

Attachment 3

Region 2000 Libraries' Discussion

Initial Opportunities Discussion

December, 2010

(revised April, 2011)

This paper summarizes the discussions of the Region 2000 Librarians' Working Group in its efforts to identify opportunities for improving the current library service delivery practices, including costs, within the region.

This paper reflects the collective effort of the Work Group. It does not constitute an endorsement of any particular service delivery model.

Background

The Region 2000 Local Government Council (Council), through discussion in early 2010, identified regional library services as a concept to be studied as part of the Council's efforts to promote regional cooperation and more effective provision of public services. The Council directed a working group form, composed of Region 2000 staff and area library directors, to further investigate this concept.

Specifically, the working group was charged with organizing a review of current library service practices in the region, and determining the potential to improve on the status quo, if any.

The working group was asked to:

- Describe the state of current library operations;
- Identify models of library operations;
- Determine options and opportunities for cost reductions and/or service improvements; and
- Recommend an approach to move forward with the effort, including resources needed, if advisable.

This initial discussion is a limited, high level review.

Participating on the working group are the following: Steve Preston, Director, Amherst County Public Library; Barry Morris¹, Director, Appomattox County Public Library; Peggy Bias, Director, Bedford Public Library System; Nan Carmack, Director, Campbell County Public Library; Lynn Dodge, Director, Lynchburg Public Library; and Bob White, Deputy Director, Region 2000 Local Government Council.

Current State of Library Operations

¹ Barry Morris retired during the course of the working group's discussions. At the time of this writing Appomattox County was in the process of filling the library director's position. As a result this report does not reflect the views of the Appomattox County Public Library Director.

Currently five library systems serve Region 2000: Amherst County Public Library, Appomattox County Public Library, Bedford Public Library System, Campbell County Public Library, and the Lynchburg Public Library. Jointly, the systems with their sixteen facility locations support a population of approximately 245,000. Together the Region 2000 libraries serve 1,067,444+ visitors annually, circulating 1,571,423+ books and related material.

In addition to the books and material circulation, area libraries provide 231,783+ computer access sessions per year, 979+ adult program activities with 17,590+ persons taking part, and 2,016+ youth programs with 50,535+ participants.

Clearly, the Region 2000 libraries are a significant cultural and educational asset to our community. This public service is provided by a staff of 92 with 25 professional positions, working with a cumulative budget of approximately \$6.5 million. Attachment A. Region 2000 Libraries' Profile provides a statistical snap shot of the area's libraries.

Models of Library Operations

Four base models of library operations were identified by the working group. These models are (1) the *individual library*, (2) the *library cooperative*, (3) the *regional library/cooperative*, and (4) *regional library-independent*.

Individual libraries serve a specific locality and are often identified by the locality's name. Under the *library cooperative* model, the member libraries remain independent, but contract with each other for selected joint services. With the *regional library/cooperative*, individual libraries form a regional library entity for specific services, while retaining their individual identities. The *regional library-independent* model transfers responsibility for providing public library service, including governance, to an independent regional library.

The Amherst, Appomattox, Campbell, and Lynchburg library systems are formed as individual libraries. Bedford is a regional system (Bedford City and County). All the libraries operate in some capacity as a library cooperative. A further description of the four library models is found in Appendix B.

Working Group Opportunity Discussion Summary

The working group has been meeting since May, and as part of its efforts held a series of in depth interviews with select librarians through out the state². The result of our discussion is summarized here.

² As part of the working group's discussions, it arranged a series of in depth interviews with a select group of Virginia librarians, whose collective experience and accomplishments were particularly valuable to our topic. These professionals are Diana Rosapepe, Director of Roanoke County Library Services; John Moorman, Director of Williamsburg Regional Library; John Halliday, Director of Jefferson-Madison Regional Library; Scott Firestine, Director of Appomattox Regional Library; Fran Freimarck, retired Director of Pamunkey Regional Library; and Cindy Church, Networking and Development, Library of Virginia.

