



JRJML

J. Robert Jamerson Memorial Library

157 Main Street, Appomattox, VA 24522 * Phone 434.352.5340 * Fax 434.352.0933

Meeting Minutes – Library Board of Trustees

Date: Tuesday, May19, 2026

Call the Meeting to Order

Roll Call of Members

- Mrs. Susan Williams - Appomattox River District present
- Mrs. Evelyn Ford- Courthouse District present
- Mr. Neil Selz - Falling River District present
- Madeline Abbitt- Piney Mountain District present
- Ms. Hope Adams - Wreck Island District present
- Cindy Scheu – Library Director present

Disposition of minutes – Motion to accept SW, Second HA

New Business

- Board Training by Reagen Thalacker, Public Library Consultant, Library of Virginia

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn SW, seconded by HA 5:00 pm

The next meeting will take place on July 21, 2026, starting at 4:00pm.

If anyone wishes to add to something to the agenda please contact Cindy Scheu at the Library, 434.352.5340 or email her at director@jrjml.org.

BOARD SUCCESS

J. Robert Jamerson Memorial Library
May 19, 2026

Reagen A. Thalacker, MLIS
Public Library Consultant
Library Development
Library of Virginia



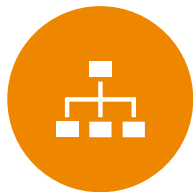
Who are we?



Agenda



Founding Principles



Responsibilities



Relationships



Advocacy



Records
Management



Legal Information



Founding Principles



FOUNDING PRINCIPLES

First Amendment

- “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” (1789)

14th Amendment

- Extends this requirement to the states



FOUNDING PRINCIPLES

Principles of Librarianship

- [Library Bill of Rights](#)
 - Adopted 1939, Reaffirmed 1996
 - Set of principles that establishes libraries as forums for information and ideas, ensuring that everyone has equal access and that materials are not censored based on origin, background, or views.
- [Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#)
 - An accompanying document that helps to utilize the original document when applying the principles. Updates applied, as necessary.



FOUNDING PRINCIPLES

Principles of Librarianship

- [Freedom to Read Statement](#)
 - Adopted 1953, Last amended 2004
 - Defends the right to read and opposes censorship, arguing that a diversity of viewpoints is crucial for a healthy democracy and that a free exchange of ideas is vital to society
- [Freedom to View Statement](#)
 - Adopted 1990
 - Supports the right to access films and other audiovisual materials
 - Added when libraries began carrying these materials



FOUNDING PRINCIPLES

Principles of Librarianship

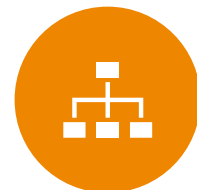
- [Libraries: An American Value](#)
 - Adopted 1999
 - States that libraries are a core American value because they provide free and equitable access to information, fostering education, democracy, and community.



Responsibilities

RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Employ**
- **Mission**
- **Planning**
- **Laws**
- **Public Relations**
- **Board Meetings**
- **Continuing Education**
- **Services**
- **Report**
- **Funding**





Relationships



RELATIONSHIPS

Board & DIRECTOR:

- Don't micro-manage. You've hired a Director for the library – let them do the job they were hired for.
- Ask questions and seek clarification and allow the Director to do the same.
- Address any issues early, don't wait for annual reviews to bring something up.
- Be invested in their success – because their success is yours as well.



RELATIONSHIPS

Board & STAFF:

- Any and all instructions for Staff must go through the Director.
- No Trustee should intervene between Staff and the Director. Any issues should be referred to the Board via the established grievance procedure.
- Trustees typically work with Staff on committees, long-range planning, library social events, etc.
- Be interested in the work done at all levels because the staff make the library what it is.



RELATIONSHIPS

Board & FRIENDS GROUPS / FOUNDATIONS:

- Friends Groups and/or Foundations are separate 501(c)(3) entities that serve as fundraising arms of the library.
- Maintaining strong collegial relationships between the Board of Trustees and these groups expands the pool of advocates for the library.
- If possible, there should be a Board liaison to the Friends and/or Foundation Board, and vice versa, a Friends and/or Foundation liaison to the library Board.



