

A regular meeting of the West Virginia Library Commission was held on Wednesday, October 23, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. at Louis Bennett Memorial Library in Weston, WV.

Quorum Call:

Present: Chair Charlie Morris, Commissioner Debra Sullivan, Commissioner Adam Gissy, Commissioner Randall Reid-Smith.

Present via ZOOM: Vice Chair Beth Hammers.

Absentee: Commissioner Chris Rockenstein, Commissioner Carrie Abraham.

Call to Order:

A quorum being present, Chair Charlie Morris called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m..

Approval of July 24, 2024, Meeting Minutes: Chair Charlie Morris asked for a motion to approve the minutes and dispense with their reading. Commissioner Randall Reid-Smith made the motion and Commissioner Debra Sullivan seconded it. The motion carried. Minutes approved.

Financial Report and Purchasing Card Report:

Presented by Brent Epling, Library Section Administrative Services Director

- Report included the budget vs. actual financial report and purchasing card reports for the Library Section ending September 30, 2024.
- The final month of the federal fiscal year is September, making spending down the federal LSTA grant issued at the beginning of FFY 2023 one of the Library Section's top financial priorities. This goal was accomplished by awarding reimbursement grants to library consortia for cataloging and automation expenses and by acquiring digital resources for statewide access. The Library Section continues to offer programs such as Tutor.com, Miss Humblebee's Academy, and National Geographic Kids.
- Brent Epling thanked all the libraries who responded to the section's requests for amendments to final reports for old grants. Library Section staff members recognize the efforts, and Tandra English made efforts to help achieve compliance with the State Auditor's Office.
- As mentioned in the July report, most of the funds the Library Section returned to the state at the end of FY 2024 were from lines relating to personnel. Continued efforts to fill agency vacancies will help close this gap in FY 2025.
- The agency's purchasing card report was presented for approval. The report is for first quarter state FY25. July, August, September.

Commissioner Debra Sullivan asked if it is possible to get the percentage of expenses in order to compare with last FY 2023. Commissioner Randall Reid-Smith asked Brent Epling to present that information at the next meeting.

Chair Charlie Morris asked for a motion to approve both reports; Commissioner Randall Reid-Smith moved to accept the reports, and Commissioner Debra Sullivan seconded. The motion carried. Reports approved.

Director's Report:

Presented by Donna Calvert, Library Section Director

- Donna Calvert and Sarah Marzouk staffed a display table for the Center for the Book at the National Book Festival in Washington, D.C. on August 23rd.
- Gretchen Fry of Martinsburg-Berkeley County Public Library and Christy Hagerty of Shepherdstown Public Library assisted the Library Section with the Appalachian Heritage Writers in Residence Heritage Week activities September 20 to 27.
- The Library Section participated in the West Virginia Book Festival presented by Kanawha County Public Library and the Library Foundation of Kanawha County and held on October 19 at the Charleston Civic Center. Donna Calvert introduced a poet, Clint Bowman, from North Carolina for his program at the festival.
- Family Read Week is being held November 10-17. Posters were mailed to the libraries on October 21. Thanks to Terri McDougal at Kanawha County Public Library for providing the theme: Bringing West Virginia Families Together. Library Section staff Pam McGee, Jimmy White, and Sarah Marzouk worked together to design the poster, family guide and library toolkit.
- Library Section employee Monica Keeney is working on the Annual Public Library Survey aka Bibliostat and the agency's Statistical Report.
- There have been unforeseen problems with some of the Library Facilities Improvement Grants. Director Donna Calvert consulted with Commissioner Randall Reid-Smith about these issues and then relayed the information via Zoom to Roane County Public Library, Martinsburg-Berkeley County Public Library, Kingwood Public Library, and Louis Bennett Memorial Library.
- A structural engineer has determined that the foundation of Roane County Public Library is safe, but the concrete floor has dropped three inches. The bathroom cannot be renovated until the foundation issue is resolved. Commissioner Randall Reid-Smith asked if the Roane County Commission can meet with him on October 24th.
- When contractors replaced the HVAC system at Martinsburg-Berkeley County Public Library, they sprayed in the fire retardant, which contaminated the lights with asbestos. The library is looking into the possibility for an asbestos abatement grant. Commissioner Randall Reid-Smith says he is looking into other options as well.
- Sarah Palfrey, Director of Morgantown Public Library, reported the basement at Kingwood Public Library flooded because the foundation sits on a natural spring. The first round estimate is \$50,000 for repairs.
- Louis Bennett Public Library: old brick mortar has deteriorated and a wall has partially collapsed. The roof and gutters need to be replaced. Estimates are \$70,000 for the roof and \$30,000 for the gutter. The Gingerbread trim needs to be restored. Commissioner Randall Reid-Smith said Steubenville University could possibly use this as a training project. Director Katrina Johnson states the wall repairs will cost \$5,000. Commissioner Randall Reid-Smith will contact Jenna Green, Dept. of Arts Program Coordinator, to fast track a grant up to \$10,000 for emergencies available for historic sites.

