



**Board of Trustees Safety Workshop
And Long Range Plan Meeting
21 November 2023 Minutes**

Trustees Attending: Stephanie Thompson, Lauren Emert, Susan Williams, Logan Hill, Greg Brakebill, Tim Moore, Dawn Reagan, Andy Simon, Shawn Graham

Staff Attending: Manny Leite - BCPL Director, Anjanae Brueland, Summer Dale

Visitors: Dee Barham and Dick Burgess - Friends of the Blount County Public Library, Chad Hampton - Blount County Public Library Foundation, Mariah Franklin - The Daily Times

Call to Order: Stephanie Thompson called the Blount County Public Library Board to order on 21 November 2023 at 4:30 pm.

Public Comment

- The board did not hear comments from members of the public.

Report of Blount County Public Library Director by Manny Leite:

- Stephanie asked Manny to speak on the progress already made brought up by the Safety Concerns presented at the last Safety Workshop.
- The exterior of the property has been cleaned and the bushes and trees have been trimmed/removed. This was done to prevent loitering after hours. Manny has already received many compliments from patrons and staff.
- There has been an increase in Police presence inside and outside BCPL. Police from Maryville and ALcoa have been coming on a daily basis doing perimeter sweeps. Officers do a couple of walk throughs throughout the day and an officer waits in their vehicle when available at close to see staff to their cars safely. Manny has also been notified that the police do nightly sweeps of the parking lot.
 - Staff members have said that in the mornings around 7am-7:15am there are less vehicles hanging around in the parking lot due to the increased police presence.
- Justin McClure, head of the IT department, will be here at 5:30pm to give an update on the SARA system, which includes mobile panic buttons.
- Manny brought up the idea of walkie-talkies, especially with regards to the Teen Room and Children's department. The specific walkie-talkies that are being looked at can handle a 22,000 square foot range. Walkie-talkies seem to be more convenient to use especially in a crisis situation rather than a cell phone. These walkie-talkies will need to be charged when not in use.
- Manny attended a training this morning put on by TEMA. The group talked about incidents and active attacks as well as any terrorist attacks on public buildings. Mayor Mitchell and other department heads attended.
- There has already been confirmation from staff, Chelsea Mathenia and Beth Coppenger, regarding their desire to be on the Safety Committee. There has been other interest as well from interested parties such as the head of Risk Management, Justin McClure from IT, and a

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commissioner. We would also like a Board member, a Friend of the Library, a member of Law Enforcement...etc.

- The goal would be to meet every month or every quarter to discuss the safety concerns and solutions.
- At the Board Meeting it has been requested that a Board member make a motion to form the Safety Committee.
- If you have any recommendations for Committee members please let Manny or Stephanie know.
- The SARA system was discussed. This panic button is on every computer in the library for emergency use. When pushed, it automatically dispatches to the 911 center and our camera system focuses on the station that pushed the button.
- Stephanie has assigned a security category to each Board member and passed out a worksheet to fill out. Summer printed off and previously distributed the notes from the last Safety and Security Workshop as well as Staff input to use as reference.
 1. "Staff Training and Communication" - Manny Leite and Dawn Reagan
 2. "Wifi Tables" - Andy Simon and Tim Moore
 3. "Communication" - Lauren Emert and Anjanae Brueland
 4. "Unhoused Population" - Shawn and Logan
 5. "Check Outside Lighting" - Tim and Andy
 6. "Isolation of Bathrooms" - Greg and Susan
 7. "Basement" - Stephanie and Dee
 8. "Main Admin Hallway Door" - Manny and Dawn
 9. Everyone, be sure to check the "Other" category as well.

The Board broke into groups for about 15 minutes to discuss the above categories.

Stephanie called the Board to order at 5:16pm to present their findings.

1. "Staff Training and Communication" - Manny Leite and Dawn Reagan
 - Manny expressed that the Library needs to have clear communication with staff when any incident comes up.
 - BCPL will be purchasing Walkie-Talkies for staff.
 - Justin McClure, IT Director, spoke about the SARA system. SARA is installed on all computers and has been configured to fire off events to one another. When an event is fired off it goes directly to the 911 center and brings up the camera closest to the event. This will help first responders. There will be a big test of the SARA system next week.
 - Justin also spoke on the Mobile Panic Buttons. Blount County Schools use a pendant version that is a bit more IT heavy using antennas and triangulation to determine the exact location of an event. This would be a more expensive option for BCPL. SARA is coming out with an App for your phone similar to this which also goes directly to dispatch.

