

BTBL User Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
May 19, 2014

ATTENDEES

Members: Deborah Armstrong, Kathleen Berman, Margie Donovan, Roslyn McCoy, Karen Parsegian, Alan Smith, Georgeta Tanase, and Elena Thomason.
Members Absent: Thomas Mason, Tiffany Manosh
Staff: Mike Marlin, Mary Jane Kayes
Special Guest: Greg Lucas, State Librarian

Library Tour

Several members toured the Braille and Talking Book Library prior to the meeting.

Call to Order

The inaugural meeting of the Braille and Talking book library's user advisory council (BUAC) was called to order at 10:30 AM by BTBL Director Mike Marlin. Introductions by committee members were made, as well as introductions from the welcoming BTBL staff

State Librarian of California Greg Lucas joined the meeting to welcome the members and shared his thoughts about libraries.

Background/Scope

Mike covered some ground rules of conduct such as treating others with respect, giving all ideas a fair hearing, and abiding by Roberts Rules of Order.

He then provided a detailed outline of his goals for the library and the council. Mike stated he wanted to form this council so BTBL would receive "an outside view." With limited resources, he wants to ensure he serves patrons in the best way possible. He hopes members will be serious about representing their constituencies and be willing to give BTBL advice. He wants both positive and negative feedback.

Library history, organization of BTBL (as well as the state library), services provided, and statistics were shared. He continued with a brief review of NLS standards, and the library's fiscal outlook.

Goals

- Continuing to update the public reading room (in Sacramento) and increasing its walk-in traffic
- Expanding the collection to contain more books that are of interest to Californians
- Putting more outreach materials online so any patron could share information

about BTBL with others

- With further outreach he hopes to increase the number of patrons, serving under-represented groups better such as juveniles, those living in rural areas, and newly blinded people. He'd like to see Braille usage increase, and he'd like to see more volunteers narrating local materials in BTBL's recording studios.
- A long term goal would be hiring a children's librarian and an area devoted to young readers.

Besides future plans, Mike covered challenges the library faces. The recession has impacted its budget, reducing staff and making it difficult to serve special populations and effectively handle outreach. The shrinking patron numbers are a serious concern because there are so many legally blind citizens in Northern California that are unaware of BTBL's services. Mike stressed BTBL's dependence on federal funds, but also pointed out BTBL does receive some income from donors and its endowment.

Council's Role /By-laws

Mike detailed what the committee can and cannot do. Most importantly, the Council can not represent itself to legislators as a group, only as individual patrons. There were many questions from members on the appropriateness of advocacy. Members were eager to assist with outreach -- promoting BTBL both to lawmakers and the general public.

Mike clarified the Council's role, explaining members could advocate personally as individual BTBL patrons, but not officially as the library's advisory council (which would constitute lobbying). He explained that, BTBL is a state agency that reports directly to the governor, and therefore its advisory council would be required to refrain from lobbying just as the library may not publicly advocate political positions.

Council Officer Elections

Officers elected were:

- Alan Smith president
- Margie Donovan vice-president,
- Deborah Armstrong secretary.

The meeting concluded with a discussion of suggestions for future agenda topics. This included the organization of an event to invite legislators to tour the library and see where their money goes. Mike also requested that members review the by-laws for possible revisions.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:15 PM.

Next Meeting

September 6, 2014, 10:00

California State Library Annex
900 N Street
Sacramento CA 95814

Minutes submitted by Deborah Armstrong and Karen Parsegian