



**Thomas Balch Library  
Advisory Commission  
Agenda  
7PM – 13 March 2024**

- Call to Order
- Approval of Minutes – 10 January 2024
- Library Director’s Report – March 2024 (January-February 2024 activity)
- Friends of TBL, Inc. Report – Don Cooper, President of the Friends
- TBL Foundation Report – Alexandra Gressitt, Secretary/Treasurer, TBL  
Foundation Board
- Old/Continuing Business:
  - St James’ Cemetery Committee
- New Business:
  - Strategic Planning Discussion
- Comments from Councilmanic/Commissioners

***Next Advisory Commission meeting, Wednesday, 10 April 2024 @ 7PM Thomas Balch Library meeting room.***

*All Town Council, Board and Commission meetings are recorded and may be found on the Town’s Web site at [www.leesburgva.gov](http://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 Gressitt, Library Director at 703-737-7195 or [Balchlib@leesburgva.gov](mailto:Balchlib@leesburgva.gov). Three days advance notice is requested.*

TBL ADVISORY COMMISSION ATTENDANCE SHEET CY2024												
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024
<b>NAME:</b>												
Baracat-Donovan, Candace (2026) appointed 1/2023 [Cimino-Johnson]	P	N						N				
Barnard, Tony (2026) appointed 10/2023 [Wilt]	A	N						N				
Billigmeier, Scott (2024) appointed 9/2022 [Bagdasarian]	P	N						N				
Hershman, James H Jr Chair (2026) appointed 7/1994 [Martinez; 1/2023 [Steinberg]	P	N						N				
Coyer, Paul, (2024) 7/1/2022 [Nacy]	P	N						N				
Dias-Mattina, Adrian (2024) appointed 1/2021 [Cummings]	P	N						N				
Woolard, Russ (2024) appointed 1/2017 [Burk]	P	N						N				
Wilt, Patrick, Council Manic as of 1/2023												
Umstatt, Kristen C., Board of Supervisors from 1/2016												
P = Present												
A = Absent												
N = No Meeting												
V= Virtually present (Teams/telephone)												
X = Not Member												
* No Quorum												
<b>OTHERS PRESENT:</b>												
Alexandra S Gressitt, Library Director	P	N						N				
Don Cooper, FTBL President	P	N						N				
Public												
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>						<b>0</b>				



# Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission Minutes 10 January 2024

**Commissioners Present:** Scott Billigmeier; Paul Coyer; Candace Baracat-Donovan; James H Hershman, Jr. Chair; Adrian Dias-Mattina; Russ Woolard, Vice chair

**Commissioners Present Virtually:** None

**Commissioners Absent:** Tony Barnard

**Others Present:** Don Cooper, President FTBL

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

**Meeting convened** by Hershman in lower-level meeting room, Thomas Balch Library, at 7:01 PM.

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

**Virtual Attendance Request:** None

**Minutes:** Minutes of the regular commission meeting of 10 December 2024 were approved on a motion by Billigmeier seconded by Woolard.

**Library Director:** Report attached.

**Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, Inc.:**

- Reported on the annual meeting held 7 January 2024 and the showing of the oral history of Betty and Robert Lowenbach.
- Next Friends board meeting is 9:30AM, Tuesday, 16 January 2024 at TBL.

**Thomas Balch Library Endowment Foundation:** Gressitt, Secretary/Treasurer reporting

- Next Foundation board meeting is 12PM, Tuesday 16 January 2024 at TBL. Focus will be Balch Family trust Fund and a brochure.

**Old Business:**

- Land Acknowledgement landmark was briefly discussed and by consent tabled.
- St James' Cemetery committee - Gressitt reminded everyone that the next meeting to be held at Thomas Balch Library will be 30 January 1PM. It will be hybrid to allow more people to attend.
- History Awards – the Library Director presented the newly revised History Awards brochure.

**New Business:**

- Following discussion, on a motion by Woolard, seconded by Dias Mattina the Commission approved (6-0-1) its 20-24 meeting schedule as follows:

- January 10, 2024
- February NO MEETING
- March 13
- April 10
- May 8
- June 12
- July 10
- August NO MEETING
- September 11
- October 9
- November 3 (Sunday) Brief meeting, official picture taking, followed by the History Awards.
- December 11

**Councilmanic remarks:** None.

**Commission Comments:** None.

On a motion by Woolard seconded by Coyer, the meeting adjourned at 8:06PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexandra S. Gressitt  
Library Director  
11 January 2024