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- There is also an option to hardwire a panic button in specific locations within the library such as desktop computers. This is the easiest option to do.
 - Justin McClure will be on the Safety Committee.
2. “Wifi Tables (and Check Outside Lighting)” - Andy Simon and Tim Moore
- Another camera should be in place. They discussed investigating a flexible on/off based on light so that in the summer it would stay on later with the sunshine and in the winter it would turn off earlier.
 - Tim suggested throttling back the speed of the wifi table outside of operating hours. Limiting the experience to a lesser wifi speed so that you are not capable of streaming video but checking email and limited experiences.
 - We currently have that capability now.
 - Obtain an additional camera focussed on the wifi area with high lumen motion activation.
 - Logan expressed that the damage to the wifi tables was not done by the unhousted population but vandalism. The issue is maintenance and repair. There was no agreement regarding maintenance. A Maintenance of Effort needs to be established. We need to address this and communicate this to the donating organizations.
 - Summer to look in past Minutes.
3. “Communication” - Lauren Emert and Anjanae Brueland
- Lauren expressed that the biggest issue seems to be a lack of transparency. There are 2 audiences that need to be addressed; Internally with the Staff, Board and some Stakeholders as well as the Friends and Foundation as well as externally with the Community.
 - One unified message or script for the staff to communicate to patrons and the public. Dawn Reagan suggested that there be a singular staff member to direct questions to. Anjanae explained that with our current Social Media Crisis Plan there is one message that directs the public to the director email ie “Please reach out to bcpl.director@blounttn.org”
 - There is a staff portal where Manny shares incidents and outcomes and information to all staff.
 - As far as short term solutions, the Public Relations Team will begin Public Relations training and certification. One of the subjects being Crisis Management where they will gain new skills to utilize. Also, implementing the SARA system and possibly printing out a script to be used by staff.
 - Mid to Long Term Solutions will be to continue having transparency and an Open door policy for staff and community, to come talk to Manny. We will tweak these practices as we go along.

Stephanie stopped the Safety Workshop and Long Range Plan meeting as we had run out of time. The following was summarized from the Worksheets completed by the remaining Board Members:

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4. "Unhoused Population" - Shawn and Logan
 - The issue that was identified was that all people are welcome but there are some unhoused population that are loitering and causing problems at the library. The question is, is A Place To Stay (APTS) contributing to the problem?
 - We need more information and should get that information from A Place To Stay staff, Library staff and Law Enforcement.
 - Short Term solutions include finding out the true role of APTS; what are their services/how many are served; Ascertain problems which have been caused/ or not by the unhoused; Issuing Trespass Orders to people who are disruptive.
 - Mid-Term Solutions include checking Quarterly to determine if problems are occurring and to determine if WiFi throttling down is contributing to less difficulties.
 - Long-Term solutions include Re assess whether or not it is still feasible for APTS to stay in place. And making information available to the public.
 - Other thoughts include Walkie-Talkies, 2 hour Workshop at the Blount County courthouse, a monthly or quarterly meeting of the Safety Committee, WiFi now goes off at 8pm and on at 8am, and putting SARA on every computer.
5. "Check Outside Lighting" - Tim and Andy
 - Included and discussed in #2 "Wifi Tables"
6. "Isolation of Bathrooms" - Greg and Susan
 - The issue is that the Restrooms are remote.
 - No other information is needed. The Short Term Solution would be to remove the doors. The partitions are placed as such so it is somewhat discreet. Restroom vestibule configuration is similar to an airport terminal where you can walk in through an opening.
 - Mid-term solutions include possibly adding an angular or convex mirror on the Library outer wall that faces the entry desk.
 - Other suggestions include:
 - The bushes and vegetation to be trimmed.
 - Maryville Police Department and Alcoa Police Department patrolling.
 - Watching staff members leave at BCPL closing.
 - Also, sweeping the parking lot after hours.
 - Walkie-Talkies
 - Manny to do 2 hours of training workshop at the Courthouse.
 - Lance Coleman (Risk Management Director) to give discussion on forming an ad hoc safety committee.
 - WiFi turned off from 8pm to 8am.
7. "Basement" - Stephanie and Dee
 - The issues are controlling access in and out of the Basement as well as the fact that the Fire Alarms are not accessible.

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- Short term solutions include a back door push bar and alarm plus communication and a way to get back inside.
 - Walkie Talkies to use in the Basement.
 - Uncover the Fire Alarms.
 - Mid-term solutions include adding electrical outlets.
8. “Main Admin Hallway Door” - Manny and Dawn
- Patrons can walk down Admin hallway unannounced. Concerns include theft and unruly interactions (which has occurred).
 - Solutions: Spoke with General Services about installing a card swiper to access the Admin. hallway. It would be similar to the one to enter the Staff break room from the outside. General Services said it could be done. Once installed, cards will be given to The Friends, Foundation, Writer-in-Residence, A Place to Stay, Be Aware Blount and Trustee Chair & Co-Chair. There will be cards available for Board members at the Check-Out desk.

In closing, Shawn Graham expressed that once the Safety Committee meets we will find that many of these categories will be interconnected.

Stephanie thanked everyone for attending this Safety Workshop.

Important Dates

Other Library Meetings

Blount County Commission Meeting – 21 December 2023, 7:00 pm – BC Courthouse

Blount County Friends of the Library – 28 November 2023, 4:00 pm – BCPL

Foundation for the Blount County Public Library – 15 December 2023, 8:00 am – BCPL

Maryville City Council - 5 December 2023, 7:00 pm – Maryville Municipal Bldg

Alcoa Board of Commissioners - 12 December 2023, 7:00 pm – Alcoa Municipal Bldg

Next Library Board Meeting – 16 January 2023, 5:30 pm, Sharon Lawson Room

The next Library Board Meeting will be held on 21 November 2023, following this Safety Workshop at 5:30 pm, in the Sharon Lawson Room.

Respectfully submitted,

Summer Dale