

Brooks Memorial Library Technology Committee Minutes, March 31, 2021

Called to order online at 4:32, after a minor bit of trouble with technology

Agenda changes/additions: none

Minutes of Oct 28, 2020 approved

No public comment

Continuing Business

Update on website

Starr reported that MRW agreed to a six-month maintenance agreement, and Matt confirmed that we'll be covered for updates of site plug-ins. We have not signed off on the project yet; we're waiting to come to an agreement over the room -booking tool and events calendar that were part of the original project. The events calendar has some issues we need to resolve, and the proposed booking tool has caused concern because of limitations of functionality and a cumbersome user experience. The Tech Committee affirmed that MRW must honor its contractual obligations, and also affirmed that having the right tool is the most important consideration in the end. The website group reported on their general satisfaction with the website project—in particular, we're happy that it lends itself to collaborative work by many different staff members. This will be a richer, more sustainable site than our old one.

New Business

AmeriCorps/VISTA Staff for Outreach Training and I&R Community Database

Starr filed the initial application and is preparing for next steps in the application process. She explained that the VISTA worker would be a conduit between the library and community groups, training staff at organizations on use of library resources so that the organizations could, in turn, train their constituents. The VISTA worker would also gather information from community groups to add to a database of organizations that would be accessible to the public and would strengthen the library's information and referral services. Through that work, the library would build resiliency, strengthen our root system of connection, and help alleviate poverty.

Leo noted that increasing our capacity to do direct tech support is really part of library service in this century, yet direct service would not be included in the VISTA project, per VISTA guidelines. We proposed that the VISTA worker would train library staff so that more library workers can assist the public, helping meet demand for service that can't be met by Matt's hours alone. Matt gave background on his work with the public, noting that "demand is bursty." Another proposal was to recruit volunteers or workers who might be paid a stipend through Board funds—maybe older teens.

Expansion of library materials—tools and bikes, etc.

Bicycles

Potential partnership for a project to host two e-bikes as special checkouts, connected with organizations including LocalMotion and V-Bike. Working with the Town. Insurance has to pass muster.

MOU about things like the library retaining the bikes over time. Potentially a cool way to promote this technology in the community, because the library is be a public place that people know.

Community tool library

There might be various ways to do it, either just become a community partner with tool sharing, or actually acquiring and circulating tools.

Leo paused to ask whether it was the work on the technology committee to engage with these topics, and the committee engaged! We discussed capacity and mission regarding resources beyond the ones most frequently associated with libraries. We should be responsive to expressed demands of the community—so our ability to register demand is as important as the delivery of the service itself. The tool for that: the Strategic Planning Process! Starr reminded the committee of the language in our mission statement, to “connect people and resources to inspire, inform, and empower our diverse community.”

Other technologies and opportunities

Matt reported that wifi hot spots will be ready for checkout soon.

Laptops/ipads? We don't have any for circulation right now, but we let some orgs take them during covid. The Friends bought us 8 new laptops right before covid shutdown. We had talked about making the older ones available for checkout beyond the library, but there's breaking down fairly quickly.

Money will be flowing toward libraries in the state. Starr reported on a couple of possibilities that will fill needs: a new book security system that would allow for a self-checkout option, not to replace a staffed circulation desk, but as an additional option for added patron privacy. Money could also be used to offer access to a library kiosk in West Brattleboro with circulating and downloadable materials.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30.

Next meeting: April 28th, the fourth Wednesday in April