

# THE LIBRARY BOARD COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

## Library of Virginia

April 17, 2023

### EDUCATION, OUTREACH, AND RESEARCH SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Education, Outreach, and Research Services Committee met at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 5, 2023, virtually over Zoom. The following committee members were in attendance: Robert L. Canida II, *vice chair*; Peter E. Broadbent Jr.; Barbara Vines Little; Shelley Viola Murphy; Lana Real; and Marcy Sims. Also in attendance were Gregg D. Kimball, Director of Public Services and Outreach; Catherine Fitzgerald Wyatt, Education and Outreach Manager; Angela Flagg, Marketing and Communications Director; and C. Paul Brockwell Jr., Library Board Chair. Committee members Robert D. Aguirre, *chair*, and Carol G. Finerty were absent.

Dr. Kimball reported on planning for a potential Library project for the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution. Mr. Broadbent had shared his thoughts with the Library's staff about a possible crowdsourcing project to document the signers of the so-called "10,000 name petition" to the General Assembly which advocated for religious freedom. Sandra G. Treadway, Librarian of Virginia, brought together several senior managers to assess this proposal. Staff members reviewed the petition collection and consulted with historians, digital humanities scholars, and Library staff. The Library has more than 2,000 petitions from 1776 to 1786. While religious petitions are the third largest category of total petitions, many others cover topics significant to the Revolution: land grants and pensions, war materiel, manumission and slavery, etc. All the content lends itself well to the themes articulated as a "Revolution of Ideas" by Virginia's American Revolution 250 Commission. As a totality, the collection paints a compelling picture of Revolutionary Virginia with petitions from every region of the state. Programming and educational offerings based on the petitions will also be developed. The Library plans to have a draft of the proposal in the coming weeks, which will be vetted with Commission staff in advance of a possible presentation at the Commission's July meeting.

Dr. Kimball and Ms. Wyatt described the Library's project to collaborate with Virginia's 11 state and federally recognized Indian tribes on an exhibition exploring the Library's collections. The Library held an initial organizational meeting with the tribes in the summer of 2022. During the second phase of the project, Library staff members visited eight of the 11 tribes at their headquarters/reservations. We continue to reach out to the other three tribes. These wide-ranging conversations not only yielded useful ideas for the exhibition but also identified areas where the Library could support the tribes in the future, such as developing a digital archive of indigenous materials from its collections. The third phase of the project is now beginning. The Library will videotape representatives from each tribe as they reflect on materials from the Library's collections that are significant to them. Each tribe will also identify key artifacts from their own collections for display. The exhibition will feature the interviews in digital interactives, foregrounding the voices of tribal members just as the Library did with the "New Virginians" exhibition. Several board members asked about the development of a land acknowledgement

statement for the Library. Staff members noted that this has been a point of conversation with the tribes and that such a statement would flow out of this process.

Ms. Wyatt and Ms. Flagg described progress to date on 2023 activities. The opening of the signature exhibition “200 Years / 200 Stories” was a resounding success. The exhibition has garnered significant interest including numerous tours and favorable press coverage. Signature programs have also been well attended and continued the exhibition’s storytelling theme. Brent Tarter’s talk on the origins of the Library’s book collection drew excellent reviews and about 130 participants. The panel discussion “The First Civil Rights: Black Political Activism After Claiming Freedom” garnered an enthusiastic audience, highlighting the 92 Black men who served in the General Assembly between 1869 and 1890. The program was co-sponsored by Virginia Humanities. For Women’s History Month, the Library hosted a panel discussion entitled “A Woman’s Place is in the House...of Delegates” on March 29, commemorating the 100th anniversary of women serving in the House of Delegates. Jennifer L. Lawless, Commonwealth Professor of Politics at the University of Virginia, moderated the distinguished panel that included Delegates Carrie E. Coyner, Charniele L. Herring, and Vivian E. Watts. All programs were recorded and are available on the Library’s YouTube channel. The launch for “LVA On the Go” occurred on March 25 at the Suffolk Library. Participants gave strong reviews to the Library’s programming and activities that featured genealogy, digital resources, and children’s activities. The Library’s specially designed “On the Go” vehicle will travel on its maiden voyage to Washington County Public Library on April 15.

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