



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

July 21, 2021

Lamar Branch July 21, 2021

OPENING OF MEETING

- A. The meeting was called to order by President, Bobbie Gardner, at 5:20 p.m. A quorum was met with all members present: Warren Arthur, Vernessia Patterson, Gene Norwood, Lynette Moody, Gail Gandy, Bobbie Gardner, JoAnn Lee (remote), and Barbara Carraway (remote).
- B. The following visitor(s) attended and were recognized: Kelly Shull, Lamar Branch Manager; and, the following members attended remotely and were recognized: Michelle Wallace, Darlington Branch Manager; Charlene McDonnough, Society Hill Branch Manager; Christy Lamb, Administrative Assistant.
- C. A motion was made by Warren Arthur, seconded by Gail Gandy, and carried to approve the agenda.

OPEN FORUM

- A. No members of the public requested to address the Board.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes – A motion was made by Gail Gandy, seconded by Gene Norwood, and carried to approve the May minutes.

FINANCIAL REPORT

- A. A budget surplus is anticipated as the fiscal year draws to a close. The exact amount of the surplus will be known once all outstanding invoices are paid. The surplus funds will be carried into FY2022 and may be used for capital improvement projects.
- B. The FY2022 budget for the Library was approved by County Council. The budget is \$1,589,571. State Aid increased from \$2 to \$2.25 per capita and resulted in an increase of about \$15,000 for the Library. The increase was not included in the FY2022 budget, meaning it is a “windfall” we may use to purchase additional materials or services in the coming year.
- C. An increase of 2% for staff salaries was included in the proposed FY2022 budget. It was not included in the final budget presented by the County Administrator to the County Council for approval. It was felt FY2022 revenues would not allow such an increase due to an anticipated shortfall because of the slow economic recovery brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. No Darlington County employees received a raise in the FY2022 for this reason. The Board requested the Director talk with the County Administrator about an increase in staff salaries.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT – The Director’s report included the following:

- A. An explanation of the State Library's State Aid acceptance form was provided to the Board. The State Library requires public libraries to budget funds as follows: 65-70% for personnel, 15-20% for information resources, 10-20% for operating expenses. The Darlington County Library System fell within the budget requirements with 69% for personnel, 16% for information resources, and 15% for operating expenses. To complete the acceptance process for State Aid, these figures are provided at the beginning of the year and the form will be signed by the Library Board President Bobbie Gardner.
- B. Additional E-Rate funds were obtained for a firewall upgrade. The Library received approximately \$12,000 in E-Rate funding at a cost of \$333 for our E-Rate consultant, John W Hughes IV (Managing Director, Communications Audit Services, LLC) to manage the grant application process.
- C. The Library will receive \$29,000 in American Rescue Plan Act grant funds. These funds will be used in the purchase of a Ford Transit van. A proposal was submitted for a mobile library to serve as an outreach vehicle to provide service to shut-ins in our community and transport a "Pop-Up Library."
- D. The Summer Reading and Learning Program had a wonderful start. At the time of this report, the participation numbers were 39 short of 1,200. The Library has not seen participation numbers such as these since 2016-17. Our Summer Reading and Learning Program has been successful in part due to interesting in-person programming (like the Sheriff Department's bloodhounds and the Fire Department's arson dogs), virtual programming, staff promoting participation in new ways, and the creation of a family experience.
- E. Receipt of applications for all open positions posted on the County's website and the Library's Facebook page has been the slowest in memory.
- F. Drew Sansbury, Darlington Youth Services Librarian, received a grant from Duke Energy to promote South Carolina State Parks. Twenty-Five "Tales and Trails" backpacks were created for families to enjoy a day long visit at any State Park. The backpacks included a free park pass, magnifying glass, compass, butterfly net, etc. These backpacks will be shared with other libraries within the Pee Dee that Duke Energy serves.

HOST BRANCH MANAGER'S REPORT – Kelly Shull, Lamar Branch Manager

- A. The Lamar Branch Youth Services Librarian, Octavia Mack, resigned.
- B. Staff are excited to see everyone back in the building.
- C. Children enjoyed the Sheriff's Department bloodhound program as part of this year's Summer Reading and Learning Program. A contest was held to name two of their dogs last year. Their names are Smoky & Bandit.
- D. Lots of new programming is coming in the weeks ahead, including cooking, a book club, etc.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

No committee reports.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. BOARD OFFICER ELECTIONS – A motion was made by Gail Gandy, seconded by Lynette Moody, and carried to approve present officer selection remain unchanged for 3rd term.
 - a. President – Bobbie Gardner
 - b. Vice President – Gene Norwood
 - c. Secretary – JoAnn Lee

NEW BUSINESS

- A. INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBER – Library Director Jimmie Epling introduced and welcomed Mrs. Barbara Carraway of Hartsville (Council District 6) to the Library Board. She will fill the unexpired term of Mrs. Carolyn Marine.
- B. COST OF LIVING RAISE FOR DARLINGTON COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM EMPLOYEES – Given the initial budget request included a 2% raise for staff was not included in the Library’s budget presented by County Administrator to the Darlington County Council for approval, a motion was made by Warren Arthur, seconded by Gene Norwood, and carried to direct Director Jimmie Epling to discuss with our County Administrator a raise of 2% for Library employees.
- C. STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW AND EXTENSION – A motion was made by Joann Lee, seconded by Bobbie Gardner and carried to approve extending the current strategic plan for another year as a number of the objectives are still relevant and attainable in the next year.
- D. DISCONTINUING ALL OVERDUE FINES – Overdue fines on juvenile materials were discontinued June 2017. The budget was not significantly impacted by the change. Information was distributed to the Board members about the pros and cons of eliminating overdue fines and numbers, the experiences of fine-free libraries, and fine statistics related to the Library. Fines were initially instituted to teach responsibility, however adverse effects have been noted. A motion was made by Warren Arthur, seconded by Gene Norwood, and carried to approve waiving all future overdue fines beginning August 1, 2021.

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING

President Bobbie Gardner requested the Library Board be mindful of their fellow Board member’s time by stressing members strive to be punctual in attending future meetings. She noted the past few meetings started late because a quorum was not present at 5 p.m. due to tardiness.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Warren Arthur, seconded by Gail Gandy, and carried to adjourn the meeting at 6:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by

Christy Lamb, Administrative Assistant