

Published in the Penn-Franklin News on January 13, 2021.

On Hiring A Library Director

Within the last nine years, the Board of the Murrysville Community Library has gone through the process of interviewing and hiring for an open Library Director seat three times. Two of those searches were conducted within only the last two years, just about a year apart.

The hiring responsibility is an important one for any Board, and it is not uncommon across the county that one or more such positions is open within any one year among the 22 member public libraries of the Westmoreland Library Network. It is unusual, but not at all unknown, to have to conduct a search twice within a year, but, at least in Murrysville's case, the reason was a positive one, one about which everyone could feel good. The Board has come away from each transition knowing that the outgoing Library Director was a success story, and the other-library hiring entity felt that way too.

So, the Murrysville Community Library Board is now very experienced at this, and you may be interested to know something about a recent job description for the Library Director position: ".....passionate and motivated to lead the library in its mission: *to inspire ideas, enrich lives and create lifelong opportunities for learning, literacy, and enjoyment* .

"The ideal candidate will be a forward-thinking, community-oriented leader who possesses strong organizational and project management skills and will be responsible for planning, organizing, managing and directing all phases of the Library operations in coordination with the goals, policies and budgetary decisions of the Library Board of Trustees. S/he should have a strong interest in continuing to expand the programming to all members of the community, supporting the current STEM emphasis, working closely with the county library system, and a willingness to explore new things."

One certain requirement is that the Library Director must, at least in Murrysville and many other communities, but not all, hold a Master of Library Science degree from an accredited institution of higher learning. That degree may be earned by on-campus enrollment, but these days it is also acceptable to have earned it on-line.

What is interesting above about the "ideal candidate" is that s/he is expected to be inspirational, "forward-thinking," on lead for expansion of programming, supportive of STEM emphasis, and willing "to explore new things," all above and beyond the more traditional requirements of running a non-profit, community service institution, including maintaining "working relationships with patrons, library staff and Board members, and the general public," implementing policy and procedure, and exercising "initiative and judgment in completing tasks."

Those are a myriad of challenging expectations and attributes, and they belie the traditional image of a librarian. They belie the old-time image of the very quiet community library just filled with newspapers, magazines, and books for the borrowing. They convey the better image of growth and modernity, a modern corporate mindset,

Published in the Penn-Franklin News on January 13, 2021.

which is what I sincerely hope that you are taking away from this series of The Magic Library Card! articles about the Westmoreland Library Network and its member libraries.

Charles B. Greenberg
WLN Board President