



**Thomas Balch Library  
Advisory Commission  
Agenda  
7PM – 10 February 2021**

- Call to Order
- Welcoming New Commissioner: Adrian Mattina and reappointment of Russ Woolard, Mary Pellicano, Martha Schonberger
- Approval of Minutes – 09 December 2020
- Library Director's Report – December 2020-January 2021
- Friends of TBL, Inc. Report – Don Cooper, President of the Friends
- TBL Foundation Report – Alexandra S. Gressitt, Secretary/Treasurer, TBL Foundation Board
- Old Business:
  - Library Strategic Plan Catalog Project Discussion/updates-Gressitt/Hershman
  - Historical marker for Leesburg's Potters Field – Pellicano/Jewell
  - 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration
- New Business: Election of Officers by 31 March 2021
  - Commission Annual Report due
  - Electronic meetings
  - Boards and Commission Portal
  - Group Picture for Website
- Comments from Councilmanic/Commissioners

***Next Advisory Commission meeting Wednesday, 10 March 2021 @ 7PM.***

*If you require any type of reasonable accommodation, as a result of a physical, sensory, or mental disability, to attend and/or participate in this meeting, please contact Alexandra S. Gressitt, Library Director at 703-737-7195 or [Balchlib@leesburgva.gov](mailto:Balchlib@leesburgva.gov). Three days advance notice is requested.*

**Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission**  
**9 December 2020**  
**Library Director's Report**

**Activities:**

**Exhibits:** For December in the Mercer Room the exhibit is Granny's Cooking: Meals at 21 West Loudoun Street, 1950's – 1970's curated by Charles A. Johnston and in the Meeting Room for October-December Bethany Widom - A Step in Time. Viewing is by appointment only. Town press releases have been issued for both exhibits.

**Grants:** The Library remains appreciative of the many grants received through the years and continues to look for opportunities for grant funding for processing and preservation of our collections. At this time we do not have sufficient staffing to be considered for to implement any new grants.

**Lecture Series, Classes, Tours & Other Activities:** Classes and exhibits are by appointment only. In person events and tours remain on hold due to social distancing requirements. Due to the recent rise in COVID-19 activity we are again limiting reservations to one (1) researcher per two hour appointment and no more than two (2) individuals at a time to visit exhibits. We are halting donations for the remainder of the year and anticipate with the upcoming winter break there will be a reduction in ILL service as College and university Libraries close. This service will continue so long as institutions are open to lend.

**Publications/Products:** Nothing new.

**Building and Grounds:** The leak in the Mercer Room has been repaired. Dry wall has been patched and painting to repair leak damage is to take place the week of December 7 in the Clark, Janney and Mercer Rooms.

**Outreach:** Outreach for November included the Preservation for Home Archives virtual workshop led by Gabrielle Sanchez; preparing and installing the November exhibit "Pastimes: games, amusements and other diversions from Thomas Balch Library Collections" in the Mercer room. Staff collaborated with Charles A. Johnston to prepare the exhibit "Granny's Cooking" on view through December; collaborated with staff at Loudoun Heritage Farm Museum, and Loudoun County's Mapping and Planning department; was consulted by Loudoun Museum staff about large format scanners and options for digitization of large items and served as consultants to Fairfax County Public Library staff in regard to VIVA VA Heritage.

Public access to our social media posts for **FY21:** Total reach for November 2020: 41,493 and the number of engaged Facebook users: 5,424 The number of Instagram views in November 2020: 650 and the number of Twitter views: 3,563

**Collections:**

**November 2020 Activity:**

Accessions: 5

Collections Processed: 0

Additions made to collections: 0

Additions to Vertical files/Maps: 4

Collections being processed: 7

Photographs catalogued or scanned: 0  
Collection guides sent for posting to NUCMC: 0  
Collection guides posted by NUCMC (for a total of 399): 0  
Collection guides posted to VIVA (for a total of 315): 0  
Collection guides updated on VIVA: 0  
Collection guides posted on town website (for a total of 356): 345 collection guides; 1 digital collection; and 10 indices): 0  
Collection guides updated: 0  
Web updates: 6  
Items listed on Archives Grid: 700 (less 314 VIVA): 386  
Books and Periodicals sent to LCPL for cataloguing: 0  
Books and Periodicals returned from LCPL: 0

**Accessions:** Donations for November included genealogy books and records collected by Ann Arnold Hennings a former resident of Loudoun County who recently passed away; miscellaneous artifacts including a brass foxhunting horn used in the Middleburg area; and several small collections purchased by Thomas Balch Library Endowment Foundation including: miscellaneous 18<sup>th</sup> century Loudoun County records, reference materials and correspondence related to the Exeter Property, Loudoun Branch of the Valley Bank Records (1818-1850), Loudoun Telephone Company Stock (1908-1911), broadsides and photographs. Additions were also made to the Fauquier and Loudoun Garden Club records as well as the library's growing collection of Covid-19 related documentation and materials.