New Business:

WV Office of Technology:

Bryant Reynolds, Service Desk Manager for the WV Office of Technology (WVOT). Bryant Reynolds was filling in for Donnie Patterson. Bryant did not have any information to share but would relay back to WVOT any questions and concerns the Commission had.

Chair Charlie Morris asked for an update on WVOT's work with the libraries, including any issues the Commission should be made aware of. Bryant Reynolds offered to comment on the service desk tickets, but again, stated he was unable to comment on issues outside of his field of work.

Library Section Director Donna Calvert said there are concerns with our ongoing projects such as Deep Freeze reboot refresh software, cabling project, and a need to come up with a bid for telecommunications next year. Bryant Reynolds said he is not able to comment on any of those issues, but he will relay them.

Commissioner Debra Sullivan asked how long, on average, does it take for WVOT to respond to libraries' requests for help. Bryant Reynolds replied that it depends upon the severity assigned to the ticket; WVOT has five severity levels. Level 1 is urgent, response times are also dictated by the technician's workload.

Secretary Randall Reid-Smith asked Bryant Reynolds what a good guesstimate would be on response times, Bryant Reynolds was unable to give specifics. Commissioner Randall Reid-Smith asked if Bryant could get someone at WVOT on the phone now during the meeting to answer the Commissioner's questions since this has been an ongoing situation.

Chair Charlie Morris wants to add a comment here. Chair Charlie Morris says that when he listens to what libraries tell him, technology is always a frustration. Every time we have one of these meetings we get a report, we have conversations, and I walk away, and I don't know anything more when I leave the meeting than when I came in. I simply don't understand why we have frustration in the system, and would like to know a plan of how we fix it. Who at WVOT do we talk to about that?

Bryant Reynolds responds that Donnie Patterson would be the person to work with on that. Bryant Reynolds adds that he doesn't have it on hand right now but they can get some numbers on service desk ticket response times. Chair Charlie Morris comments It would be nice to have a consistent response from the office of technology when we have these meetings.

Commissioner Adam Gissy asked how many service calls WVOT received from libraries, for the month of September, how many service calls did you have to field? Bryant Reynolds said he can get that information to the Commission soon.

Commissioner Debra Sullivan asked if the WVOT works with other state government agencies, not just the libraries. Bryant Reynolds replied that, yes, that is correct, the WVOT supports everyone that is on the executive domain. Commissioner Debra Sullivan comments as a reminder that technicians used to be located within the Library Commission but those technicians have since moved into the WVOT.

Library Section Director Donna Calvert stated that there are some deadlines approaching like the internet filter so that the Library Section can qualify for E-rate. Chair Charlie Morris comments that these same topics have been discussed at prior meetings.

Commissioner Debra Sullivan commented that when the library technicians were moved into WVOT, the Commissioners at the time pushed back on the move but no one listened to them. Commissioner Randall Reid-Smith commented that he had been given permission to hire five technicians back but it is not going anywhere and that was a year and half ago and that it needs to be done by January.

