

**Department of Libraries**  
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## VERMONT BOARD OF LIBRARIES

### MINUTES OF MEETING - DRAFT

April 11, 2023

10:00 a.m. – 12:31 p.m.

Meeting Conducted Virtually via Microsoft Teams and onsite at the Office of the Department of Libraries, 60 Washington Street, Suite 2, Barre, VT 05641

**Board Members in Attendance:** Tom Frank (Chair), Adriene Katz (Vice Chair), Maxie Ewins, Deb Granquist, Bruce Post, Linda Saarnijoki, James Saunders

#### Others Present:

Catherine Delneo (State Librarian, Commissioner of Libraries and Secretary to the Board), Tom McMurdo, Josh Muse, April Shaw, Janette Shaffer, Gina Hruban

**Call to Order: [00:00:00]** Chair Tom Frank called the meeting to order at 10:00am.

**Roll Call:** Chair Tom Frank took roll call.

#### Changes to Agenda: [00:01:24]

Linda Saarnijoki requested an update on the recruitment of new board members during the State Librarian's report.

#### Public Comment: [00:01:50]

There was no public comment.

#### Approval of Minutes of Board Meeting from January 10, 2023: [00:02:11]

Discussion by the Board of minor corrections.

Deborah Granquist moved to approve the minutes as corrected.

Linda Saarnijoki seconded the motion.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2023 meeting as corrected.

**State Librarian's Report: [00:09:11]**

Supporting document:

[https://libraries.vermont.gov/sites/libraries/files/AboutUs/Board/Supporting\\_Documents/2023\\_04\\_11\\_StateLibrariansReport\\_v2.pdf](https://libraries.vermont.gov/sites/libraries/files/AboutUs/Board/Supporting_Documents/2023_04_11_StateLibrariansReport_v2.pdf)

State Librarian Catherine Delneo provided a summary of information from the State Librarian's Report dated April 11, 2023 and shared that seven applicants have submitted materials in response to the recruitment announcement for new Board of Libraries members. The candidates represent many regions of the state. Catherine Delneo and Chair Tom Frank will review the applications and make recommendations to the Governor's office staff. Catherine thanked the Board members for their patience with the recruitment and thanked those who had served additional time for their support in her first year as State Librarian.

The State Librarian took questions from members of the Board.

Bruce Post complimented and expressed appreciation on the redesign of the Department of Libraries' website. He said that it's now easier to navigate and locate information.

Bruce Post about the Annual Public Library Survey and the rate of returns to date. Catherine called on Department of Libraries Technology Consultant Josh Muse for response. Josh replied that approximately one-third of the surveys have been returned to the Department to date. Josh added that he expects many more surveys to be returned closer to the deadline of April 15<sup>th</sup>.

Bruce Post asked Catherine for insight into why Vermont is typically ranked in the bottom three states for participation in the survey. Catherine replied that some of Vermont's libraries are so small, are open so few hours, and have such small staffing that it likely feels overwhelming for the director to gather the data that they need for the survey. Also, because the Department of Libraries does not have direct authority over Vermont public libraries it can only ask and not require libraries to complete the survey. Some states have a requirement for completing the survey for granting purposes, which results in a higher survey return rate.

Catherine called on Janette Shaffer, who extended an invitation to the board members to attend the Vermont Book Awards ceremony which will be held on Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup> at the Vermont College of Fine Arts in Montpelier.

Maxie Ewins thanked Catherine and the Department staff for their participation at the VLA (Vermont Library Association) conference in Burlington on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Maxie said it was an excellent conference with many topics and she greatly enjoyed it. Adrienne Katz, who also attended, commented that it was a good idea to combine public libraries and school libraries at one conference.

James Saunders asked Janette Shaffer if the Vermont College of Fine Arts (VCFA) will continue to be involved in the annual Vermont Book Awards. Janette replied that we understand VCFA plans to continue to be a partner to the



Department and Vermont Humanities in the awards.

James Saunders commented about the issue of Vermont State College (VSC) administration's decision to eradicate VSC physical book collections and move to an all-digital format. James asked if the Board wants to issue a statement about this issue.

James asked Catherine Delneo if any information is available on what VSC plans to do with the physical collections and if the board should issue a statement.

Catherine replied that the Department of Libraries was not consulted by the state colleges as they developed their plans related to their libraries and has not seen a formal plan. Catherine also indicated that the State College Libraries are not in the purview of the Department, and that the Department and the Administration have not taken a position on this matter. Catherine shared that the Legislature seems very aware of this topic and that some questions related to it have come up during her testimony on the Department's budget and a miscellaneous education bill.

Bruce Post asked Catherine Delneo about her sense of Vermont and its libraries now that she has been State Librarian for over a year. Catherine replied that she has visited 50 public libraries and two academic libraries, and it is really difficult to offer a generalized statement about Vermont libraries because each library is locally controlled. There is a good deal of variation from community to community. Through the visits and the Working Group some common themes have emerged, particularly from small and rural libraries that have shared concerns about the level of financial support they receive.

The Board discussed the topic of library funding.

**Working Group Update: [01:06:35]**

Catherine Delneo shared a presentation on the activities of the Working Group on the Status of Libraries in Vermont and took questions from members of the Board.

Supporting document:

[https://libraries.vermont.gov/sites/libraries/files/AboutUs/Board/Supporting\\_Documents/Working\\_GroupUpdate\\_BOL\\_041123\\_v3.pdf](https://libraries.vermont.gov/sites/libraries/files/AboutUs/Board/Supporting_Documents/Working_GroupUpdate_BOL_041123_v3.pdf)

The Board discussed common challenges for libraries including providing benefits for staff, staff training, and how to support the public's social service needs.

The Board discussed the challenges of the wide scope of the Working Group and the significant amount of time and energy it has required from Department staff.



**Capital Projects: [01:45:00]**

Catherine Delneo shared the Capital Projects presentation and took questions from members of the Board.

Supporting document:

[https://libraries.vermont.gov/sites/libraries/files/AboutUs/Board/Supporting\\_Documents/Capital%20Projects%20Presentation%20for%20BOL%2004%2011%202023.pdf](https://libraries.vermont.gov/sites/libraries/files/AboutUs/Board/Supporting_Documents/Capital%20Projects%20Presentation%20for%20BOL%2004%2011%202023.pdf)

The Board discussed aspects of grant funding and also the Needs Assessment form and information.

**Adjournment: [02:01:56]**

Prior to the adjournment, Linda Saarnijoki asked if the Board would like to act on suggestion issue a statement about VSC's decision to remove their libraries' physical collections that James Saunders had raised earlier in the meeting.

The Board discussed different ideas on how to respond to VSC's decision and identified that it has a limited purview in this matter, specifically that the Board of Libraries can advise the State Librarian on the Department's plans to mitigate its response to VSC's decisions.

The Board discussed the possibility of scheduling a special meeting on May 9<sup>th</sup> to determine how they want to respond to VSC's decision.

Chair Frank reminded the Board that the meeting had run long and indicated that a special meeting might not be necessary.

Bruce Post moved to adjourn the meeting. Maxie Ewins seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 12:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Catherine Delneo, Secretary of the Board

Time stamp to reflect [Hours: Minutes; Seconds] in the meeting recording.