### **Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission** (10 January 2024 meeting report)

- Approved the minutes of the 13 December 2023 meeting.
- Received the library director's report—two new flyers, one listing the past Loudoun History Awardees and other a general brochure on Balch's research resources, are available—events in the upcoming series are scheduled to August with some in the works for the fall, exhibits and tours are scheduled for the entire 2024 year—the recent heavy rains caused a leak around the cupola on the front roof resulting in some water near the Balch Bust
- Don Cooper, president of the Friends of TBL, gave the Friends report—the recent annual meeting on 7 January was a success, a new Friends Board was voted in followed by viewing an excellent new filmed oral history to be added to a growing collection at Balch—the next meeting of the Friends to choose officers will be at Balch on 16 January
- Alexandra Gressitt, Secretary/Treasurer of the TBL Foundation Board, reported that the board's next meeting will be on 16 January at noon, at Balch—more action regarding completion of the funds transfer from the old Balch Trust to the foundation's endowment fund is on the agenda
- Under Old/Continuing Business—the next meeting of the St. James' Cemetery Committee will be held on 30 January at Balch to include all of the interested parties (meeting will be hybrid)—the indigenous Peoples historical marker was taken off the agenda, pending Town Council and/or County Board action
- Under New Business—the commission discussed the new rules, passed by Town Council, governing the meeting schedules of boards and commissions—following the discussion, the commission unanimously adopted the following schedule for 2024: 10 meetings, dropping the meetings in February and August; all to be on the second Wednesday of the month, with the exception of November when the meeting is scheduled for the first Sunday afternoon, immediately preceding the Loudoun History Awards—following additional discussion, meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

**Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission**  
**10 January 2024**  
**Library Director's Report**

**Activities:**

**Exhibits:** Town press releases and postings to social media are issued for events.

- January-February 2024: African American Architectural Survey- Black History Committee
- January-March 2024: From the Time of Kings Photo Exhibit – Diane Helentjaris

**Grants:**

- The Library applied for a small grant from the Loudoun Library Foundation
- The Library will be applying for a rapid grant (\$5,000) from Virginia Humanities to assist with exhibit materials at the Donaldson Cabin.

**Lectures and Author Talks, Classes, Tours & Other Activities:** Check the *Balch Column* on-line for details on our events. Events have been scheduled through August 2024 and are being scheduled for Fall 2024. Pre-registration is required for all events to prevent confusion for hybrid or virtual presentations. Unless there is no room to accommodate those who don't pre-register, no one will be turned away.

**Publications:** The Loudoun History Awards brochure and the general informational brochure for the Library have been updated and printed. The professional researcher's brochure has been updated and is at the printers. The winter spring issue of the *Balch Column* is at the Printers.

**Building and Grounds:**

- We are currently working on dispelling a dead animal odor.

**Disaster and Emergency Preparedness:**

- Nothing new to report.

**Outreach:** Outreach for December included Laura's hosting a pop-up exhibit at the Donaldson Log Cabin featuring items from TBL's rare book collections, assisting with Wynne Saffer's Locating Places Workshop, continuing to promote the ongoing exhibit of items from the Rust archive on view in the Mercer Room throughout the month; meeting virtually with Jane Ailes and Worthy Martin regarding TBL as a potential site for a VA Humanities Grant funded exhibit relating to Virginia Emigrants to Liberia. Alexandra Gressitt and Laura Christiansen received a tour of the renovations at Douglass High School and Community Center. TBL staff collaborated or provided assistance to Town of Leesburg staff from PIO and Planning and Historic Preservation divisions in December. Alexandra met with representatives of OCLC for a recap on the Catalog project.

**Collections: December 2023 Activity:**

**Accessions:** 19 gifts were accessioned.

Acquisitions of note accessioned in December included two small paintings and handwritten letter by an enslaved woman named Susy; a VHS tape and Program from the Preservation Society of Loudoun County's 1993 Preservation awards; a Tally-Ho Theatre Program from the late 1930s or early 1940s, and a digital donation of scans of 19th century letters to and from the Poulton Family of Loudoun County.

Additions to existing collections received included additions to the Town of Leesburg Records.

Published materials received during the month of December included a copy of *the Rural Landowner Manual A Resource Guide for the Northern Piedmont; Huntland: The Historic Virginia Country House the Property and Its Owners 1741-2022* by Marc Leepson; and 17 bound volumes of Connection Newspapers 1998 – 2004.