Commissioner Randall Reid-Smith has been texting with the Cabinet Secretary and advised that the response was that he would speak with Heather Abbott - CIO, WVOT. Commissioner Randall Reid-Smith comments that he would go to the Governor's Office because Heather never helps. Chair Charlie Morris thanks Bryant Reynolds for joining the meeting and listening to the concerns and frustrations. Director Donna Calvert thanks to WVOT field Tech Kenny Martin for setting up the meeting.

WVU Institute for Policy Research and Public Affairs - Library Project:

Chair Charlie Morris said as he was reviewing the applications for the first round of facility grants, it became apparent to him that there is an overwhelming need for facilities. About two years ago, West Virginia University established an Institute for Public Policy. Charlie Morris met with Sam Workman, Director of WVU Institute for Policy Research and Public Affairs, and WVU Senior Advisor to the President, Jay Cole.

Charlie Morris has asked for their help in identifying public policy issues for the public libraries in the state. The Institute agreed to take the project on at no cost. Sam Workman will lead the project, which will encompass facilities and any other issues that arise during their research.

The project will have three phases: data collection, which Donna Calvert is working on; research into how other states handle their public policies; and interviews to provide input from as many people in the state as possible, starting with the WV Library Association. The project starts immediately and should be completed by late winter or spring. It will provide recommendations regarding the structure of library support and funding of libraries.

WVOT Continued:

Commissioner Randall Reid-Smith has John McHugh, Secretary for the Department of Administration, on the phone joining the meeting. Secretary John McHugh comments that he wants to specifically understand the Commission's frustrations with the WVOT. Chair Charlie Morris commented that the libraries' have an assortment of complaints regarding the WVOT, stating that for more than a year, various representatives from WVOT have been attending our meetings but the issues have continued to go unresolved. Commissioner Randall Reid-Smith comments that he believes the best thing would be to have questions from the Commissioners and get them to the Cabinet Secretary and Heather Abbott beforehand so that at the January 2025 meeting WVOT can provide answers. Secretary John McHugh advised Commissioner Randall Reid-Smith to get him the questions and he would begin trying to find the answers.

Commissioner Randall Reid-Smith tasked the Commissioners with making a list of distinct questions and examples for their next meeting in January 2025. Chair Charlie Morris comments that he wants to give the librarians a chance to express their concerns and asks Director Donna Calvert to contact the libraries and have them send back their list of distinct issues by December 1st. Then in early December he will meet with Director Donna Calvert to consolidate the list. Everyone was agreeable to this. Commissioner Debra Sullivan volunteered to help compile the list of questions and examples.

Chair Charlie Morris comments that he would like to know what part of our budget is dedicated to technology. Commissioner Debra Sullivan asks how the WVOT services are being billed. Commissioner Randall Reid-Smith advises the Library Section is billed quarterly by the amount of tickets. The monthly bills are sent to Brent Epling and others in finance to verify. Chair Charlie Morris asks Director Donna Calvert to pull that dollar amount together for when they meet in early December. Chair Charlie Morris summarizes the two requests he has made with Director Donna Calvert regarding contacting the libraries for their input on WVOT, survey, and how much the Library Section is spending on WVOT. Commissioner Debra Sullivan asks Director Donna Calvert, during the survey, to discover how many libraries do not depend on the WVOT.

Library Section Services and Reading Room:

Commissioner Debra Sullivan asks for a circulation lending report from the Reading Room. She would also like a report on the services provided and how many patrons are using the room. Library Section Director Donna Calvert comments that she has a full Statistical Annual Report that's been turned in and comments on the changing role of the Library Section, the Reading Room, and the services being provided, with emphasis on increased use of electronic material.

Announcements:

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, January 22, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. in Charleston. The Commission will vote at the January meeting on their 2025 calendar. The Commission advised they would continue hosting their meetings on the road at libraries across the state.

Director Katrina Johnson from Louis Bennett invited the Commissioners to the 50th anniversary of the opening of Louis Bennett Memorial Library on December 9, 2025.

Adjournment:

Commissioner Randall Reid-Smith moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Adam Gissy seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 10:54 a.m.

Chair Charlie Morris

Director Donna Calvert