



Darlington County Library System

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Locations

Darlington
Hartsville
Lamar
Society Hill

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

March 2025

Society Hill Branch March 19, 2025

OPENING OF MEETING

- A. The meeting was called to order by Vice President Gail Gandy, at 5:02 p.m. A quorum was met with the following members present: Bobbie Gardner (remote), Ken Hughes, Gene Norwood, Vernessia Patterson, Gail Gandy, JoAnn Lee (remote), and Carol Hill.
- B. Member(s) absent: Barbara Carraway.
- C. The following visitor(s) attended and were recognized: Antoinette Fernandez, IT Manager; Lynn Anderson, Society Hill Branch Manager; Jane Proell, Friends of the Darlington Branch Library President; and, the following member(s) attended remotely and were recognized: Christy Lamb, Administrative Assistant; Martha Brown, Hartsville Branch Manager; Tracy Tuplin, Darlington Branch Manager.
- D. A motion was made by Ken Hughes, seconded by Carol Hill, and carried to approve the agenda.

OPEN FORUM

- A. Jane Proell, Friends of the Darlington Branch Library:
 - 1. Goals for the Library - Jane Proell requested clearer SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) for the Darlington Library to help the Friends of the Library better align their efforts. Specific goals mentioned included:
 - i. Expanding the youth services program, which she deemed too broad.
 - ii. Converting the garage into usable space, noting she had heard of such plans for many years.
 - 2. Supporting the Library's mission through fundraising, with \$1,500 raised in the first quarter, but emphasizing the need for a defined plan.
 - 3. Library Space for Book Sales – Requested additional space in the Library dedicated to displaying books sold by the Friends group.
 - 4. Advocacy and Mission – The Friends group continues to advocate for the Library's mission to the community and legislators, but emphasized the difficulty in achieving this mission without clear goals from the Library.
 - 5. Representation at Meetings – The Friends aim to have a representative attend Board meetings to act as a liaison.
 - 6. South Carolina Room Project – The ongoing remodeling of the South Carolina Room into a Conference Room, which began in October 2024, saw the collection removed to another area of the Library (separated by yellow tape). She expressed concern about the lack of coordination with the Darlington County Historical Commission. She noted that while the Library had removed items for review, the

Historical Commission board was not aware of the need for this review. She suggested that the Friends could utilize the space for their book sale.

7. Request for Used Computers -- The Friends group requested to be considered for a used computer during the upcoming computer rotation, which occurs every five years within the branch.
 8. Mobile Library Outreach Van – Raised concerns regarding the usage of the mobile library outreach van purchased in 2022. She pointed out that no outreach activities were reported on the annual statistics fact sheet she received as information and requested clarification on how the van is being used for its intended purpose, particularly in relation to services for shut-ins and pop-up library events. She noted that the van had participated in the Hartsville Christmas Parade in December 2024, as per the November 2024 board minutes.
 9. Procurement Card Purchases – Inquired about specific purchases made in June and September of 2024, noting concerns over advertising expenses to Neptune Park (June 2024, \$319.16) and office supplies related to the Riverbanks Zoo (September 2024, \$159.00) and Ripley’s Aquarium (September 2024, \$288.02).
- B. Gail Gandy, Vice-Chairperson**
1. Confirmed that Historical Commission Director Brian Gandy had procured books for the Historical Commission when invited. He welcomed any future invitations to review new materials or equipment.
- C. Jimmie Epling, Director**
1. Stated that remediation work in the South Carolina Room had been necessary due to mold issues, followed by lighting and carpeting updates. This work required the room be emptied and the contents temporarily displaced approximately a year ago. He stated that a final review of the remaining items had not been made due to limited storage and that conditions were less than ideal in the garage. The items will remain in their current location until a resolution is reached.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes –** A motion was made by Ken Hughes, seconded by Gene Norwood, and carried to approve the January minutes.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The Library is going into its fourth quarter with 77% of its budget expended.

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

- A. Marketing Manager Christine Shaw-Rittmeier** created a social media reporting system. February 2025 engagement stats were presented at the meeting.
- B. State and local regulations** have rarely required someone appointed to a board or commission to take an oath. Board members at most libraries across the state have not been required to take an oath of office by their local governing body. An Attorney General's opinion prompted a Charleston County legislator to introduce legislation to codify an oath requirement. The Darlington County Library Board will not take any action toward taking an oath at this time unless County Council votes to require an oath be taken.