**Digital Collections, Computers, and Microfilm: 0**

**Manuscript and Visual Collections:** 3 Manuscript collections were processed, Bazil Newman and Lizzie Simms Research Collection (M 0153); Poulton Family Correspondence, 1836 - 1864 (SC 0163); Betty Saunders Ruby Family History Collection (M0156); 1 Collection Guide, Town of Leesburg Records, was updated; 5 collection guides were added to the Town website: Mott-Bentley Correspondence, 1835-1900, n.d. (M 0116), Old Stone Methodist Church Cemetery Letters (SC 0169), Bazil Newman and Lizzie Simms Research Collection (M 0153), Poulton Family Correspondence, 1836 - 1864 (SC 0163), and Betty Saunders Ruby Family History Collection (M0156); 24 photographs are in process; 24 records were uploaded to Past Perfect, the online version of Past Perfect currently holds 7,270 images.

**Printed Collections: 951** items were cataloged; 888 items were added to the Centennial catalog.

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

**Catalog Project:** Staff has completed adding to the maps and is now working on the microfilm collection. Other collections still to be added include unpublished papers; ephemera; vertical files, law books in Town Hall newspapers, and rare books. We continue to have positive feedback on our new catalog.

**Personnel:**

**Interns/Student Researchers:** Lauren Stupak (University of Tennessee) and Ethan Ohngemach (VCU) completed their internships.

**Staff:** Tamsyn Knight, who holds a PhD from Oxford University, a master's degree in English from Massey University, New Zealand, and an undergraduate degree in History and English from Massey University. You will find her most regularly Tuesdays and Thursdays at the reference desk.

Interviews have been conducted to fill Helen Vettori's position and an offer will be forthcoming.

**News of Former Staff:** Robert Goldberg sent season's greetings.

**Volunteers:** Work on a variety of projects such as scanning and numbering photographs, rehousing collection materials and prepping collections for processing.

**Donaldson Cabin:**

- Taylor Ruzinsky is processing collections at the cabin using grant funds.
- Laura managed the Library's participation on First Fridays through December. After a brief winter hiatus, she will resume First Friday activities in the spring. Participation in Donaldson Cabin events is being recorded separately in our statistics to evaluate public interest.

**Action Items:** None

Respectfully submitted,

Alexandra S. Gressitt

**JANUARY 2024 TBL Summary Statistics**

Employee	Reference Questions								Other Work							Social Media			
	Genealogy	History	Maps/ Location	Images/ Media	Tech	Admin	Directional	General	Phone	E mail	Mail	Town of Lbg	Website /Media	Visitors	Closings				Counter
Alexandra	5	73	5	3	29	332	124	89	74	2026		9		24	5	1068			
Alyssa																	Instagram	14	2066
Anna	4	8	3	8		1		35	43	629	4		9				Twitter	0	63
Bryan	8	6		8			4	18	6	84							Facebook	13	33896
Echo																	Google	0	4023
Tamsyn		12	1	8				77	2	98							Youtube	2	1720
Helen																	Balch Column	8056	
Joanna		4						5		24							<b>Total</b>	<b>8085</b>	<b>41768</b>
Laura	12	306	1	51	144	390	105	151	49	1051		18	41	8					
Madison	19	10	2		2	2	2	23	44	10									
Maria																			
Mary Pender	5									4									
Michelle		5	1	3				7	3	127									
Sara	3	4								117									
Taylor	7	5				16		2	1	156			1						
Travis																			
Ben																			
<b>General Lib</b>										569									
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>4895</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1068</b>			

Location	Visitors
Leesburg	85
Loudoun Co.	57
VA	19
Other US	8
All USA	169
Int'l	0

Volunteer Hours			
Ann Geiger	7.5	Kate Nau	1.75
Becky	1.75	Kathy	1.5
Deb Hershman	3	Morgan D	
Gabby P	4	Sam W	4
Gloria	1.5	Sue	7
John F		Wynne	3
Judy K		Sara	2
<b>TOTAL HOURS</b>	<b>37</b>		
Total # of Active Volunteers:			

Intern Hours
<b># of Active Interns</b>

Attendance Stats	# of Meetings	# of Attendees
Rental Meetings	3	64
TBL Internal Meetings	16	138
TBL Offsite Events		
Donaldson Cabin		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>202</b>

Public Service	
New Wifi Usage	7
<b>Total Reference Questions</b>	<b>7296</b>
ILLs requested	1
ILLs filled	1
Photograph reproduction orders	15
Photographs reproduced for orders	59
Archive Collections Used*	62
Income	\$ 1,103.00
Pro Bono TOL	\$ 284.00

Collection Mgmt	
Items added to catalog	541
Newspapers received and inventoried	64
Accessions	6
Total items added to Catalog	605
Archive Collections in process	5
Archive Collections processed	0
Photographs Processed	1
Images added to Past Perfect	1
ARVAS (VIVA) entries	0
Guides posted to TBL Site	0
Books sent to bindery	0
Books returned from bindery	0

\*incl. USGS, Lewis File, Cemetery maps, hard copy newspapers, manuscripts and photos