

VLA Executive Board Annual Retreat
August 21, 2012
Cottage at Goddard College, Plainfield VT
9:30am-3pm

Present: Amber Billey, Helen Linda, Grace Greene, Heather Grev, Prudence Doherty, Lara Keenan, Daisy Benson, Nancy Tusinsky, Jessica Summer, Christine Webb, Heidi Steiner, Ray Brior, Kat Redniss, Selene Colburn, Amy McMullen, Wynne Browne, Christine Friese, Sarah Costa, Shara McCaffrey, Amy Grasmick, Scott Murphy, Marty Reid, Lydia Willoughby, Debbie Landauer

Meeting minutes by: Sarah Costa

Meeting Called to order at: 10:05am

Introductions

Introductions were made all around.

VTLib Update

Marty circulated a handout of updates from VTLib (included at end of minutes as appendix). The Fiber Broadband project is progressing. By December, Sovernet will have fiber in forty-five public libraries across the state, mostly in the south. Fiber was offered to libraries based on their proximity to the fiber route Sovernet was laying down. Eight libraries are already up and running on the network, and VTLib is receiving glowing reports on its speed. The project has federal funding to get connections from the fiber route to the library buildings, and state funding of around \$5000 per library for the necessary equipment in each library to connect. This is the first time the state has provided operational funding for libraries. Marty is hopeful that it is a start towards more state support for libraries.

The state's contract with Gale is ending, and the Vermont Online Library Committee will soon be sending out an RFP to new vendors. VTLib is also considering new models for providing ebooks to libraries, at lower cost than and in addition to Overdrive.

VTLib is looking to replace VALS and Web2 with something more robust and modern. This will be a big investment in the next few years.

Library automation is still a priority. There are around thirty libraries left in Vermont that are not yet automated. VTLib is supportive of shared catalog projects on this front, including both VOKAL and Catamount. Six libraries will be running on VTLib's Catamount Library Network by the end of January. VTLib is also investigating the feasibility and utility of providing access to a service like Marcive to improve the quality of shared catalogs.

The ILL task force is investigating the feasibility of a courier service. Both Maine and New Hampshire have ILL Courier services that bring the cost down to about 47 cents per item. However, both states process ten times more ILLs annually than does Vermont.

Digital literacy is another VTLib priority this year. Some funding for this is coming from disaster relief grants, so towns hit by Irene and spring flooding are prioritized for state digital literacy initiatives such as internet interns.

Marty encourage VLA to work closely with VSLA, particularly in advocating for the value of libraries. Quality standards for education in Vermont have historically been a model for other states, and the new Vermont standards contain no language in support of school libraries or librarians.

Marty was asked about Sovernet's timeliness in following the fiber installation schedule. She responded that they are taking longer than promised, and that libraries should call Kevin Nadzam (828-1987) any time Sovernet works on their connection to keep him abreast of their progress.

Marty closed by encouraging VLA and VTLib to work together on leadership training, community summits, library advocacy, and government relations.

Review of Position Descriptions

There are a lot of discrepancies in board position descriptions and responsibilities listed across the constitution, bylaws, handbook, and website. These should be unified. The bylaws are the legally binding descriptions and may need to be updated to reflect reality. The board broke into groups to discuss each position's various descriptions.

A few definite takeaways emerged, but more discussion will be needed in the future. Helen volunteered to work on unifying the descriptions on the website. Among the takeaways: the membership chair is responsible for picking up the mail and maintaining the membership database. The Vice President must serve on the conference committee, and the past president should be chair of the nominating committee. There is shared responsibility between the president and vice president to attend meetings of the Board of Libraries. The board needs to determine what form nominations and voting can and will take, and update documents to reflect that reality. The bulk mail permit language can be removed from Treasurer position descriptions. Committee leaders should always be referred to as chairs, not presidents. The handbook and bylaws are missing new committees (Inclusion, Scholarship, Conference), as well as changes to the Membership and Outreach Committee. The Nominations and Elections committee is only listed in the bylaws. The handbook still refers to the Communications/Editorial committee, which should be changed to Membership and Outreach. VLTA was folded back into VLA as the Trustees section, which is currently inactive. Lastly, the Green Mountain Award should be listed on the website.

Committee chairs should look through all four documents and unify the language across each for their position and committee. The listings of committees and their leadership also need to be updated. It would be good for sections and committees to have their own constitutions and bylaws, both of which may already exist in the archive.

Daisy mentioned that Committee chairs should not be voting members of the board, since they're appointed rather than elected. All agreed. Section chairs and presidents can vote; vice presidents can attend board meetings but may not vote. Daisy also mentioned that she manages both the VTLibraries and the Board listservs.