RELATIONSHIPS

Board & EVERYONE ELSE:

- Trustees are public representatives of the library and, as such, whatever you do or say may reflect on the library.
- Board decisions should be reflective of what the library and community needs and not any one individual Trustee.
- After the Board makes any decision, it speaks with one voice.



Advocacy



ADVOCACY

What is it?

- Being vocal, visible, and well-informed
- Using the library and spreading the word
- Talking to individual groups about the library
- Working closely with local officials according to the library's plan
- Telling people about being a Trustee
- Selling the philosophy and merits of high-quality library service
- Supporting the Friends of the Library / Foundation



ADVOCACY

Why do Trustees Advocate?

- You see the library from the user's viewpoint
- You have a perspective on the full range of library services
- You represent a broad base of consumers
- You are volunteer participants in government
- You are voters



ADVOCACY

How & When to Advocate?

- How do I advocate?
 - In every conversation you have promoting the library and its services
- When do I advocate?
 - In every conversation you have promoting the library and its services

WAYS TO KEEP UP

Virginia:

- [Virginia Library Association – Legislative Committee](#) – Advocate Action Alert Mailing List
- [Virginia Library Association – Intellectual Freedom Committee](#)
- [Trustees, Friends, and Foundations Newsletter](#) – link to the archives

Nationally:

- [Public Library Association – Advocacy Page](#)
- [Turning the Page: Supporting Libraries, Strengthening Communities](#)
- [EveryLibrary](#)





Records Management

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Why is this important?

- It is the permanent record of the business of the library
- Should they wish to, the public has the right to request any and all public records.
- As a public body, the library is accountable to the public.
- Mismanagement of the records can reflect poorly on the library, tarnishing its reputation for being a good steward of public funds, and/or breaking the trust in the institution.



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA)

Virginia Freedom of Information Act (§2.2-3700)

“...the General Assembly ensures the people of the Commonwealth ready access to public records in the custody of a public body or its officers and employees, and free entry to meetings of public bodies wherein the business of the people is being conducted...”

This includes public libraries.



PUBLIC MEETINGS

What is a public meeting under FOIA?

3 board members gathered

+

discussing library business



PUBLIC RECORDS

What are public records under FOIA?

Any writing, images or recordings in any format

+

prepared or owned by, or in the possession of a public body or its agents

+

in the transaction of public business



RETENTION

What Do I Keep and How Long?

- [GS-19](#) or General Schedule 19 is for Records Retention & Disposal of documentation related to county and municipal government *administrative records*.
- The Library of Virginia developed this in accordance with the Virginia Public Records Act (§42.1-76) of the Code of Virginia.
- There are dedicated Records Management folks at the Library of Virginia who can assist.



E-MAIL



You are responsible for managing the e-mails you send and receive.



Requests from the public must be honored the same as any other public record request.



E-mail must remain accessible during the entire retention period.



E-MAIL: BOARD TIPS

- Use an official signature
- Proofread for typos (beware of autocorrect!)
- Retain final e-mail in a thread in a dedicated Board e-mail folder
- Use a useful subject line
- Don't put something in an e-mail that you wouldn't want to see in tomorrow's newspaper





Current Issues: Legal Information Regarding Book Challenges



CURRENT ISSUES

Legal Information to Be Aware of Regarding Book Challenges

- This is **legal information only** and not legal advice.
- Theresa Chmara, Legal Counsel for the Freedom to Read Foundation, compiled and initially shared the following information.
- For any formal legal questions, please consult your local legal counsel.



CURRENT ISSUES

First Amendment

- States that “Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech.”
- Applies to the States through the Fourteenth Amendment.
- Applies to adults as well as minors.
- Protects the right to speak as well as the right to receive information.
- Applies to government entities, not private entities.
- Applies to all speech unless designated an unprotected category by the US Supreme Court.



CURRENT ISSUES

Book Challenges & the Law

- Unprotected Categories of Speech
 - *Miller v. California*, 413 U.S. 15 (1973)

The United States Supreme Court has held that the First Amendment does not protect obscene material. In determining whether material is obscene or not, a court must find that the material meets **all three parts of the test**:

1. Whether the work depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by the applicable state law;
2. Whether the average person, applying *contemporary community standards*, would find the work **as a whole** appeals to the prurient interest; and
3. Whether the work, **taken as a whole**, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, *or scientific value*.



