharkey: in favor of the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Lilly Talbert shared the final format of the report with the Working Group.

Catherine Delneo suggested moving the Working Group meeting scheduled for November 17 regarding the presentation of the report to the public to early December. The group agreed to move the meeting to early December, exact date to be determined.

Adjournment [02:05:55]

Catherine Delneo adjourned the meeting at 11:09am.