

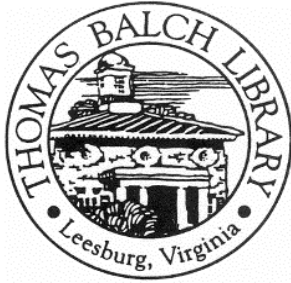
**Thomas Balch Library
Advisory Commission
Agenda
7PM – 08 September 2021**

- Call to Order
- Approval of Minutes – 14 July 2021
- Library Director's Report – September 2021 (for July & August activity)
- Friends of TBL, Inc. Report – Don Cooper, President of the Friends
- TBL Foundation Report – Alexandra S. Gressitt, Secretary/Treasurer, TBL Foundation Board
- Old/Continuing Business:
 - Library Transition Plan - Catalog Project Discussion/updates
 - Gressitt/Hershman
 - Historic marker for Leesburg's Potters Field – Pellicano
 - 100th Anniversary celebration
 - History Awards
- New Business:
 - Display shield for History Awards
 - 2019 Awardees engraved tabs completed
 - History Awards Press Release
- Comments from Councilmanic/Commissioners

Next Advisory Commission meeting Wednesday, 13 October 2021 @ 7PM.

All Town Council, Board and Commission meetings are recorded and may be found on the Town's Web site at www.leesburgva.gov.

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. Three days advance notice is requested.



Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission Minutes 14 July 2021

Commissioners Present: James H. Hershman, Jr., Chair; Adrian Mattina; Mary Pellicano, and Russ Woolard

Commissioners Absent: Mandy Kinne; Martha Schonberger Vice Chair

Others Present: Don Cooper, President, Friends of the TBL, Inc.

Staff Present: Alexandra S. Gressitt, Library Director

Meeting convened by Hershman in lower level meeting room, Thomas Balch Library, at 7:04PM.

Electronic Recording Statement: It is the practice of the Town of Leesburg to record meetings of the Town's standing boards and commissions.

Minutes of 09 June 2021 meeting were approved on a motion by Woolard and a second by Pellicano.

Library Director:

- Report Distributed and attached.

Friends of the Thomas Balch library, Inc.: Don Cooper, President

- The Friends next meeting, in person at Thomas Balch Library, is 9:30AM Tuesday 20 July 2021
- Next fundraiser, in-person, is scheduled for Sunday, 12 September 2021 and will include a tour of the Library.
- The in-person annual meeting is scheduled 9 January 2022 (snow date 23 January) at Thomas Balch Library and will include a premier of a new oral history.
- Next newsletter will go out after the Annual fund raiser and prior to the annual meeting.
-

TBL Foundation: (Gressitt, Secretary/Treasurer reporting)

- The next board meeting, in person, is noon, Tuesday, 20 July 2021 @ noon.
- Board voted to accept transfer of the Dianne Lee bequest from the Town of Leesburg.
- On-going tax issues have been resolved.

Old Business:

- Library Transition Plan – Library Director shared with the Commission the compilation of documents, reports, brochures and other publications assembles so far along with beginning of draft introduction. During discussion Commissioners felt portions of the compilations could be put together as an

- orientation packet for incoming Commissioners. Commissioners were invited to stop by the library to view the document in greater detail. Input was solicited.
- Pellicano led a discussion on an historic marker for Potters Field reburials in Union Cemetery. Reporting on a conversation with Donna Torraca, Arts Commission and Jeanette Cummings in which it was agreed to scale back the project to work with the space currently available; Torraca to explore funding possibilities, Cummings to explore memorials; and Pellicano to work with Gressitt to write a background report to present to the Council for their endorsement. Hershman volunteered to assist with the writing of the document.
 - 100th Anniversary Celebration –general discussion with various ideas from ice cream socials to panel discussion on the history of the building to speakers on the history during Thomas Balch 's life and genealogy – to be continued.
 - Legacy Leesburg Town Plan - following a brief discussion in which Commissioners expressed appreciation for the enhancements made on the Thomas Balch Library narrative, it was agreed Hershman would follow up with a letter conveying their thoughts to Susan Berry-Hill, Director of Planning and Zoning.
 - History Awards –following discussion – on a motion by Woolard, seconded by Pellicano, the Commission voted proceed with an in-person history awards event; refreshments to be determined closer to the event; solicitation for nominations to be prior to Labor Day.
 - **New Business:** Hershman brought up the Town's proposal for a Boards and Commissions networking event on 2 October at 7:30AM. Commissioners suggested an afternoon time or another day might be more suitable and request the Library Director to convey to the Clerk's Office.

