

Hernando County Library Advisory Committee

Annual Report – 2011

Prepared by Janet Dunleavy, President

Purpose and Mission

The purpose of the Library Advisory Committee is to advise the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) on the development and implementation of sound programs for the Hernando County Public Library System and to assist in providing a feasible, adequate public library system.

Our mission is to review and recommend policies, procedures, and initiatives of the Library Services Manager and staff in order to promote and foster broad-based citizen use of library facilities, participation in library services and programs, and access to library materials. The Library Advisory Committee is the people's voice on matters pertaining to the Hernando County Public Library System.

Committee Membership and Meetings

Members of the 2011 Library Advisory Committee included:

Janet Dunleavy, President	Randi Redmon
Tommy Breedlove, Vice President	Adrienne Vining, Alternate
Sharon Neville	Art Croci, Second Alternate
Peter Limberis	Betty Jean Culliton (former member)

The Library Advisory Committee held monthly meetings at alternating locations of the Hernando County Public Library System. Routine committee business was conducted, public input received, recommendations made and ideas shared. Reports and updates were given by Library Administration on operational, financial, and statistical issues concerning the Hernando County Public Library System.

Highlights of Committee Activities and Accomplishments:

- Completed annual review and approval of Committee Goals and Objectives.
- Conducted review of applications for vacant Committee positions.
- Held Election of Officers (due to resignation).
- Special Guest Presentation by Community Development Director Jean Rags who spoke about the budget process and budgetary concerns facing the Library in the near future. Due to current economic conditions, the Library has funded less from the local General Fund which necessitated utilization of more grant dollars to fund the operating budget. The next two budget year would be crucial.
- Special Guest Presentation by Programming Specialist Mary GaNun on digital downloads.

Library Highlights and News:

- The Friends of the Library funded the annual library program costs and expenses. More than 481 programs were offered bringing an attendance count of 14,770. The Friends donated \$7,621 to the Library for programming and other operational expenses.

- Recipient of State Aid to Libraries Grant funding. State Aid has contributed greatly to maintaining important resources and services at the library, particularly in the wave of the current nationwide budget constraints.
- The University of South Florida Alumni Chapter was sponsoring a “1st Annual Hernando Book Stampede” and collecting gently used or new hardcover books to donate to the Hernando County Public Library.
- The Library met with representatives of the school system to discuss cooperative efforts between the Library System and the School System.
- Personnel changes impacted the Library System. Adam Brooks was named Interim Community Development Director in October upon the retirement of former Director Jean Rags. Restructuring included Outreach and Learning Services.
- Major strides were made toward streamlining library services: A new Integrated Library System was launched, new library logo and branding promotion was launched, the Library website was updated, services promoted by use of FaceBook, Twitter and other social media; the service desk at the Main Library was integrated.
- More than \$10,038 in donations were given to the Library. Funds included \$7,621 from the Friends of the Library and \$2,417 from patron donations.
- The Friends of the Library: received a bequest that was used to assist with funding of the new library branding and to purchase eReaders and iPads for library educational training and demonstration purposes, had team shirts created for Library Board, began receiving revenue from a new payroll deduction option available to county employees to contribute to the Friends of the Library.
- Five-Year Anniversary Celebrations were held for the Spring Hill and East Hernando Branch Libraries and the Little Red Schoolhouse Bookstore.

Budget & Financial Issues

Reports were given by Library Administration, updating the Committee on the latest budget developments. The economic struggle and loss of county revenue continue to impact the library system. Discussed ideas and possible solutions to address the projected budget revenue shortfall. In May 2011, it was estimated that, if the Board of County Commissioners continue to fund at the current level, grant funds were estimated to provide for approximately 2.5 years. On the legislative level, State Aid to Libraries Grant Funding was restored.

The Library continues making adjustments to reduce costs and further improve efficiency by consolidating, reducing, and making eliminations when possible, and is in constant pursuit of seeking ways to improve and simplify the processes. Despite the economic decline, 83,000 card holders visited the library 423,000 times annually, provided nearly 264,000 informational and referral responses, and checked out 655,000 materials. Staff continues to strive to provide the best possible service with a reduced staff.

The State Aid to Libraries Grant funding and the support by the Friends of the Library and the community have given us a new and overwhelming sense of gratitude during this burdensome financial crisis.

Concluding Comments

The Board of County Commissioners carry a heavy responsibility to make decisions that are best for the community as a whole and the decision making becomes more difficult when compounded with continued budget cuts during treacherous economic times, such as these. We remain confident that, during their deliberations, the BOCC considers the unprecedented value libraries have within the community and that they will strive to preserve them for the patrons who make over one-half million visits to the library annually. In this digital age, libraries are heavily relied upon because of the available technology, as we see by the multitude of patrons who utilized the public Internet and wireless connection during their visits this year. Citizens increasingly rely on public libraries as the basis for their source of information, education, entertainment, and enjoyment.

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to serve on the Library Advisory Committee and we are appreciative to the Board of County Commissioners for granting us the opportunity to be advocates for library services in our community.