Books of note donated included David D Smarr's 2019 book *The Pioneers of the Potomac Path: England's venture into the American wilderness: upon the creeks of Nomini, Passapatanzy, Choppawamsic, Accotink, Dogue, Little Hunting & the River Occoquan* and issues of the Genealogical Forum of Oregon's *Forum Insider* and *Anglican and Episcopal History*.

**Inventory:** Everything was inventoried by Bryan Fisher during the last quarter of FY2020 except for items stored in Town Hall. This portion of the inventory will be completed as the pandemic permits and furloughed staff returns.

**Digital Collections, Computers, and Microfilm:** Nothing new to report.

**Manuscript and Visual Collections:** During November 0 collection guides were posted to the website.

**Printed Collections:** During November a total of 101 items were added to the catalogue: 0 books was added to or corrected in the catalogue by TBL staff, 34 periodicals were added to the catalogue by TBL staff, 67 newspapers were received and inventoried, and 0 books/periodicals were returned by Loudoun County Public Library cataloging since the last report to the Commission. Books of Interest returned from cataloging include:

**Vertical Files (VF):** Additions and or updates to the microform index (0) ephemera files (1), vertical files (0) unpublished papers (3); and maps (0).

## **Personnel:**

**Interns/Student Researchers:** As of 14 March, due to COVID19 guidelines all interns and student researchers have been asked to take a hiatus until the health crisis has resolved itself.

**Staff:** All reference flex staff remains furloughed. Three full time staff are working; the Library admin is working up to 6 hours per week, an 84% reduction in time, and 1 flex staff member is processing the Elaine Thompson Collection utilizing grant funds for approximately 11 hours per week.

**News of Former Staff:** Shirley M. Mann a long-time supporter of Thomas Balch Library; volunteer, past President of the Friends of Thomas Balch Library, and flex staff member (1 July 1994-3 December 2005) passed away 25 November 2020 in Winchester.

**Volunteers:** Due to COVID19 and social distancing guidelines Volunteers are on hiatus until such time as the health crisis ends. The Library is working to set up distance (digital) projects for Volunteers to continue contributing. An initial offering was made to a select group for feedback. Revision in the process will be forthcoming.

**Cumulative Statistics for FY2021 (July 1, 2020- June 30, 2021):**

Effective March 14 at 4PM due to the COVID19 health crises the library was closed to the public. Commencing in June the Library moved through Phase 1 reopening to Phase 3 in July. Admission to the library for research or to view exhibits is by pre-scheduled appointment only. Based on our normal schedule (7 days a week including 3 evenings) during November the library was closed **27** days for COVID19 (21) and holidays (6). Total closures for FY21: **131** (*Covid 116; Holiday 15*). Please note the Library is open by appointment only on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Staff works on-site Monday through Friday handling virtual reference, tasks otherwise completed by the 10 furloughed staff and of the admin staff whose hours were cut 84% as well as their own assigned duties. All figures below are based on extant information at time of computations. Figures may change as heretofore unreported data is received.

**Facility Use Only (does not include off site events):** November 2021: **362**.

FY21: Cumulative July 1, 2020 – November 2021: **2,019**. The Library was closed to the public **131** of **153** days so far this FY but open for work **102** days averaging **20** visitors/donors and workmen to the library per work day.

**FY21 Totals:**

TBL Event/Meetings Attendees onsite: **330**  
TBL Event/Meetings Attendees offsite: **301 (not included in building count)**  
TBL Event/Meetings Attendees TOTAL: **631**  
TBL Events/Meetings: (**onsite 30/offsite 6**): **36**  
TBL Events Cancelled: **7**  
Meeting Room Bookings (external): **2**  
Meeting Room Bookings Cancelled: **14**  
Meeting Room Attendees (external): **11**  
TOTAL number of people served in person: Onsite and Offsite: **2,320**  
Reference Questions Town Employee (in course of town work): **21**  
Reference Questions: **23,672**  
Reference Questions TOTAL: **23,693**  
Photographic Reproduction Orders: **26**  
Photographs Reproduced: **83**  
Archive Collections Use: **114**  
Facebook Postings FY21: **101**  
Twitter: **94**  
Instagram: **75**  
Electronic Outreach Patron Use: **36,022**  
Electronic Outreach Patron Engagement: **413,136**  
Website Postings/Corrections: **65**  
Wi-Fi Registrations (New): **4**  
Revenue (*including sales tax*) Collected: **\$2,074.75**

Volunteer Hours: **0**  
Intern Hours: **0**  
ILL Requests: **20**  
ILL Requests Filled: **20**

**Action Items:** None

**Notes:**

- ✚ Thomas Balch Library is open by appointment only due to COVID19
- ✚ The Library meeting room remains unavailable for use until further notice.
- ✚ Library staffing is limited to 3. Reference work has increased exponentially. All staff is focused on reference service with all other responsibilities being delayed and/or funneled into backlog for whenever additional staffing is made available.
- ✚ The next Commission meeting is scheduled for 13 January 2021 at 7PM – pandemic permitting
- ✚ The next TBL Endowment Foundation Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 26 January 2021 –pandemic permitting
- ✚ Please check your Town email for notices pertaining to Awareness Training.
- ✚ Effective in December due to increasing COVID-19 cases, public access to Town Hall is limited to the first floor and will be closed on weekends. Meeting rooms are unavailable for use through February by public groups (such as Toastmasters).