CURRENT ISSUES

Book Challenges & the Law

- Viewpoint Discrimination
 - *Rosenberger v. Rector and Visitors of Univ. of Virginia*, 515 U.S. 819, 829 (1995)

The First Amendment does not permit viewpoint discrimination. The United States Supreme Court has held that “[v]iewpoint discrimination is....an egregious form of content discrimination.”



CURRENT ISSUES

Book Challenges & the Law

- Viewpoint Discrimination / Book Removal
 - *Board of Education v. Pico*, 457 U.S. 852 (1982)

In the context of determining whether a school library board impermissibly removed books from the collection, the United States Supreme Court held that if the library “intended” by removing books to bar access to ideas with which they disagreed, then the removal is unconstitutional.



CURRENT ISSUES

Book Challenges & the Law

- Viewpoint Discrimination / Book Removal
 - Building off of Pico
 - *Mainstream Loudoun v. Board of Trustees of Loudoun*, 2 F. Supp. 3d 783 (E.D. Va 1998)

The court held that “the First Amendment applies to, and limits, the discretion of the public library to place content-based restrictions on access to constitutionally protected materials within its collection.”

...”a public library, ‘like other enterprises operated by the State, may not be run in such a manner as to prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion or other matters of opinion.’”



CURRENT ISSUES

Book Challenges & the Law

- Segregation of Materials Burdens First Amendment Rights
 - *Sund v. City of Wichita Falls*, 121 F. Supp. 2d (N.D. Tex. 2000)

The district court held that forced removal of books from the children's room to the adult section of the library placed a "significant burden on Library patron's ability to gain access to those books."



CURRENT ISSUES

Book Challenges & the Law

- Segregation of Materials Burdens First Amendment Rights / Parental Rights
 - *Sund v City of Wichita Falls*, 121 F. Supp. 2d (N.D. Tex. 2000)

In response to the argument that parents have the right to remove material with which they disagreed, the district court stated that “if a parent wishes to prevent her child from reading a particular book, that parent can and should accompany the child to the Library, and should not prevent all children in the community from gaining access to constitutionally protected materials.”



CURRENT ISSUES

Book Challenges & the Law

- Attorney's Fees

In the Fayetteville Public Library v. Crawford County case, Crawford County was ordered by the court to pay more than \$400,000 in attorney fees to the plaintiffs,

If a library or other state entity is sued for a violation of First Amendment rights and the plaintiff is successful in winning the case, the state entity could be liable for not only for the costs of the litigation and payment of fees for its attorneys, *but the court also can order that the state entity pay the attorneys' fees of the plaintiffs who instituted the litigation.*

42 U.S.C. Section 1983



CURRENT ISSUES

Some Recent Cases

- Crawford County, Arkansas
 - Fayetteville Public Library v. Crawford County
 - Arkansas Act 372, Sections 1 and 5
 - Virden v. Crawford County
 - Board action to remove certain books to another area
- Campbell County, Wyoming
 - Criminal complaint alleging that the library was disseminating obscene materials



CURRENT ISSUES

Case That Upended Decades of Precedent

- Llano County, Texas
 - Little v. Llano County (ongoing)
 - Board action to remove 17 books from the shelves that were found to be offensive
 - Has the potential to upend everything that libraries are based on

Final Thoughts

- My aspirations for my library and its community are...
- The challenges we face in reaching these aspirations are...
- The changes needed in my community to reach our aspirations are...

RESOURCES

Trustees Page - InfoCenter - Library Development (LD)

<https://vpl.lib.va.us/trustees-friends-foundations/>

Library of Virginia – Records Management

<https://www.lva.virginia.gov/services/rm>

American Library Association

<https://www.ala.org/>

United for Libraries – Virginia has a statewide membership for staff and stakeholders

<http://www.ala.org/united/trustees>

Virginia Library Association

<http://www.vla.org/>

Trustees, Friends, & Foundations [monthly newsletter](#) from the Library of Virginia

Questions?

Thank You for Your Service to Your Library and Your Community!

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