



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

January, 2026

Hartsville Branch January 28, 2026

OPENING OF MEETING

- A.** The meeting was called to order by Vice President Gail Gandy at 3:04 p.m. A quorum was met with the following members present: Gail Gandy, Ken Hughes, Gene Norwood, Vernessia Patterson, JoAnn Lee, and the following member(s) attended remotely: Bobbie Gardner.
- B.** Member(s) absent: Barbara Carraway and Carol Hill.
- C.** The following visitor(s) attended and were recognized: Antoinette Fernandez, IT Manager; Tracy Tuplin, Darlington Branch Manager; Lynn Anderson, Society Hill Branch Manager; Martha Brown, Hartsville Branch Manager; Christine Shaw-Rittmeier, Marketing Manager; and, the following member(s) attended remotely and were recognized: Christy Lamb, Administrative Assistant.
- D.** A motion was made by Ken Hughes, seconded by Gene Norwood, and carried to approve the agenda.

OPEN FORUM

- A.** None

CONSENT AGENDA

- A.** A motion was made by Bobbie Gardner, seconded by Ken Hughes, and carried to approve the November minutes.

FINANCIAL REPORT

- A.** Expenditures in 53700-Postage and 55000-Printing and Binding are high due to deposits made on account for printing and mailing missing/overdue material notices and ILL courier services.
- B.** The Library is halfway through its Fiscal Year 2026 budget. Forty-eight percent of the original budgeted amount has been expended, with an unexpected HVAC replacement and repair costs included. The budget is in good shape to handle unexpected repair/remediation expenses in the future.
- C.** The State Library requested the minimum grant given to public libraries be increased from \$150,000 to \$200,000. The Library's State Aid will increase \$25,000 from \$175,000 to \$200,000.

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

- A.** Enjoyed being Santa for library programming throughout December. Santa received cookies and bracelets from young patrons whose lists varied from kittens to heartfelt requests for parents/guardians.

- B. Mold remediation recommended for the Darlington branch. Wallpaper trapped moisture, resulting in mold in two areas of the Darlington Branch. The quote was \$6,905. The branch will remain open during repairs.
- C. A HVAC alarm system sensor for the Hartsville branch gave false alerts. The repair cost is \$1,500, with labor being the majority at \$1,000.
- D. The February events calendar was distributed to the Library board.
 - 1. Marketing Manager, Christine Shaw-Rittmeier, addressed the Board with metrics for November and December. Board members viewed a video highlight reel, 'Best of 2025.' The videos in the highlight reel were selected because they garnered the most interaction. Mrs. Shaw-Rittmeier works hard to represent all branches equally and finds the videos stimulate interest in the Library's events, raising library awareness.
 - 2. Ken Hughes noted the work was fantastic and wonderfully creative, "Great job! Really great job!"

HOST BRANCH MANAGER'S REPORT – Martha Brown, Hartsville Branch Manager:

- A. The Branch's clocks were replaced due to a auto synchronization issue with the clock type.
- B. Reference Clerk, Matthew Vincett, unexpectedly resigned. Staff are working together to cover the shortage.
- C. A faulty HVAC alarm system sensor has been an annoyance as it triggered automated calls and texts every four hours. It has been addressed.
- D. The Library received IRS tax booklets for the 2025 tax season. We are awaiting the forms.
- E. Our well liked and much appreciated custodian, Anhelina Kostiucheko, who is from Ukraine, has not received her new work visa. She applied for her renewed work visa in a timely fashion with the deadline of November 23rd. It was not processed and granted due to the government shutdown at the end of last year. She is unable to work until she receives the visa. Mrs. Brown, as well as members of the community, reached out to their politicians and the appropriate personnel to no avail. We are trying hard to keep the building presentable while waiting for her return. I am amazed with the positive attitudes and willingness to chip in that I am seeing with my coworkers. However, I really want Anhelina to come back to work!
 - 1. Board members offered to call the Federal government representatives.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. **PALMETTO CONSORTIUM MERGER WITH SCLENDS CONSORTIUM UPDATE -**
The State Library has hired a "SCLENDS Coordinator," Faith Line. Mrs. Line's role will initially be directing Palmetto Consortium's migration as the State Library's point

person in the process. At the time of this report, the Palmetto Consortium is on track to join SCLENDS in August.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. 2026 HOLIDAY CLOSING DATES REVISION** – A motion was made by Ken Hughes, seconded by JoAnn Lee, and carried to approve amending the Christmas holiday closing to Thursday-Monday, December 24th – 28th to align with the holiday calendar approved by County Council for County employees.
- B. FY 2027 BUDGET COMMITTEE** – The proposed budget is usually due at the Finance Department in late March. Board approval of the final budget before it is submitted is possible this year at the March Board meeting. A 2-3% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) is expected and 3% will be included in the proposed budget. A motion was made by JoAnn Lee, seconded by Vernessia Patterson, and carried to approve the appointment of Bobbie Gardner, Gene Norwood, and Ken Hughes to the Budget Committee.
- C. SC LAWMAKERS PRE-FILE LIBRARY BILL DIRECTOR QUALIFICATIONS** – Senate Bill 707 would remove the right of a library Board to require, or even express a preference that a candidate for Director to hold a nationally recognized education standard for the library profession. As of January 13th, Senate Bill 707 is in the hands of the Senate’s Committee on Judiciary.
 - 1. Gail Gandy intends to call her representatives saying, “Don’t need to be dumbing down South Carolina any more than it already is.”
 - 2. Ken Hughes commented, “Politicians don’t have a right to dictate the Library Board’s hiring methods.”

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING

- A.** Change meeting time for upcoming 2026 Board meeting dates.

REQUESTS/COMMENTS – MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

- A.** Library Director, Jimmie Epling, thanked the Library Board for delaying the meeting to accommodate an overseas trip.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Gene Norwood, seconded by Ken Hughes, and carried to adjourn the meeting at 3:41 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by

Christy Lamb, Administrative Assistant