- Each of our library systems faced budget cuts this past year, and the future is expected to remain challenging. This is not unique to Region 2000; libraries at all levels, local, state, and national, are experiencing the same fiscal environment.
- Interestingly, this fiscal crunch is coming at the same time that library usage is substantially increasing. The American Library Association reported in 2006 that 82% of public libraries across the country experienced a net reduction in funding while usage climbed at average rates of 6-9% annually. Further, a 2010 Harris Interactive Survey indicates net increases in usage of all library services, but particularly computer and internet access and job seeker resources. Appendix C. Library Usage Increases provides a brief discussion of this topic.
- With this expanding need for library services within this fiscally trying environment, a clear theme permeated every interview and most discussions the working group held: *the stronger a joint emphasis an area placed on library services the better positioned the library function will be to maintain services and respond to the inevitable growth in service demand and technological advancements.*

A key advantage emphasized is the inherent strength a unified management and program structure brings. A corollary to this theme is the concern individual library systems will struggle to remain viable in the current and anticipated fiscal environment.

- At the same time our discussions highlighted the benefits of strengthening a joint approach to library service delivery, equally strong was the conclusion that *a region cannot go into this initiative with an expectation of substantive system cost savings.* This realization is due to the nature of library functions with its fixed assets such as buildings and collection material.

Additionally, the libraries' integrated library systems (ILS), or collection management systems, are not uniform. Depending on the direction of any further cooperation, this issue would need to be addressed, including the cost of merging systems.

- Opportunities may exist however for program level cost savings, cost avoidance and or service improvements. The region's library systems are currently cooperating to jointly purchase e-books and downloadable audio books at a cost savings. A more unified system of library service can have benefits with administrative costs, such as human resources, information technology maintenance, subscriptions costs, purchasing, and program development. The regional community as a whole would have access to the entire catalog of materials and services currently provided by the individual systems. Coordinated use of existing facilities in adjoining localities can address underserved areas without the need to add facilities.
- Further exploring opportunities for joint cooperation is in the best interest of the region as a whole and its individual localities. The working group understands the challenge of overcoming the initial inertia of the status quo, especially within the context of not being able to realize any substantive cost savings. However, the stronger the joint emphasis our

community can place on library service provision the better positioned we will be to maintain and meet the growing service demands.

This opinion does not presume an authority is the ultimate outcome of this effort. It also does not presume a regional library.

Moving Forward

The form a strengthened level of joint cooperation can take is an open question. The working group recommends a continuing evaluation of opportunities be organized³. This evaluation would begin with a planning level or fatal flaw analysis to quantify the opportunities. This effort should be supported by a third party consultant to provide a more in depth analysis than this initial discussion can offer. If an opportunity(ies) is found to have merit the next step is a detailed financial and operational analysis. Finally, an implementation program would be put in place to effect merited improvements.

This approach allows for regular updates to the participating jurisdictions and allows for each participant to reaffirm its support of the initiative at key steps in the process. Funding for each successive step is addressed at the conclusion of each preceding step. The suggested approach is shown in Appendix D.

Additional Working Group Discussion Notes

1. Privatization

The working group did discuss privatization of libraries as an option for service. Privatization is defined as the *shifting of policy making and the management of library services or the responsibility for the performance of core library services in the entirety from the public to the private sector*. Privatization of libraries in the opinion of the working group is a philosophical issue rather than a structural or management decision. Privatization is often used to correct inefficiencies in library management and as a method to eliminate what are deemed to be excessive staff benefits, conditions that do not exist in this area.

Appendix E. provides reference citations for further reading on this topic.

2. 'Ideal Library Services'

The working group asked the question *if starting from scratch what would the region's ideal library service system look like?* Appendix F. 'Ideal Library Services' provides the working group's perspective to this question. This discussion helped inform the working group's deliberations.

³ Steve Preston, Director, Amherst County Public Library, abstained on this matter, deferring to the Amherst County Library Board of Trustees.

Appendix A
 Region 2000 Libraries' Profile
 1-Nov-10

	Amherst Co.	Appomattox Co.	Bedford Regional	Campbell Co.	Lynchburg (1)	Total
Population	32482	14100	72568	52016	72506	243672
Square Miles	475	335	754	511	50	2125
Locations	2	2	6	4	2	16
Door Count						
Annual	154381	*** (5)	351395	233606	328062	1067444
Daily	516	***	1058	792	1082	3448
Circulation						
Annual	222180	66000	459265	257650	566328	1571423
Daily	743	264	1383	874	1869	5133
Reference Services						
Annual	5083	5000	64834	18523	48842	142282
Daily	17	20	206	63	161	467
Public Computer Access						
Annual	16599	24000	81074	44792	65318	231783
Daily	56	96	252	152	216	772
Programs-Adult						
Number	83	***	554	302	40	979
Attendees	2678	***	4259	8055	2598	17590
Programs-Youth						
Number	228	***	1177	376	235	2016
Attendees	8698	***	18216	8359	15262	50535
Staff						
Professional	11	***	32	16	33	92
	4	***	7	4	10	25
Appropriated Budget	\$679,751	\$205,047	\$1,803,587	\$662,433	\$1,585,636	
Additional Assistance(2)	\$233,924	***	CIP	\$753,794	\$ 590,202	

