

Brooks Memorial Library  
Technology Committee  
Wednesday, May 29, 2024 at 4:30 PM  
Mezzanine Meeting Room B

In attendance: Starr Latronica, Leo Schiff (committee chair), Matthew Wojcik, John Woodward. Guests: Margaret Atkinson, Bob Ferrente

- Called to Order @ 4:32
- Agenda (Changes or Additions)
  - None
- Public Comment
  - Leo gave a brief introduction to the purpose and work of the committee for the guests.
- Minutes of 3/27/24
  - Approved
- Old business: Update any current technology projects/programs
  - Matt provided a status update on the network upgrade project.

Project background: the State of Vermont is ending the FiberConnect program on June 30th. FiberConnect was a public-private partnership to provide high-speed internet to community anchor points across the state, conceived when most residents of Vermont had no access to home broadband. Since 2013 it has provided the library's internet connection and internal networking. The end of FiberConnect meant all participating libraries would have to arrange for new internet connections and replace all networking equipment. Through the Vermont Department of Libraries, generous state grants were provided to each FiberConnect library to fund the transition.

Work is well underway on a complete network overhaul and upgrade for the library. The new internet connection, which is almost ten times as fast as on FiberConnect, has been installed to the building. Matt has been testing it with some of the new network equipment (router/firewall and one of the new wireless access points). He is also in the process of contacting the providers of all the online services the library provides, as well as cloud-based systems used by staff, to notify them of our upcoming IP address change.

Matt is coordinating with staff and the IT contractor to determine the final switchover date. We will need to close the library, because we will have no network or internet access for several hours while the new equipment is installed, network rack is rewired, and everything is tested. We should only need to close for about a half-day. That will probably be in mid-June. Cost of the new equipment and contractors is well within the grant.

Also planned and budgeted within the grant is a future Phase 2. That phase will improve outdoor WiFi coverage in the areas immediately in front of the building and near the upper entrance, and add wired network ports on the mezzanine and second floor in underserved spaces. Since these are purely improvements, they do not need to be complete before June 30th. The grant us allows ten full years to spend the money on allowed expenses.

Discussion followed:

- Question: Should we expect an increase in library use because of the higher internet and network speeds? Matt: Hard to guess, but probably not very likely.
- Question: Do or will we have much insight into how the library's internet connection is being used? Matt: Not currently, since FiberConnect is managed by the state. We will own and have full access to the new equipment, so we may be able to get some information after we switch. Would only want broad trends to protect users' privacy. Not sure what related capabilities the equipment provides.
- Update on technology support from community partners, etc.
  - Vermont Department of Labor offered a first job workshop for teens at the library during April vacation week. Introduced online resources for resume writing, job searching, etc.
  - Starr has been in conversation with Vermont Adult Learning. They recommended we take a survey of public needs for technology education. Vermont Adult Learning may be able to provide educational resources (e.g., group classes) once needs and desires are known.
- Discussion: Technology Committee could perhaps develop the survey?
- Tony Eastwood has been volunteering in support of our Library of Things (Tool Cottage specifically). He may be able to help add new LoT items to the reservation system, as well.
- Staff have been working to make the library's Facebook and Instagram more active recently. Circulation staff have been supporting this; the new outreach position will take on some of this as well.
- Magazines are now available through Libby. Starr and supervisors are looking at collection development for downloadable titles.
- Upgrades to the library's public access computing may happen before the end of the calendar year.
- Youth Services has purchased a number of Yoto digital audio players which will be added to circulation. These are screen-free with simple kid-friendly controls. They play audiobooks off Yoto cards that will be available to check out with the devices.
- New business: Leo led a discussion with the meeting guests around their opinions on technology in libraries.
- Adjourned at 5:32