In the interest of maintaining organizational records, committees should have written reports to present at each meeting which can then be archived along with the minutes.

Strategic Plan Review

Advocacy: VLA accomplished a lot through commercials, the calendar, the salary reports, and some limited advocacy for state-wide funding of libraries. We could do a lot more, especially in regard to working with VTLib on advocacy. All agreed that we should bring back regional breakfasts with legislators. We also need to provide more support for advocacy on the local level. On the national level, VTLib sends two representatives to national legislative library advocacy days; the government relations committee chair should also attend, and that attendance should be made explicit in the handbook description.

Education: We have a strong potential network of mentors and now need to make good use of it. Lydia is making mentorship support a priority in her term. Mentoring for both public and college libraries could be strengthened. VLA members now receive a discount on tuition at Drexel. VLA created a scholarship committee to support librarian education. We continue to work with VTLib on the certification process. We are no longer cosponsoring the conference with VSLA, but should find other collaboration possibilities with them. Some other possible actions items include virtual continuing education opportunities and expanding partnerships with LIS schools.

Intellectual Freedom: We are still working on developing IF trainings, creating a list of attorneys specializing in IF, and reinstating the John Swan lectures. Other possible areas of focus include making an IF toolkit, issuing statements from VLA on IF issues, doing outreach to both school and public libraries, and informing librarians about confidentiality issues, family cards, and changes to statutes that affect patron privacy.

Membership: VLA's social media presence now includes Facebook and Twitter. Helen has the online membership form and payment site nearly ready. We're working on setting up a structure to engage those indicating an interest in volunteering. Lydia asked about membership packages to welcome new members. Helen says we're now sending emails instead of membership postcards, and that there's no package as of yet. Shara said that as the chair of the Personnel Committee, she would volunteer to send out new librarian welcome packets. Helen agreed to help. Daisy mentioned that we used to give section chairs a list of all people interested in volunteering in their sections, as well as a list of all people in their section at the beginning of each year. This practice would be good to reinstate. Possibilities on membership development include using BuddyPress as a sort of VLA version of ALA Connect, but BuddyPress is still having problems with the new site.

Daisy also mentioned that having a membership committee sometimes makes it easy to forget that we can *all* recruit and do outreach to new members -- it's not just the committee's responsibility. Prudence mentioned that SAA has key contacts in each state and utilizes them to keep up with new and lapsed members. VLA might be able to use that model on a county basis.

The current member database is in a Google spreadsheet, and Helen would like to make it cloud-based on real database software in the near future.

Partnerships: VLA has maintained its partnership with VTLib, but is doing less with VSLA. We should formalize and record what partnerships and associations VLA has had in the past. Amy mentioned that partnerships are primarily project or program based. Lydia encouraged us to think about partnerships strategically in relation to VLA's mission. Marty urged new partnerships with the Vermont makers' movement and with farmer's markets around the state.

Actionable items include working more closely with VSLA and having a board member represent VLA there. We should also cultivate a partnership with the VT League of Cities and Towns.

Structure and Governance: Kat mentioned that we've updated certain committees and structures and done a lot of timely internal restructuring. We still need clear documentation of roles and responsibilities. Helen urged us to clarify and formalize who should attend board meetings. Lydia brought up the need for balance so that board meeting attendance is accessible to those at both small and large libraries.

Marty suggested the possibility of hiring someone external to facilitate a discussion on restructuring and to help the VLA board renew its focus as we craft a new strategic plan. Debbie agreed, feeling that the old plan contained too many priorities to realistically be accomplished by a volunteer group in just a few years. Selene also agreed, and said that outside facilitators can often validate and make evident things we only think we know. Amber agreed that hiring someone may be a good idea and should be looked into further.

Plan Review Takeaways: Consolidate, focus, and set realistic goals for action. Wynne urged caution when consolidating. Selene brought up the difference between a vision statement and a four year plan, and the need to differentiate the form and purpose of each. Helen emphasized the need to focus on concrete and actionable items in the new plan. Amber said that we do not want to eliminate the four year plan, but that we do need to focus it and make it actionable. Amy mentioned that committees take charge of almost all the headings in the plan, so the executive board is not solely responsible for accomplishing the plan. Heidi encouraged the board to look at goals for year, who specifically will accomplish those goals, and when. Kat said that we could also look at developing broader goals with specific action steps and specific people tied to accomplishing those steps.