Councilmanic remarks:

Commissioner remarks:

- Commissioner Mary Pellicano announced she was moving from Leesburg to MD and would be leaving the commission after this meeting—the commission members and library director expressed appreciation for her service to the library and town.
- Commissioner Mattina was welcomed to the first in-person commission meeting since her appointment during the pandemic.

Next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, 08 September 2021 @ 7PM** in the Lower Level meeting Room at Thomas Balch Library

On a motion by Woolard and a second by Pellicano the meeting adjourned at 8:10PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexandra S. Gressitt
Library Director
15 July 2021

Thomas Balch Library Commission Report

- Approved the minutes of the 9 June meeting
- Received the library director's report—the library is open on a limited hours basis until September—some flextime staff is working and interviews are scheduled for more—volunteers are returning—a bid has been made for a new fire alarm system—the library has held 13 virtual events, drawing 479 registrations from at least 30 states and DC—Talks and other programs this fall will be virtual due to earlier scheduling, with in person programs resuming in spring 2022—some reconfiguring of the electronic equipment in the meeting room is necessary for those future presentations
- Don Cooper, President of the Friends, presented the Friends report—their board is meeting at Balch at 9:30AM, 20 July to finalize plans for the in person September fundraiser—they are also planning their January annual meeting, to be held at Balch—the Friends newsletter will be mailed after the fall fundraiser.
- Alexandra Gressitt presented the TBL Foundation report—a transfer of funds into the endowment had been approved and business and tax issues were resolved at the last meeting—the next board meeting is at noon 20 July at Balch
- Under Old Business—Commissioner Pellicano discussed her recent talk with the members of COPA about the Potter's Field marker—an agreement has been initially reached on the place and scale of the marker-- the library director and commission chair discussed the progress on the Transition binder and invited commissioners to offer ideas for further inclusions—there was discussion of ideas regarding celebration of Balch's centennial in 2022—there was consensus on the commission that the revised draft of the Leesburg Legacy Town Plan addressed their concerns about Balch and was a marked improvement in the regard over the first draft—after some discussion, the commission voted to move forward with the 2022 History Awards planned to be held in person at Balch in early November
- Under New Business the chair brought up the Town's proposal for a Boards and Commissions social event on 2 October at 8 a.m.—the commission suggested that an afternoon time or another day might be more suitable
- Commissioners comments followed—Commissioner Mary Pellicano announced that she was moving from Leesburg to Easton, MD and would be leaving the commission after this meeting—the commission members and library director expressed their appreciation for her service to the library and the town

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission: Annual Report, 2021

It has become a cliché to say that the past year—the pandemic year—was a year like no other. For the Balch Library and the Advisory Commission, nevertheless, the description certainly fits. The library was forced by health restrictions to curtail sharply its public access, eventually limiting it to patrons on a restricted appointment-only basis. Its entire flextime staff was furloughed. The library’s highly valued series of classes and talks could not be held on-site. Faced with these daunting obstacles, the library director and the few remaining staff, by responding to a flood of phone and online reference questions and producing virtual classes and talks, maintained Balch’s record of service to the community during the lockdown period. The Advisory Commission, too, faced challenges. Initially, following existing guidelines, we held a meeting fully masked and socially distanced, but subsequent guidelines led us to cancel some meetings. Fairly quickly, with help from library staff, we adapted to virtual meetings, then to hybrid meetings with a few members present at the library.

Health restrictions on public gatherings forced the commission, reluctantly, to cancel its chief annual public event, the Loudoun History Awards. It was only the second time, in the more than quarter century of holding the ceremony, that the event was not held (when the building was under renovation in 2000 was the other occasion when it was cancelled). The commission, however, was able to carry out its mission of oversight of library operations and concern for the library’s future needs as well as its interaction with the Town and the community. Throughout the year, despite the interruptions, the commission has kept up a good working liaison with Town Council and the town government and with the library’s support organizations: The Friends of Thomas Balch Library; The Thomas Balch Library Foundation; and the Black History Committee.

Among the commission’s major activities, projects, and concerns over the past year are the following:

- The commission considers the Re-cataloguing Project as an essential need for the library going forward. It supports full funding for the project and for the staffing needed to accomplish it.
- The commission finds that Balch has a pressing need, one that is growing ever more pressing, for additional space to store and process its growing (and valuable) archival collections.
- The commission believes that a reinstatement of all flextime staff and the addition of another permanent staffer be made as the library returns to regular hours and operations in FY22.

