

TO THE RICHMOND COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD:

I have been asked to write a brief history of the Richmond County Public Library to better acquaint those not familiar with its history and to refresh memories of those who were part of its development.

When the Rappahannock Community College in Warsaw opened in 1974, the college welcomed the community to its library. A Friends of the Library organization was soon established to provide books and other materials for children and adults in the RCC service area (Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula). As time went on, the Friends presented story hours, children's programs and adult programs, some of special interest to RCC and high school students.

Around 1980 (?) The Friends and the college asked Richmond County to provide funds for a part-time staff member. The county did so and at some point the Town of Warsaw added funds. The Friends continued to provide a public library collection and public programming, and gave support to the library in many other ways, such as receptions, publicity, etc. Almost any need of the library was given support by the Friends, if they had the funds. So, at this point, the county paid for a staff member, and the Friends provided materials and programming.

In the late 80's, preliminary discussion began, regarding the establishment of a Richmond County Public Library operating in a cooperative arrangement with the college. As the college and county already were operating a public library, it seemed advantageous to seek a legal public library status, in order to receive state funds annually and have access to the resources of the VA State Library for public libraries. Ida Patton, then public library consultant for the Library of Virginia, directed the formation of this new library and guided its development. I believe, with consultation with the college and the county, she wrote the original contract.

A Board of Trustees was appointed by the County Board of Supervisors. At that time, the Friends made the recommendations for trustees to the county. The State of Virginia provided an one-time establishment grant to the new library to be spent in three years.

A contract was signed in 1993 and the newly merged operation became legal. Enclosed is Appendix B of the contract, "MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING: RELATIONSHIP OF THE RAPPAHANNOCK COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO THE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD AND THE PUBLIC LIBRARY DIRECTOR", an extremely important document which outlined procedures for hiring the public library director, his or her duties, the mission of the board and its duties, and included other related information, all of which insured public library service. Funding from the county included a contract fee which covered space, utilities, and certain, services; monies meeting or exceeding that required by the state which provided the public librarian's salary; and a local funds contribution for general use, including a part-time staff member. The college provided 120 hours in staff.

In 1998, RCC President, Dr. Norman Scott, wished to make changes in the contract. A new one was constructed and presented by Dr. Scott to the Library Board, and presumably to the Richmond County Board of Supervisors, and then signed by Dr. Scott and Mr. Gray. Changes included allowing the college librarian to serve as the certified public librarian, This position is required for a public library to receive full funding from the state. Another change was that all local funds - those from the county, town, Friends of the Library, gifts, grants, etc. went into one account at the college, to be spent for public library purposes.

Sally King  
Vice-Chairman, RCPL Board

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