

**WASHINGTON COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM  
COMMUNITY FORUM NOTES**

**May 27, 2015  
Cottage Grove**

The following suggestions and comments were expressed by the attendees at the Cottage Grove Community Forum on Thursday, May 27, 2015. Attendees were asked to write down their wishes and desires for the future of the Washington County Library System under the following themes. Their comments were recorded according to the following themes:

**PROGRAMS (Adults, Teens, Children)**

**Seniors:**

- Services for seniors
- Services to seniors
  - Delivery of sets for book clubs
  - Classes on how to use ebooks, and computers for research or news or email
  - Bookmobiles
- Outreach to senior housing

**Children:**

- Facilitate finding books for kids – make it easier for a 6-12 year old reader to find a book in which he/she can be excited
- Increase early childhood programs (ages 4-5)
- Keep up good programs in Cottage Grove for ages 3-5 (storytime and learning programs)
- Programs to enhance awareness of being a Global Citizen, i.e. educating kids to create thirst to learn about the world outside of Washington County

**Teens:**

- Teen space needed at Park Grove
- More directions for teen readers
  - Teen Council
  - Teen Book Club
  - Teen involvement
- Book clubs for teens

- Outreach for teens – are they part of this process?
- Increase availability of interesting ways for teens to share ideas – teen book clubs and also to use and develop skills in creative ways – service projects (e.g. read story time do puppet theater, create videos which inform or entertain such as video a story for younger kids)

### **Volunteer Opportunities:**

- Educate/outreach to community about volunteer opportunities at the library
- Provide books and volunteers to serve the homebound

### **Overall Programming and Program Space:**

- Expand classes and learning opportunities for all ages and all locations
- Keep the breadth of services offered now – call-in reference, homework help, how to use ebooks tutorials, children’s services, teen spaces
- Coffee shop for readers
- Need separate:
  - Early literacy space
  - Teen space
  - Quiet space
  - Sharing space

## **COLLECTIONS: Print, Media, Downloadable**

### **Books:**

- Get “new releases” (books) on the day released
- Keep lots of children’s/early learning books available
- Maintain access to current collections (print, media, downloadable) with access to additional materials (newspapers, reference materials)
- Keep collections as they are
- Books! Maintain books for children, teens, adults
- I know ebooks were supposed to be the next big thing, but my grandkids are reading Books. I like access to Bayport, Stillwater, etc. in the County, the ability to request and hold books there.
- Keep books – show this as an option for children
- Coordinate with local historical organizations for collection in the library system

### **eBooks:**

- Be a part of the Minnesota ebook collection
- Keep expanding ebook titles. Figure out a way around the number of titles available so people don’t have to wait for an ebook.
- Expand ebook collections
- Keep the 3-M and Washington County downloadable books.

### **Specific Collections and Formats:**

- Keep print magazines as well as electronic
- More directions for teen readers
  - Teen council
  - Teen book club
  - Teen involvement
- More access to historical and American music
- Provide digital resources for learning
- Increase ability/availability of resources to borrow besides books – such as technology to create DVDs, or to transfer older audio/video media to digital
- Plan to embrace new forms of materials
- Provide opportunities for people to access music onsite, at home and share knowledge with others

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Access:**

- Higher speed internet access
- Embrace technology!
  - Provide for ease of access
  - Provide educational opportunities
- Make technology accessible and less intimidating to seniors
- Keep MN Link – a fabulous resource
- Maintain and enhance technology, services and resources
- Balance between people with money and those with limited resources
- The library should be a place where everyone in the community can access the most current technology, keep it current
- Keep copiers, printers and public stations. Anyone might need them on any given day, even if they have one at home.
- I don't like having to log into the wi-fi every time I enter the library.
- There needs to be a balance between technology and printed materials.
- I don't see how libraries can keep up with changing technology. It changes constantly and I think you should leave that to Best Buy as far as hardware goes. Kids have their own tablets and laptops so the plug-ins may be a necessity.
- Automation whenever possible (i.e. self check in/out). What else can be done in this direction?
- Bring back Washington Library County independent website with increased links to interesting avenues for learning and gathering information. New York Public Library, for example, has excellent podcasts. Brainpickings.org discusses interesting, current ideas using books available from public libraries.
- What about school-library duplication of services?
- Do we integrate with the district school technology?