Total Budget(3)

\$6,514,374

Note:

1. Lynchburg provides a public law library.
2. Additional assistance from parent organization, such as Campbell County IT Department or Accounting)
3. Total Budget includes Budget number and Additional Assistance.
4. Data reported by locality librarians and based on FY 10 statistics.
5. *** indicates data not reported.

Appendix B. Models of Library Operations

Individual Library

Individual libraries serve a specific locality and are often identified by the locality's name, for example the Campbell County Public Library. As a department of local government, the individual library is funded by local government and may also have a governing or advisory board. The roll of the governing body is to set policies and oversee the library program. The Library Director and staff are employees of the City or County and fall under the personnel policies and procedures of the local government. All payroll and fiscal management (processing of invoices, etc.) are handled through the local government's financial department.

Library buildings are owned by the locality and are maintained by a department of local government. Decisions to build new library buildings are made by local government and are considered along with their long-range plans for the area.

Technology is planned, administered, and supported either through the local government's technology staff or by the library staff, possibly supported by a private contractor. In addition, the library's materials are selected, ordered and processed by library staff. The library makes its collection available to the public and materials not available through the collection are borrowed via interlibrary loan. A non-resident borrowing fee may be charged.

Library programs and services are planned and carried out by library staff under the direction of the library director and as approved by the governing body. The City of Lynchburg and the counties of Amherst, Appomattox, and Campbell can be classified as individual libraries.

Library Cooperative

Under the Library Cooperative model, the member libraries remain independent, but contract with each other for selected joint services. For example, two or more libraries can open their collections to each other's residents by sharing the same library software. Nonresident fees are eliminated. A courier system is utilized to transport materials among the various facilities.

Management and operations remain as discussed with the Independent Library arrangement, except as modified by contract.

The Region 2000 libraries have a history of cooperation. All area libraries are members of SWING, the SouthWest (VA) Information Group, a consortium of over 130 public, academic, special, and school libraries. SWING has a contracts manager, who coordinates some 40 procurement contacts with library vendors, resulting in substantial discounts on books, periodicals, library supplies, library furnishings, and services.

The Lynchburg Public Library and the Amherst County Public Library, along with two area colleges, participate in the Lynchburg Information Online Network (LION) cooperative, an integrated library system (ILS). This arrangement is organized under a contract, allowing for the

shared use of an ILS central server and software along with technical support. The Roanoke Valley Area Libraries has a similar system with its joint library card, with a shared ILS.

Regional Library/Cooperative

Individual libraries form a regional library entity for specific services, while retaining their individual identities. These services can include maintaining the ILS, sharing access to their collections through the online catalog, cataloging and processing of library materials, and providing technical support for computers. In addition, supplemental services may be provided, such as e-rate filings, federal and state reports, payroll, and fiscal management. The library continues to have autonomy and be identified as the Campbell County Public Library or the Lynchburg Public Library, but could be further identified as a member of the Region 2000 Regional Library (example). The library buildings, as well as the responsibility for maintaining those buildings, remain with the local government.

An equitable funding mechanism is established to allow the local governments to fund the regional services as well as their local library. The library director continues working with his or her individual library board. One member from each board is appointed to the Regional/Cooperative Board that then makes decisions relating to all the member libraries. The level of authority is determined by the scope of services. Policies and procedures would be coordinated to the extent those policies impact joint services.

One of the libraries serves as the headquarters library and the regional/cooperative services are administered from that library. Materials ordering, cataloging, processing, and related matters are done at that site for all member libraries.

A single ILS serves all members. It is funded and supported centrally and policies and procedures are coordinated. A system administrator is employed to manage the ILS. Each locality provides network and PC support to its libraries, if that is stronger than the regional library can provide.