- After reading the draft copy of the Legacy Leesburg Town Plan, the commission felt that Balch had not received the attention that it merited as a major feature of the town's Historic District. A highly constructive session with town planning director Susan Berryhill at the commission's April meeting fully addressed those concerns and ensured that Balch had the place it deserves in the coming Town Plan.
- The commission retains a continuing interest in obtaining an appropriate marker for the grave site of the Potter's Field reinternment. It has done so in cooperation with the Commission on Public Art (COPA) and looks forward to continuing that relationship and to the fulfillment of this long-delayed, most worthy project.

Respectfully submitted,
James H. Hershman, Jr.
Chair, Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission
Town of Leesburg, Virginia

Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission
14 July 2021
Library Director's Report

Activities:

Exhibits: For July and August, in the Mercer Room, the exhibit is "Loudoun County Civil War Artifacts" curated by The Creamers. In the Meeting Room for July-September there is an exhibit curated by the Loudoun Sketch Club "A Moment in Time a Moment in History." 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 or to even implement grants. As we move forward, if you hear of any grants applicable to a special collections library, please share that information with me.

Lectures and Author Talks, Classes, Tours & Other Activities: Classes, lectures, and author talks have already been scheduled through December as virtual; registration for these is required. In person events, tours and classes will resume in 2022. I have begun scheduling in-person and virtual events for the spring. Researchers and those wishing to view exhibits may visit the Library Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday between 10 and 4 (closed 12-1 for Lunch) and 2-8 on Wednesdays through September 6. It is anticipated pre-pandemic hours will resume following Labor Day on 7 September 2021.

The June class (6/3) with Lori Kimball and Steve Hammond speaking on Researching African American Genealogy was highly successful. It was recorded and is available on TBL's YouTube: <https://youtu.be/Qam9hIustJE> and may be accessed from our Facebook page.

Publications/Products: nothing new.

Building and Grounds:

A contractor inspected the fire alarm system smoke detectors providing a quote of \$16,000 to replace the system. Plans have been submitted to Loudoun County for approval. Date of completion to be determined

Outreach:

Outreach for June included assisting with the Researching African American Genealogy workshop with Lori Kimball and Steve Hammond. Laura served as a Senior Grades Website Judge for National History Day on June 1-7. Alexandra and Laura had a follow-up meeting with Alyssa Fahringer and George Oberle of GMU in regard to digitization projects. Laura attended the Virginia Piedmont Heritage Association 25th Anniversary celebration at the Goose Creek Bridge, and presented a virtual tour of the Library to a group from the Leesburg Senior Center. Research assistance was provided to Loudoun County Public Schools Staff, Loudoun County Historic Court Records Department and Loudoun Museum. TBL images also appeared in the Summer Issue of the MARAC publication *MAA*.

Social media posts: Total reach for June 2021: 86,800 and the number of engaged Facebook users: 5,327. The number of Instagram views in June 2021: 611 and the number of Twitter views: 5,643. In June the number of TBL YouTube postings was 4

and the number of viewings 721. For June the total number of Google page visits was 17,798.

Collections:

June 2021 Activity:

Accessions: 25

Collections Processed: 0

Additions made to collections: 0

Additions to Vertical files/Maps: 0

Collections being processed: 6

Photographs catalogued or scanned: 0

Collection guides sent for posting to NUCMC: 2

Collection guides posted by NUCMC (for a total of 404): 2

Collection guides posted to VIVA (for a total of 318): 0

Collection guides updated on VIVA: 0

Collection guides posted on town website (for a total of 362): 349 collection guides; 1 digital collection; and 10 indices): 2

Collection guides updated: 0

Web updates: 12

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: In June 25 gifts were accessioned. Donations of note accessioned in June included St. James' Episcopal Church Records incorporating Vestry minutes and records, Parish Registers, microfilm, and other records dating between 1830 and 2010.

Additions to existing collections received in June included materials to be added to the Town of Leesburg Records and the library's growing collection of Covid-19 related documentation.

Published materials received included *Family Genealogy: A Collection of Stories and Documents from Archive Materials of the Wallis, Schutt, Roe, Wormald, and Grabowski Families and Their Extended Lineages* by Marion Frances Wormald Grabowski, *Gourdvine Black and White: Slavery and the Kilby Families of the Virginia Piedmont* by Timothy Kilby, and 1 Heritage High Year Book, *The Journey 2012*.

Inventory: A partial inventory, excluding items in Town Hall, was completed by Bryan Fisher during the last quarter of FY2020.

Digital Collections, Computers, and Microfilm: The Town, for security reasons, is in the process of moving public access computers at TBL to a separate network. This includes public access multimedia equipment in the meeting room.