### **Education and Training:**

- Provide funds and training for a service like Woodbury's "reserve police". Train volunteers 16 years and up to provide technical and library assistance
- Cross-generational meeting to trade ideas or new electronic gadgets and services
- Makerspaces

## **TRAINING AND CLASSES**

### **Training/Class content:**

- Need more lifelong learning programs
- Training and programs for various age and talented groups
- Classes offered should be based on community requests and needs
- Provide digital training and a dedicated room with funding
- Provide classes on how to research topics
- Musical instruments
- Health training (exercise, diet, blood pressure)
- How to sort through and organize online data services
- Give more classes on utilizing technology not just for elders but younger age groups for them to see the potential

### **Concern for Duplication with Community Ed:**

- Leave training classes to community education for the county
- Needs are currently met with community education programs
- Do we think the library can handle this better than other options? Why are the other options not offering training and classes?
- Leave training and classes with community ed
- Community ed. type classes should not be duplicated
- Community ed. classes are not free

## **COMMUNITY GATHERING**

Some meeting space is needed

- Initiate mentoring/learning between generations and demographics
- One central place in the community where all age groups are free to gather.
- Yes - small, medium and large gathering spaces
- A community gathering room is great for author visits, non-profit groups to gather, and Book Clubs!
- As public spaces, libraries should have meeting rooms available for community groups without charge.
- This is important to maintain
- Should be educational/literacy related (book clubs, author visits, etc.)
- Need a mission statement. Is the library the best option here?

- Libraries as gathering place to share ideas, learn and discuss – keep this! Book clubs, places to meet for Toastmasters, clubs and much more
- Making/keeping libraries open for community activities and encouraging more
- Have the main space of the library be for social interactions and energy and have dedicated quiet rooms for reading
- Community programs get bumped from school spaces if the students need the space – sometimes without enough notice
- Access to meeting rooms is difficult
- Make any public library space “nice”. It does not have to be cinder block and boring.
- Woodbury style space is appreciated.

## **FUNDING**

- Prioritize county funding to maintain hours and days of being open
- I would pay more taxes for access to a library in my community.
- Raise taxes for better libraries
- I will pay more to keep libraries open and staffed!
- We get the quality we pay for – we should spend more public dollars whatever we do
- The funding and staff to keep daytime and nighttime hours for 7 days a week at Stafford Library is a #1 priority
- Provide bookmobiles to communities
- A blend of taxes and private funding
- Help encourage a robust fundraising organization

## **STAFFING**

- Provide staffing to assist with technology
- More libraries and more training for staff
- Make use of volunteers
- The current model seems to work well.

## **VIRTUAL SERVICES**

- Yes!
- Provide virtual meetings via phones for groups to use
- More promotion for existing databases

## **OUTREACH**

- Bookmobiles – time for a return
- Books-on-wheels – like meds-on-wheels home delivery
- Expand outreach to schools, elderly neighborhoods, classes
- Online and bookmobile
- Reach out to county and city planning groups – bring plans to the library
- Provide tours of regional libraries and other county libraries

- Better coordination of volunteer services – delivering books to seniors, reading to preschoolers, literacy volunteers. What else can volunteers do through the local library?
- Please reach out to non-served county residents in all communities.
- Articles in the local newspapers about what the libraries offer or are doing (Watershed districts do this.)

## **LOCATION**

### **Space Suggestions:**

- Provide funds and staff for a meeting room for groups and a sound-proofed “music room” for all ages to meet and to play instruments together.
- Provide meeting rooms

### **Access:**

- Keep libraries in lower economic areas accessible – perhaps utilizing technological accessible kiosks
- Provide circulation/transportation (for lower economic areas) for library hubs
- Coordinate with current transit discussion in this region to improve access and ease for all residents to local and regional libraries
- Locate near other civic buildings that have reasons to be points of gathering and service – a one stop shop.
- Facilities and capital planning for libraries

### **Specific Locations:**

- Come visit the Lake Elmo Library
- Add teen room space at Woodbury
- Expand and enhance community spaces, meeting rooms, and parking at Woodbury
- Inadequate parking at Woodbury
- Park Grove needs to stay in the same location even if a new building is needed. That location serves a low-income area, specifically teens and kids.
- Keep Park Grove library at current location. Update the current library.
- Work with the City of Cottage Grove to expand the trail system from Oakwood Park and the surrounding area to the library.
- City of Newport is separate – tie in with Washington County and South Washington schools, churches and social services
- Coordinate better with independent libraries, especially on the website

## **OTHER**

- People should talk freely in the library – have rooms for quiet study.
- Mixed age spaces
- Animation is too fast for young brains
- Library card should be incorporated into driver’s license so one card not two
- Keep emphasis on books (not all technology)
- Real wood tables, checkout counters, etc.

- Stained glass windows and chandeliers
- No scents in the library – put signs in the restrooms – no perfumes – clean air
- Establish formal planning with schools
- Wish List: Open longer hours and a coffee shop
- We need a mission statement: What do we want the library to do?
- Need to make sure there are quiet areas in all libraries.
- Long-term plan coordination
- We have gorgeous facilities. Can they be open longer so that the community has access when schools, etc. are not open?
- Accessible services – resources for people of all abilities
- Develop a facilities upgrade and maintenance plan
- Dampen outside sounds within the library