Library patrons would have borrowing privileges at all member libraries and have access to the larger, combined collection through the online catalog. A courier service would move the materials within the region. Library programs and services would be coordinated for efficiency and still allow autonomy for individual libraries to serve the varied needs of their community.

The State of West Virginia organizes its library systems along this model.

Regional Library-Independent

The Regional Library-Independent model transfers responsibility for providing public library service to an independent regional library. A governing board with representatives from each participating locality sets policy, hires staff, and otherwise manages the new library system. Public library services are marketed under the new name. Local identity ceases.

Each locality retains ownership and continues to be responsible for maintaining its library facilities. A locality would fund and maintain any new facility it chooses to establish, with the consent of the governing board. Facilities may be shared by localities, by means of a contract.

Collection development is coordinated centrally. The locality retains ownership of the materials it brings into the new regional library. At a later date, if a locality chooses to withdraw from the regional library, a pro-rated portion of the regional collection will be returned to the locality, according to a pre-determined plan.

A single ILS serves all members. It is funded and supported centrally and policies and procedures are coordinated. A system administrator is employed to manage the ILS. Each locality provides network and PC support to its libraries, if that is stronger than the regional library can provide.

Annually, the Board will determine a budget for the regional library and request funding from the member localities based on a predetermined formula for apportioning the costs. The Board will define the services it will provide for the amounts requested and will detail the services a locality will lose if it does not fund the full request. Each locality will appropriate funds as its governing board determines.

Typically, the regional library Board will contract with one of the member localities to provide accounting, payroll, purchasing, and audit services.

Programming is coordinated centrally, with the goal of addressing any unique needs a locality may have. New services are approved centrally.

The Bedford Public Library System is an example of this model. This system serves Bedford City and County.

Appendix C.

Library Usage Increases

The economic downturn has certainly been felt in all sectors of government. The public library, however, is in the unique position, shared possibly by only public safety and the department of social service, in which usage is increasing as resources are decreasing. Libraries have long been a cost-saving and cost-avoiding vehicle for citizens, as statistically presented by Mary Jo Lynch in *American Libraries* with the first recession of the century, noting an average 8% increase in usage over an 8th month period after recession was declared¹. The availability of computers, internet, recreational reading, periodicals, newspapers at the public library allow citizens to cut these items from their personal budgets. The localities have reported their increased usage as follows:

	2009	2010
Appomattox: <i>Circulation</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>
<i>Visits</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>
<i>Computer Use</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>
Amherst: <i>Circulation</i>	7%	8%
<i>Visits</i>	5%	8%
<i>Computer Use</i>	13%	23%
Bedford: <i>Circulation</i>	-2%	2%
<i>Visits</i>	4%	6.5%
<i>Computer Use</i>	18%	26%
Campbell: <i>Circulation</i>	2.3%	1.5%
<i>Visits</i>	11%	6%
<i>Computer Use</i>	54%	7%
Lynchburg ⁴ : <i>Circulation</i>	0.47%	-6.2%
<i>Visits</i>	-1.62%	-3.79%
<i>Computer Use</i>	11.78%	19.35%

This is true not only in Region 2000 but across the Commonwealth and indeed the nation. The American Library Association reported in 2006 that 82% of public libraries across the country experienced a net reduction in funding² while usage climbed at average rates of 6-9% annually. Further, a 2010 Harris Interactive Survey indicates net increases in usage of all library services, but particularly computer and internet access and job seeker resources³.

¹ Lynch, Mary Jo (2002) *Economic Hard Times and Public Library Use Revisited*. American Libraries, August 2002, p. 61-62.

² Davis, Denise (2006) *Funding Issues in U.S. Public Libraries, Fiscal Years 2003-2006*. American Library Association. Accessed 10/3/10

<http://www.ala.org/ala/research/librarystats/public/fundingissuesinuspls.pdf>

³ American Library Association (2010) *State of America's Libraries*. Accessed 10/3/10

http://www.ala.org/ala/newspresscenter/mediapresscenter/americaslibraries/ALA_Report_2010-ATI001-NEW1.pdf

4 2009 was Lynchburg Public Library's busiest year in its history.

Appendix D.