**Upcoming Events:**

Due to COVID19 in-person lectures and tours are not being scheduled until social distancing permits. Research in the Library or visiting exhibits is by appointment only.

Pre-registration required for all virtual events:

- ✚ Granny's Cooking: Meals at 21 West Loudoun Street, 1950's – 1970's curated by Charles A. Johnston (Mercer Room)
- ✚ A Step in Time – Artist Bethany Widom (October-December) – Meeting Room
- ✚ The 2020 Virginia Forum rescheduled for March 25-27, 2021 may become virtual

Respectfully submitted,

Alexandra S. Gressitt



# Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission Minutes 09 December 2020

**Commissioners Present:** James H. Hershman, Jr., Chair; Mandy Kinne; Martha Schonberger, Vice Chair and Russ Woolard

**Commissioners Absent:** Donna Bohanon; Tom Jewell; Mary Pellicano

**Others Present:** None

**Staff Present:** Alexandra S. Gressitt, Library Director

**Meeting convened** by Hershman in lower level meeting room, Thomas Balch Library, at 7:00PM.

**Minutes** of 14 October 2020 meeting were approved on a motion by Schonberger and a second by Woolard.

**Library Director:**

- Report Distributed

**Friends of the Thomas Balch library, Inc.: (Library Director reporting for President of the Friends)**

- The virtual appeal, replacing the in-person event suspended for 2020 due to the pandemic, has received almost \$10,000 to date.
- There will be no in-person annual meeting this year due to the virus.
- Those who have paid their dues for 2020 and for 2021 will be able to vote for the Friends Board of Directors via a mail-in form distributed in the next newsletter.
- A newsletter will be sent in late December or early January.

**TBL Foundation: (Gressitt, Secretary/Treasurer reporting)**

- Gressitt reported the following expenditures: \$25 yearly SCC fee; Accountants fee for 2019 taxes: \$6,525; Roof repair \$24, 237.76; and several small 19<sup>th</sup> and 20 century Loudoun County collections for \$3,500.
- While the Foundation Board continues to conduct business by email; they have tentatively scheduled an in-person board meeting for 12 noon, Tuesday, 26 January 2021. This is dependent on pandemic conditions.

**Old Business:**

- Further development of a Strategic Plan is on hold pending outcome of the pandemic. The goal of the Commission is to work with Town Council to insure the Library is able to resume full services once the pandemic is under control. They expressed support for efforts the Library as made to keep the Library operational and to open new ways, both virtual and in-person, to access Library holdings and maintain public service.

- Historical Marker: discussion postponed until next meeting

**New Business:**

- Following discussion of health safety concerns due to the pandemic and possible changes by Council to meeting requirements for advisory boards, on a motion by Woolard and a second by Kinne, the Commission moved (4 present 3 absent) to follow the Town Manager's recommendation to cancel the next Commission meeting scheduled for Wednesday, 13 January 2021 @ 7PM.

**Councilmanic remarks:** None

**Commissioner remarks:**

- Commissioners expressed continuing good health for each other and families and Happy Holidays to all.

Next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, 10 February 2021 @ 7PM** in the Lower Level meeting Room at Thomas Balch Library

On a motion by Schonberger and a second by Woolard the meeting adjourned at 7:55PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexandra S. Gressitt  
Library Director  
10 December 2020

## **Thomas Balch Commission**

- Approved the minutes of the 14 October 2020 meeting
- Received the library director's report—the remaining library staff have been quite busy handling researchers who have come in by appointment and, especially, in handling more than 23,000 research requests—the virtual classes and programs have drawn considerable interests, both locally and nationally—the audience and reputation of Balch has expanded during this most restricted period (a welcome bit of good news).
- The Friends of TBL report that their fall fundraising letter has done surprisingly well, with almost \$10,000 at this time—the Friends has given up in person meetings during that pandemic, but their newsletter will be published in December or January
- The Balch Foundation reports on expenditures for tax preparation, roof repair around the sky light, and for the accession of historic documents from Lewis Leigh relating to Leesburg in the Antebellum period
- Under Old Business—the commission has deferred consideration of the strategic plan and cataloguing project until the outcome of the pandemic—the commission at this time views getting Balch back up to full operation, with full staffing, after covid-19 restrictions are lifted as its most pressing priority
- Under New Business—the commission voted unanimously to follow the recommendation of the town manager and to cancel the January meeting—the next meeting is scheduled for February when we hope to introduce newly appointed commissioners
- In commissioners comments, all noted that we will miss the service of Donna Bohannon who is leaving the commission—Also, all expressed their gratitude to the Balch staff for their efforts in carrying the library forward under these restricted conditions

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.