HOST BRANCH MANAGER'S REPORT – Lynn Anderson, Society Hill Branch Manager

- A.** The annual goal for the Branch is to increase circulation numbers. In support of this objective, we launched the "Adventures in a Box" monthly subscription program, which has seen significant success, with 27 sign-ups so far. Due to high demand, we have temporarily slowed down advertising but plan to expand the program next year to include movies.
- B.** Our March calendar is packed with various events. Additionally, the branch has introduced a "Candy Guess Jar" activity, where patrons must check out an item to participate in the guessing game, further engaging our community and aiding in reaching our circulation goals.
- C.** Looking ahead, the April calendar is filling up with exciting programs, including the incubation of eggs on the 24th and the Friends of the Library Spring Concert. The plant swap program has not yet gained traction, but we expect activity to increase as we move further into April.
- D.** A Hydroponic Farm Stand, funded through a grant, was launched with forty plants. While we have lost four plants, the remaining thirty-six are thriving. We are planning a program centered around this initiative to further engage our patrons and promote sustainable gardening practices.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. FY 2026 BUDGET – PERSONNEL**
 - a. A motion was made by Gene Norwood, seconded by Vernessia Patterson, and carried to approve the Library Board going into executive session at 5:35 p.m.
 - b. A motion was made by Ken Hughes, seconded by Gail Gandy, and carried to approve the Library Board exiting executive session at 5:58 p.m. No action was taken.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

- A. AGENDA FORMAT CHANGE –** The Library Board's meeting agenda has changed to help the flow of the meeting and to provide members an opportunity to make comments and requests.
- B. FY 2026 BUDGET -** The proposed Fiscal Year 2026 budget is \$1,918,000, with key requests including converting the Marketing Manager to full-time, increasing salaries for two employees, and funding four Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) using the Library's Fund Balance of over \$2 million. Notable budget items include a \$173,000 State Aid allocation, if approved by the State Legislature, and funding for projects like a van wrap, purchase of a new vehicle, and building renovations. Ken Hughes inquired about using the County's motor pool to acquire a vehicle. Director Jimmie

Epling responded the quality of their stock leaves a lot to be desired. The budget will be reviewed by the County Administrator and Finance Director, with a final vote expected by mid-June after the required budget work session(s), readings (3), and votes (2). A motion was made by Carol Hill, seconded by JoAnn lee, and carried to approve the budget as proposed for FY 2026.

- C. UPDATED LIBRARY CLOSING 2025 CALENDAR** – A motion was made by Ken Hughes, seconded by Vernessia Patterson, and carried to approve the change in the Library's closing calendar, moving the In-Service Day from Friday, March 28th to Friday, April 25th due to unforeseen circumstances.
- D. BOARD MEMBER TERMS** – A board member may serve an unlimited number of four year terms. A member's term expires at the end of the fiscal year, June 30th. Member terms expiring on 6/30: Gene Norwood, District 8, 2nd Full Term.
- E.** At the March 3rd County Council meeting, the Council unanimously approved Mr. Norwood's reappointment for another four year term. His new term will expire on June 30, 2029.
- F. ELECTION OF BOARD OFFICERS** – According to Board bylaws, the Board must elect new officers in July. A motion was made by Carol Hill, seconded by Ken Hughes, and carried to approve forgoing the formation of a Nominating Committee. The Board will appoint new officers at their July meeting.

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING

None.

REQUESTS/COMMENTS – MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

- A.** Gail Gandy noted a concern from staff at the Darlington Library regarding the darkness of the staff parking lot. Staff reported feeling unsafe, especially due to the presence of homeless individuals. Library Director Jimmie Epling noted that the issue could be addressed as part of the upcoming capital improvement plans for the Darlington Branch, which includes a garage renovation and front step repairs. However, he does not believe that increased lighting levels would serve as an effective deterrent for the homeless presence. Gene Norwood emphasized the urgency of addressing the safety concern sooner. To improve safety, Mr. Epling suggested exploring the installation of a dusk-to-dawn light by Duke Energy.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Ken Hughes, seconded by JoAnn Lee, and carried to adjourn the meeting at 6:11 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by

Christy Lamb, Administrative Assistant