Recommended Steps for Furtherance of Library Service Discussion (supported by a consultant)

1. **Planning level analysis.** A planning level analysis will be undertaken to include the following:

- A thorough examination of all library facilities owned by participating library units. This examination would include:
 - a. Size and condition of structure
 - b. Interior arrangement
 - c. Use level
 - d. Accessibility including parking
- An examination of staffing levels at participating library units. This examination would include:
 - a. Number of staff
 - b. Education and experience of staff
 - c. Library organizational structure
- An examination of the fiscal resources available at participating library units. This examination would include:
 - a. Study of current funding for participating library units
 - b. Discussions with library directors and local government administrators on funding projections for the next five years.
 - c. Study of budgets for participating library units
 - d. Recommendation on feasibility of fiscal funding for regional service improvements
- An examination of the programs and services offered by participating library units.
 - a. Study of current programs and services offered by participating library units
 - b. Discussions with library directors and local government administrators on program and service needs and expectations
 - c. Recommendation on program and services for regional service improvements
- An examination of the commitment to proceed with regional service improvements. This examination would include:
 - a. Meeting individually with each public library director
 - b. Meeting individually with the local government administrator in each governmental entity
 - c. Meeting with Region 2000 staff involved in the project
 - d. Other meetings as determined necessary

This planning process is viewed as a fatal flaw analysis. The project deliverable would be a report indicating whether there is merit in pursuing further steps towards a greater level of regional cooperation and service improvements, including possibly a larger unit of service. If there is found to be merit the report would include recommendations to move forward, possibly including library locations and staffing structure for a larger unit of library service. Cost for the consultant services is estimated at \$15,000. A reasonable time frame for this planning analysis is four to six months.

2. **Detailed financial and operational analysis.** If it is determined by participating library units and their governmental entities that a greater level of regional service improvement is warranted, planning begins for the establishment of this enhanced service. This will be a detailed and

intensive process. The description of this process and budget will be determined at the conclusion of the previous step.

3. **Service implementation.** The description of this process and budget will be determined at the conclusion of the previous step

4.

Appendix E.

Privatization Articles of Interest

Martin, R., et al. (June 2000) *The Impact of Outsourcing and Privatization On Library Services and Management*. Texas Woman's University School of Library and Information Studies, Austin,

TX. http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/oif/iftoolkits/outsourcing/outsourcing_doc.pdf

McCarron, J. (October, 2010) *Taking It Private*. Planning, American Planning Association

McElroy, J. (November, 2010) *When Bad Things Happen To Good Plans*. Planning, American Planning Association.

Savas, E.S. (September 2001) *Privatization Initiatives*. National Council for Public Private Partnerships

http://www.ncppp.org/resources/papers/savas_privatization.pdf

Strietfeld, D. (September 27, 2010) *Anger as Private Company Takes Over Library*, New York Times, New York.

Appendix F.

'Ideal Library Services'

Goals Statement

Access: Citizens would have access to the collections, services and programs of any library located therein, regardless of residency, incurring no user fees at any location. One library card would offer borrowing privileges at locations. Materials could be returned or renewed at any location. Materials would be moved about to satisfy patron needs through a courier service.

Collection: The collection of all libraries would be coordinated for maximized depth and breadth for educational, informational, and recreational needs (print and electronic). Patrons would have access to expanded selection of databases and electronic resources.

Programming: Library programs would be tailored to individual community needs but benefit from centralized or collaborative planning and execution.

Staffing: Patrons would be assisted by professional, well-trained staff of librarians and assistants, adequate to meet each facility's demand, supported by centralized administrative staff, including technology support, cataloging and processing, fiscal and human resource management.

Facilities: All library facilities would be built in high traffic areas with visibility. Buildings would be planned to make library access possible to all residents with a drive of twenty minutes or less, regardless of governmental boundaries. All buildings would be designed to meet the changing needs of the community and allow for current and future technological needs. A variety of meeting spaces would be made available for public use, from small collaboration to large gathering. All facilities will be well maintained.

Services: All library locations would have print and non print collections, electronic resources, programming, and training for its users. Library services would not be determined in cookie cutter design, but respond to the specific needs of its users.

Typical services would include:

- Programming
- Reference Provision
- Computer/Internet access-PC and wireless
- Loan of materials (courier, inter-library loan, and e-materials)
- Provision of electronic databases
- Computer instruction
- Children's services & reference
- Fax and copy facilities
- Notary of the Public access
- Community room access
- Additional services as identified by public need.

Governance: Citizens would participate in the governance of the libraries through representation on a governing board.

Community Engagement: All libraries will engage their citizens through organizations such as Friends of the Library or other community partnerships.