Manuscript and Visual Collections: 0 Manuscript collection were processed in June.

Printed Collections: During June a total of 198 items were added to the catalogue: 118 books/periodicals was added to or corrected in the catalogue by TBL staff, 46 journals were added to the catalogue by TBL staff, 80 newspapers were received and inventoried, and 0 books/periodicals were returned by Loudoun County Public Library cataloging since the last report to the Commission.

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

Personnel:

Interns/Student Researchers: Due to the pandemic, as of 14 March 2020, the on-site internship program has been suspended. The program will resume once we have assimilated all furloughed and new staff and resumed normal operations in the spring 2022.

Staff: Three full time staff are working and five flex staff have returned to assist with reference and cataloguing backlog. The Library is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday between 10 and 4 (closed 12-1 for Lunch) and 2-8 on Wednesdays through September 6. It is anticipated pre-pandemic hours will resume following Labor Day on 7 September 2021. We are interviewing to hire a flex reference person to cover slots left vacant by flex staff furloughed and unable to resume pre-Covid hours. Mary Frye continues to assist with Library administrative duties and is working with Victoria Summers to transition out.

News of Former Staff: Nothing

Volunteers: One volunteer (a retired librarian) has returned and is assisting with the cataloguing backlog. Other volunteers have expressed interest in returning over the coming months.

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

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 June the library was closed **16** days: *Covid (13), weather (0) and holidays (3)*. Total closures for FY21: **285** (*Covid 244; Weather 3; Holiday 38*). 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): June 2021: **644**

FY21: Cumulative July 1, 2020 – June 2021: **5,143**. The Library was closed to the public **285** of **365** days in FY21 but open for work **227** days averaging **23** visitors/donors and workmen to the library per work day.

FY21 Totals:

TBL Event/Meetings Attendees onsite: **1127 (virtual – not in building count)**

TBL Event/Meetings Attendees offsite: **505 (not included in building count)**

TBL Event/Meetings Attendees TOTAL: **1,632 (includes virtual presentations)**

TBL Events/Meetings: **(onsite 71/offsite 13): 84**

TBL Events Cancelled: **8**

Meeting Room Bookings (external): **2**

Meeting Room Bookings Cancelled: **22**

Meeting Room Attendees (external): **11**

TOTAL of people served in person: Onsite and Offsite: **6,775**

TOTAL Reference Questions: **61,210** (Town Employee: **59**; Public: **61,151**)

Photographic Reproduction Orders: **70**; Photographs Reproduced: **213**

Archive Collections Use: **311**

Facebook Postings FY21: **249**; Patron Use: **123,569**; Patron Engagement: **1,215,844**

Twitter: **222** Views: **53,626**

Instagram: **166**; Views: **7,726**

TBL YouTube Videos Posted: **22**; Video Views: **1,333**

Google Page Views: **(May & June only) 36,570**

Virtual Events: **13** - Virtual Registrations: **479**; Virtual Attendees: **308**; [30 states + DC & 33 registrations locale unknown]
Website Postings/Corrections: **168**
Wi-Fi Registrations (New): **14**
Revenue (*including sales tax*) Collected: **\$5,778.29**
Volunteer Hours: **29**
Intern Hours: **0**
ILL Requests: **34**; Filled 32

Action Items: Vote on Loudoun History Awards for 2021 as virtual or in person with no food.

Notes:

- ✚ The Library meeting room will remain unavailable for public rental until January 2022. Town and Library affiliated groups may reserve the room for use.
- ✚ Due to the current lack of public access to technology, classes and lectures will be virtual through December 2021; Tours will resume spring of 2022.
- ✚ When public use of the Meeting Room resumes it will only be available for public use (this does not include Town/Library/Affiliated groups) during hours the Library is open. The food/beverage fee will be \$25; hourly rental rates remain unchanged (\$10 per/hour or any part thereof for non-profit; \$20 p/h or any part thereof for for-profit.)
- ✚ Public events in the fall will include the Friends fundraiser September 12 and possibly the TBLAC Loudoun History Awards November 7.
- ✚ The next Friends meetings is scheduled for Tuesday 20 July 2021 at the Library.
- ✚ The next TBL Endowment Foundation Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 20 July 2021 at the Library.
- ✚ The BHC may resume meeting at TBL on Saturday 11 September 2021. Norah Schneider will be serving as library liaison to the BHC.

Upcoming Events:

- ✚ Genealogy Research Techniques taught by Norah Schneider, is scheduled for 5 August 2021 @ 10AM. Pre-registration is required.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexandra S. Gressitt