

August 10, 2023

Catherine Goldsmith, Director
Starksboro Public Library

To the Working Group on the Status of Libraries in Vermont:

So many of us work alone in our small, rural libraries. I realize that "best practice" would be to eliminate this practice, but it isn't always possible. An anecdote from the past. Many years ago, while I was working in Chittenden County, a librarian in a neighboring library was knocked unconscious by a person with mental health issues who had hid from her while she closed up. It can happen anywhere. What concerned me in that instance is that her board wanted to keep the incident a secret. I don't know whether it got out eventually which is why I continue to tell the story as a cautionary tale.

Here in Starksboro, we generally don't worry when we are alone, but we always know where the box cutter is! (In the center drawer of our desk). This small town does not have police and the State Police barracks is 20 minutes away in New Haven. Recently, we finally got a "LifeFone" button bracelet that will set off an alarm tone and triggers a call center call to ask if we are OK or if we need help. If they get no answer, they will contact 911. It works on our landline and was much cheaper (\$314 year one) than a commercial system (\$1000 first year plus \$300 ongoing subscription). I figure it is like an umbrella: if we have it, we won't need it. We also have interior lights that stay on after we leave the building and shut off automatically. The parking lot lights are decent.

We try not to climb ladders, counters and bookshelves while we are alone, especially when setting up for programs on off hours... We've all probably heard stories about those accidents.

Thank you for all of your efforts to gather information on the state of libraries in our brave, innovative, little state.

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Library hours: Monday 10-6, Thursday 10-5, Saturdays 9-2.
SPL is a courier library.