

Memorandum

To: The Honorable Andy Berke  
Councilman, Chip Henderson  
Councilman, Jerry Mitchell  
Councilman, Ken Smith  
Councilman, Larry Grohn  
Councilman, Russell Gilbert  
Councilwoman, Carol B. Berz  
Councilman, Chris Anderson  
Councilman, Moses Freeman  
Councilman, Yusuf Hakeem

Date: 12 November 2014

From: Corinne Hill, Executive Director, Chattanooga Public Library

Subject: Library Audit Update

Your support for the Public Library is extremely important so I wanted to share with you our progress on the items that were in the recent city audit.

- The Library Board adopted Bylaws at the October 2014 board meeting.
- The Library Board adopted Chapter 2 of the City's Code at the October 2014 board meeting. The transition to city leave for library staff is in process with a target implementation date of 1 December 2014.
- Richard Beeland began work as the Library's Chief Administrative Officer on October 29, 2014.
- All meetings of the Library Board and its committees are published in the newspaper seven (7) days prior to each meeting. Additionally, a notice is posted on the front door of each library and on the library's web site.
- A written procedure is in place for donating library materials that have been removed from the collection to the Friends of the Chattanooga Public Library. This is a routine part of library business and the city auditor found no issue related to the disposition of the materials.
- The Library adheres to a strict industry standard regarding the removal of library materials. I reached out to the American Library Association as well the Tennessee State Librarian on this topic. Statements from ALA's Executive Director and the State Librarian are attached.

- The Library follows the City's Travel Policy and the Director reports monthly to the Board any upcoming travel for all staff and how travel is being funded.
- Moving to the city's Oracle system is the top priority for the new CAO. We will provide additional information in the future. We currently use Oracle for business processes; we will begin to use Oracle for all HR related processes as well.
- The Library will wait for the City to release its Employee Manual, expected in late Winter or early Spring of 2015, and take appropriate action.
- A committee of two Library Board members and the Library Director has been formed to develop a Board Manual. The committee is scheduled to meet Wednesday, 19 November 2014.
- Board training will be provided by the City Attorney's office at the Board's November 2014 meeting.
- An Employee Orientation, focused on Library processes, will be developed by the CAO with an anticipated roll out in 2015.
- The Library will advertise for an auditor in late Winter 2015 so that they may provide a separate audit of the library at the close of FY 2014-2015.
- A draft MOU with the Friends of the Chattanooga Public Library and the Library Board will be reviewed at the November 2014 Library Board meeting.
- The city attorney's office is researching the need for two board members' signature on all library invoices.
- An all staff day will be held annually on Columbus Day.
- Staff disciplinary actions and separations are complete.

Again, on behalf of the Library, our staff and our Board, I want to express our appreciation for your continued support. We are focused on providing a great library for our community.

Corinne:

I've shared with you a number of ALA publications that deal with the issue of weeding. As you can see from them, national best practice encourages active weeding.

Weeding can sometimes be a very controversial subject, as library users tend to be book lovers, and book lovers hate to see books discarded or sold. But a library with a lot of books is not necessarily a good library.

The lack of weeding presents a serious problem for a couple of reasons:

First of all, many books, and particularly non-fiction books, become out of date. People use libraries to find out about lots of important life decisions regarding personal finance, employment and medical issues. Books on health issues, for instance, can be dangerous if they contain outdated information. In the area of fiction, we know from our conversations with publishers that the "lifetime" of a work of popular fiction is perhaps a year or a year and a half. People are interested in reading what's popular - whether or not they get it from a library. A library should not be a place where you only go to read yesterday's fiction.

The second reason is that the more books accumulate, the more difficult it is to find any particular book that you are looking for. Lots of unused and out of date materials just make the process of finding useful materials harder and more frustrating for library users. The good news is that as librarians we are extremely good at collecting and analyzing information on what is being used so that we can keep collections properly tended. That's why they call it weeding.

Last, a large collection of unused books takes up valuable space that can be used to provide room for library users, children's programs,

exhibits, study rooms, conference rooms and lots of other services that a community needs. Space is valuable, limited and should be used as effectively as possible to provide maximum benefits - to taxpayers and library users.

A couple of decades ago, many public library directors and trustees believed that a large collection made for a good library. With shared catalogs and fast statewide delivery among libraries, the users of every community library can now access the collections of research libraries within a day or two. Increasingly, access to large collections of millions of e-books can make every library into a top research library. That way, the local print collection can focus strongly on what is most urgently needed and most frequently used, with fast and easy access to millions of books that can meet the needs of every single community member, no matter how specialized or even esoteric their interests. No library could ever afford to do that on its own.

Hope this is helpful,

Keith

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Weeding or de-selection of materials is an important part of a public library's collection development strategy. Libraries cannot afford to ignore the necessity of weeding. Librarians clear the shelves of uninteresting, outdated, or shabby materials and leave remaining those items that are up-to-date and appealing to the reader. Failing to weed wastes space and actually causes readership to decrease.

In the Tennessee Regional Library System, we recommend that 5% be weeded from the collection each year, and that new material equal to 5% of the collection be added. If weeding has been neglected for several years, a more rigorous culling will be necessary. We also maintain that the standard turnover rate (the frequency with which an item is checked out each year) be 2.5 per item. Effective weeding will actually cause the turnover rate to improve, as patrons easily find materials that pique their interest when they go to the shelves.

Charles Sherrill

State Librarian and Archivist of Tennessee

**Travel Report**  
**December 2014 – January 2015**

**Nate Hill, Assistant Director**

January 12, 2015 – January 15, 2015 **Gigabit City Summit North America**, Kansas City, MO. (Airfare and hotel paid for by the Library.)