**Vermont Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped**

**Vermont Department of Libraries**

**Library Advisory Council Minutes**

**October 29, 2015**

**Midstate Library Service Center, Berlin**

Mike Richman called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. Members present were: Amy Olsen, Mike Richman, Paul Putnam, Dan Norris, Walter Taylor, and Barbara Buchanan. Library staff present were: Jennifer Hart, Sara Blow, Michael Roche, and State Librarian Martha Reid. No one participated by conference call.

Election: Mike said we needed to decide the makeup of the committee for the next two years. Dan said that the organizational representatives could not hold elected positions. He said that the two officers must be library users, and the organizational members should be appointed by their respective organizations. Mike suggested that we should restart the rotation with five people serving a two-year term and the other five serving for one year. He stated that when your term ends you cannot serve again for two years. If someone misses three consecutive meetings, that person is off the committee. It was decided that Mike Richman, Barbara Buchanan, Amy Olsen, Paul Putnam, and Dan Norris would serve two-year terms. Walter Taylor, Linda Goodspeed, Linda Gustafson, Paula Stevens, and Amber Fulcher would all serve one -year terms. Mike agreed to remain chairman, and Barbara will be secretary.

Jennifer’s Report: Jennifer told the committee that a new recording booth was arriving at the library today. The booth is being funded by both federal and state funds. It will be assembled in two weeks, and a celebration is planned.

Jennifer said that “High-Altitude Woman” by Jan Reynolds has just been put in circulation. She said that all six of the books recorded by our volunteers will be on the WEB OPAC by November or December. The library lost both South Burlington volunteer monitors; however, both have been replaced and new recruits are now being trained.

The Android app for BARD has been available for two months. Hours for walk-in customers at the Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped have been changed to Tuesday through Thursday, 9:30am to 3pm. Jennifer sent out over 1,000 copies of the fall newsletter and plans to send out two newsletters each year. The spring newsletter for 2016 will contain a patron satisfaction survey.

The stats are as follows for FFY 2015: 249 patrons were added and 256 were cancelled. Approximately 55,000 books were sent out. Total circulation, which also includes BARD downloads and interlibrary loans, was approximately 66,000.

Ira Chomsky, one of VABVI’s vision rehab therapists, conducted some recorded interviews with his clients to find out how popular the talking book service was. The results were very positive. People said that they were reading more and that the machines were very easy to use. Other comments were that the selection of reading material was tremendous and that the staff was pleasant.

Martha Reid’s Report: First, Martha commended Jennifer and Sara for the mountain of work they manage to get through every day with very little assistance. She said that she had just returned from the fall meeting of state librarians which was held in New Jersey. Karen Keninger, head of NLS, talked about BARD and said she was always looking for new technology. She also mentioned the local recording programs and commended their excellent quality.

Martha said that Vermont just got a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The grant is for the Vermont Early Literacy Initiative. It is to serve as a national model for training public librarians to introduce physical science to young children. Four state library employees recently took advantage of a retirement incentive offered by the state. Martha does not know yet whether these positions can be refilled, but she said there will be no more staff cuts this FY at the Special Services Unit.

Ad Hoc Committee Report: Amy said that the committee met twice. Everyone agreed that the Special Services Library should have a new name. Amber came up with Universal Access Library of Vermont. They also suggested a new logo, perhaps an open book with an equal access sign and the words “so all may read.” The committee also thinks that a new sign should be created for our new name, and that the sign should be in front of the library. Jennifer said that the library does not have much control over signs. In order to rebrand the library, public service radio ads should be created and success stories from library patrons should go out soon. Amy said that the committee thought the Library should take advantage of social media more often and that we should get the word out on You Tube. Jennifer said that the library has a Facebook account. It was also suggested that the library should contract with a professional to create a logo. Mike asked if the committee could give some information to Jennifer for the next newsletter.

Amy said that she emails a report to all libraries with information about our meetings. The group talked about involving the libraries more with our program. Some suggestions were: making sure each library has equipment used by blind and visually impaired library patrons and train the library staff to provide some assistance if needed. Jennifer said that she occasionally gets referrals from local libraries. She also said that visually impaired and blind users should be able to go online at the libraries and read magazines. It was suggested that a panel including people from the LAC get together to discuss more local library involvement. Other suggestions were to have a brochure designed to put in doctors’ offices and producing a video for Public Access Television. Martha told the group that the name would have to go through the state for approval. Mike said we would follow up with these ideas at the next meeting.

Unified English Braille: This new system will be used worldwide by all blind readers who use English Braille. Many contraction rules have been changed, and nine contractions have been deleted. Dan thinks the total transition from the current code to the new UEB code will take about twenty years. Anyone wanting a copy of the new contraction book can order it from Jennifer. UEB will take effect on January 4, 2016, Louis Braille’s 207th birthday.

Jennifer said that she and Aidan were going to meet with a volunteer who has 25 years of sound editing experience. They are hoping that he will take over the job of sound editor.

Mike said the next meeting would be on Thursday, January 21, from 10am to noon. It will be a conference call meeting. Some suggested topics include: a follow-up on the launching of UEB and possibly inviting Karen Keninger to our April meeting.

Guest Speaker: Mike asked Walter to introduce Lisa Ehrlich who is the Visual Impairment Service Team Coordinator for the Veterans Administration Hospital in White River Junction. Lisa told the group about the center located in West Haven, Connecticut which provides rehab services and adaptive equipment to blind and visually impaired veterans on the east coast. Blinded veterans who receive these services at home are served by VABVI and the New Hampshire Association for the Blind. Lisa said that she is the one who fills out applications for talking book service. She said that 40% to 50% of her clients probably use talking books. She has also found that veterans with traumatic brain injuries enjoy using talking books. She would like to see a couple of machines in each of the facilities throughout the state. Mike said that Lisa and Jennifer should talk about where machines are needed. Lisa said that demographics predict that 40% of the veteran population will probably have problems with vision in the future. She said that there are many good programs for veterans, there is transitional housing provided and one veterans home run by each state.

Mike thanked Lisa for her presentation and invited her to stay for the yearly staff appreciation luncheon.

The meeting was then adjourned at 11:25 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Barbara Buchanan, Secretary