Committee/Section Review

College and Special Libraries (Daisy)

Section needs to focus on outreach, particularly for medical and other special librarians. Topics of importance include intellectual privacy and partnerships. Daisy is hoping for both fall and spring events, possibly workshops. She may partner with VPR for them.

Public (Lydia)

Section wants to focus on more informal events and networking gatherings, including continuing the unconference tradition started last year. Another priority is reaching out to new librarians. Helen will provide a list of new members to help on this front.

Technical Services (Christine)

The section is evolving nicely and is thinking about new training possibilities. They have a blog and a website, but need more content for the latter. Future meetings will be centrally located (geographically speaking).

Childrens (Heather)

Section will be hosting two events this year: one on children and one on teens. The children's services event is already in the works. The teen day has a lot of possibilities including teenage brains, Dungeons & Dragons/RPGs, Minecraft, and more. The events will hopefully be recorded for later access. Communication has been difficult because membership is so huge, so future communications may be sent out over VALS and VTLibraries to make them universally accessible.

Awards (Amy)

Awards are a big opportunity for advocacy, so we should make them a bigger affair. Kat suggested making two minute videos for each winner to tell their nomination and award story. Helen offered up the VLA Youtube channel as a host. VLA currently offers a Trustee of the Year, Librarian of the Year, and Green Mountain Award.

Government Relations (Selene)

This committee is starting from ground zero after a hiatus. The goal is to have representatives from every county on the committee. The committee will be planning this fall to reinstate the legislative breakfasts in Spring 2014. The committee has been involved in the past with state legislature, but may now focus more on supporting librarians' advocacy efforts at the municipal level. There are legislators currently discussing bills for state funding of libraries. Both VTLib and VLA are wary of such general funding and would encourage a more nuanced strategic approach to funding at the state level.

Inclusion (Kat)

Priorities for the year include staff diversity, inclusion, working with the under and unemployed, ADA compliance in older buildings, creating safe spaces, mental illness, and what in libraries might be alienating to certain patrons and how to address that gap. Possible events include a half day staff inclusion workshop and a workshop on inclusive collection development. Mental Health First Aid is another possible training that is in line with state priorities and which has free trainings libraries can request. Kat is also looking at creating contact guides on various issues for librarians' reference.

Intellectual Freedom (Ray)

High turnover rates in small libraries mean that many librarians are not trained in professional standards for privacy, so one priority is communicating basic information on

intellectual freedom and patron privacy, Sarah suggested putting together a cheat sheet for point of service library staff but acknowledged distribution would be a challenge. Possible events for the committee include reinstating the John Swan lectures, maybe in conjunction with the ACLU. A hot topic right now is government surveillance, and it would be interesting to host a speaker knowledgeable on that issue.

Membership and Outreach (Helen)

The newsletter requires every committee to contribute, so if you are a committee chair, you need to either write or appoint someone to write those updates. Better yet, take pictures, get permission, and send those in for the newsletter.

The website has a small team ready to work on it. It should be rolled out by April to be ready for the conference. Helen is working on creating packets that can empower everyone on the board to be membership liaisons. The new membership form should be online by October 1. Committee is working on ways to get directors to strongly support VLA membership among their staff.

Personnel (Shara)

Committee should be more involved with the Membership committee. Shara would like to start a new benefits survey for academic libraries.

Scholarship (Scott)

Committee really needs to be expanded and marketed. Where does VLA want scholarship money to go? Since this committee is doling out cash, there should be a wide representative body serving on it. They need to make forms, write up policies, and figure out what percentages of scholarship money go out when. One question for the future is whether we want any scholarship money to go towards MLS tuition or public library certification support.

Conference (Jessica)

Jessica has the beginnings of a conference committee. A survey will be coming out soon for feedback on last year's conference and suggestions for 2014. Possibilities include hosting vendors at lunch and creating a scholarship fund for mileage reimbursement. Amber suggested we compare the cost of reimbursing mileage with the cost of moving the conference to a more central location. St. Michael's will probably still be the most cost effective option. Jessica is also hoping to organize room shares or homestays so that librarians from far away can stay in Chittenden county the night before the conference.

Future Meetings

September 11: Midstate Library Service Center, Berlin

November 13: Hartness Library at VTC, Randolph Center

January 8: Brownell Library, Essex Junction

March 12: Midstate Library Service Center, Berlin

May 14: Sherburne Memorial Library, Killington

July 9: TBD; possibly just a lunch meeting

Other Business

Amber will follow up today's retreat with a Surveymonkey. She'd like to move next year's retreat to early June to more closely follow the conference and avoid August scheduling complications.

Wynne will be putting together a budget and sending it out soon. Each section is supposed to break even. However, we do currently have some extra money in the budget, so if you have something good but unfunded you'd like to try, bring it to the board for approval.

We'll be reviewing the budget in October and approving it in January.

Amber asked us to briefly review 12 Reasons Boards Fail, with the disclaimer that we're doing a great job and is looking forward to working with all of us.

Meeting adjourned at 3:25.

Report from Marty Reid, State Librarian

Vermont Library Association Executive Board Retreat August 21, 2013 Goddard College

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in your Board Retreat. The Department of Libraries values our relationship with VLA and we look forward to working with you and your membership over the coming year. Congratulations to Amber and her team – it's going to be a very busy year!

Assistant State Librarian Christine Friese is the VTLIB representative to your Board. Her role is to bring news and updates of Board activities back to VTLIB – and to be your main contact for what is happening here at VTLIB. This liaison relationship is important because we want to make sure that we are supporting one another and that we are working together to insure the best possible library service for Vermont citizens. Our missions are somewhat different, of course, – but we definitely have that goal in common! My major VLA involvement this year is likely to be with the Government Relations Committee. I want to make sure that we are working together on issues that affect state and national library policy and I look forward to working with Selene Coburn and her committee.

Vermont State Board of Libraries: Bruce Post (Essex), Chair; Lucy Comstock-Gay (New Haven), Deborah Granquist (Weston), Ariel Wengroff (Burlington), Anne Lesak (Burlington), Josh Fitzhugh (Berlin), and Jim Gish (Middlebury).

Here are some focus areas for VTLIB in FY2014:

1. Fiber Broadband in Public Libraries

We will complete the federal BTOP grant project with the Vermont Telecommunications Authority and Sovernet to implement fiber broadband in 45 public libraries by the end of 2013. All of these libraries will receive their Internet via a shared State-funded Wide Area Network.

2. Resource Sharing for Vermont Libraries

This will be a major focus for us over the next two years and will be the area of focus for us as we work on funding and policy issues. It has several important aspects:

- *Vermont Online Library*
- Digital resources for libraries (especially e-Books for public libraries)
- Vermont Automated Library System (VALS)
- Web2 Union Catalog
- Library automation and networked/shared catalogs (public libraries), including the Catamount Library Network
- Google Videoconference Project

3. Digital Literacy for Vermont Citizens

As a partner of the VCRD federally-funded Vermont Digital Economy project, the VTLIB will be working this year with approximately 25 public libraries to develop robust digital literacy programs. Also part of this project: to develop tools and resources on digital literacy and disaster preparedness for public libraries statewide. We will also be looking to identify and work with partners across the state to provide digital literacy resources, training and other services to Vermonters of all ages.

Over the past two years we have made physical changes to the State Library reading rooms, installing a new reference desk in a more user-friendly location, removing unused furniture, installing public wireless access and purchasing 2 digital microfilm readers. By September we will have a contract in place to microfilm a backlog of Vermont newspapers to add to our outstanding collection of historical newspapers. This year we will purchase new map storage units and inventory our map collection and will work with State Archives to develop a collection, access and preservation plan for electronic state documents.

This fall we will survey state government on their information and research needs and develop a collection development plan for the State Library.

5. Organizational Assessment of the VTLIB: Capacity Building

In 2011-12 the VTLIB developed two new strategic plans: (1) federal LSTA 5-year plan, required by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), and (2) State of Vermont Strategic Plan, part of a process across state government initiated by Governor Shumlin. Both plans are available on the VTLIB website: <http://libraries.vermont.gov/>

At the same time, we have been subject to annual budget cuts (both state and federal funding) and will have a difficult/impossible time adding staff positions, though this is a critical need at VTLIB.

This year we will contract with a Consultant to do an assessment of our organization, which will include a review of our staffing needs and building a system that we can use to measure performance and act on that information.

6. Vermont Public Library Foundation: Capacity Building

7. Support School Libraries and ensure that Vermont schools have trained and certified school media specialists

8. Services to Children and Youth

- Vermont Early Literacy Initiative (VT Center for the Book)
IMLS Grant Proposal
Turrell Fund grant
- Partnership with AOE on summer reading program

9. Professional Development for Public Librarians

- Management Training series (Library Directors)
- Creating a culture of assessment and measurement
- Advocacy training
- Technology training

How can we work together?

10. Leadership training for Vermont Librarians
11. Summit(s) of interest to VT library community
12. Government relations; funding for statewide projects
13. Advocacy (local, state, federal)

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