

Oconee County Library Board Meeting

Minutes for April 10, 2023

4:30 p.m.

Bogart Library

Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. The following members of the Board were present: Chairman Mark Campbell, Vice-Chairperson Rubielen Norris, Secretary Fred Lutz, Angela Moss-Hill, Deann Craft, Rachel Watson, Mike Eddy, Daphne Norton, Matt Stephens and Mandy Marable.

Oconee County Library and Athens Regional Library System members were also present including James Mitchell, Valarie Bell, Toby Mayfield and Donna Butler. Aria Higginbottom of Clark Outsourcing was present to present the new balance sheets added to the quarterly financial statement.

Upon motion by Ms. Norris seconded by Ms. Moss-Hill, the minutes of the January 2023 meeting were approved.

There were no public comments at the meeting. The meeting was video-recorded by Mr. Lee Becker of the community.

Chairman Campbell noted that Ms. Norris recently attended the Oconee Board of Commissioners meeting to accept the proclamation of appreciation from the commissioners for the community service provided by the Oconee County library.

Chairman Campbell also announced that construction has commenced on the new library at Wire Park. A ceremonial groundbreaking will be held at 10:00 a.m. on April 14th. Both branches of the Oconee libraries will be closed until 12:30 p.m. on Friday so that library staff may attend the ceremony.

The Branch Manager's report was provided by Mr. Mitchell. His written report is attached.

The regional services report was provided by Ms. Mayfield. Her written report is attached.

The regional director's report was provided by Ms. Bell. Her written report is attached. Of particular note is the anticipated additional state budget support for the East Side project and the new Oconee County library. Also, a one-page ARLS strategic plan for 2023-2025 was provided which will serve as the basis for yearly tactical plans in the region. The new ARLS website is available at www.athenslibrary.org.

Chairman Campbell thanked board members who attended the board member training session on February 9th with the state librarian, Julie Walker, and also

expressed thanks to board members who attended the Library Day at the Capital on February 8th. Chairman Campbell noted that Oconee County was well represented. He urged members to continue to thank our elected officials for their support of the library.

Mr. Mitchell reported that the Watkinsville Friends of the Library conducted a very successful book sale in February. A family fun day is planned for May 15th.

Old Business: Chairman Campbell provided an update on the new library construction. If signed by the governor, the additional approved funding will help outfit the new library so that the finished product will be exceptional. Board members reviewed proposed commemorative naming opportunities for designated spaces in the library. There was no objection to the concepts of naming or to a donor wall. Ms. Norris asked for the library completion timeframe. Chairman Campbell indicated that construction was ahead of schedule such that completion may still be accomplished within this calendar year.

New Business: Chairman Campbell advised that a request for reconsideration of materials had been submitted in late March. Staff will review the request and provide a recommendation at the next board meeting. The item will be on the agenda for a vote by the board at the July meeting.

Library financial performance through the fiscal year third quarter was reviewed by the board. Chairman Campbell noted that budgeted revenues received (~79%) exceed expenditures (~72%) such that the finances are in good condition 75% through the year. Ms. Higginbottom explained the new balance sheets provided for both the system and gift accounts.

The proposed budget for the 2024 fiscal year was presented and discussed. Revenues from funding partners are still tentative. The budget will be reviewed at the July meeting. Upon a motion by Ms. Norton seconded by Mr. Eddy, the proposed fiscal year 2024 budget was approved.

There being no further business, upon the motion offered by Ms. Norris and seconded by Ms. Marable, the board adjourned the meeting.

The next meeting is Monday July 10, 2023 at 4:30 p.m. at the Watkinsville library.


Mark Campbell, Chairman


Fred Lutz, Secretary

Bogart Library

Children Services:

- ★ **Donna:** Donna continues to offer three Early Literacy programs to develop language and literacy skills for ages birth - six weekly. She has added a monthly visit to Cleveland Road Elementary Pre-K and a bi-monthly ESOL program for school age children. We have added a very popular Meet & Play (open play) session every Friday morning. Parents LOVE it. So many new families have moved into the Bogart service area. Meet & Play has helped new residents make new friends, while their children develop social and emotional skills. We have added STEAM Wednesdays to our Lego rotation. Families are enjoying the addition of science, art and engineering programming for their children. However, sadness has appeared occasionally when a Little Lego Fanatic arrives to discover other things going on. Horrors! We're adapting to provide both STEAM and Lego on Wednesdays. We had a good turnout for our February STEAM Saturday, with a Bird ID walk and bird crafts for the Great Backyard Bird Count.
- ★ **Our new Chapter Chat Tween Book Club is going extremely well, with lots of enthusiasm and good attendance.** It's going so well, we're challenged with finding a time to continue it during the Summer Reading Program.
- ★ Read to Rover has resumed and has been so popular that Kathy Ricks, our TDI volunteer added an additional 30 minutes to make sure each child had a chance to read to Maisy Jane and Everleigh.

Passive Learning Programs:

- ★ **Children:** Art, puzzles, building, math, word searches and puppets
- ★ **Teens:** Sadly, we've had little response to our Teen programs, but we've had a number of teen volunteers, many of whom Donna trained as tweens. It's good to know they think of the Bogart Library as home!

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Outreach: Donna visited CRES in February and March. Paul attended RBES Arts Night March 9th. Over 198 kids and parents dropped by the library "table" to get materials and participate in artistic activities. Kathryn helped at Dungeon & Dragon Night for Oconee and will help at FanFest. Blaine & Kay were judges for the NEGA Middle School Science Fair, as part of our reciprocal agreement with GYSTC/RESA. Penny presented library-based presentations to OLLIE, Torch Club and the UGA Women's Group. Penny introduced Valerie at the March meeting of the Torch Club. Members raved!

Adult Services:

- ★ **Bogart: Penny continues to offer superlative adult programming with the Bookies Book Club, Memoir Writing and the Mystery Club. All three groups have run out of room in the Creative Space and will move into the Multipurpose Room in April.** Donna presented a program on Georgia-born abstract expressionist artist, Alma Thomas. Kathryn has added a fabric arts program (Help! I Yarned) for adults on the third Friday of each month. Kathryn also offered Quilling as the craft for Crafting @ Midday in March.

“Inreach:”

- ★ Two grade levels from Cleveland Road Elementary School visited the library in February and March for a library tour, storytelling and information about library cards. Such a pleasure!

Watkinsville Library

Special Events

- ★ **Spring into Wellness**
 - We had roughly 20 vendors and organizations who helped participate and many had tables promoting their wellness resources in Oconee County.
 - We had little way to track how many patrons attended the event but we estimate that roughly 1,000 people attended.
- ★ **FanFest**
 - We had between 25 and 30 vendors, 3 food trucks, 7 performances, two workshops, gaming, and more
 - We estimate about 1300 participated this year. We saw a huge increase in attendance and also in how long people stayed at the event

Children Services:

- ★ **Storytime is still thriving. We’ve added in open play time at the end for families that want to stay longer but aren’t interested in crafts.** This has been a big hit, especially when we turn on the bubble machine.
- ★ Open play is still going strong. This program allows toddlers and caregivers to interact with each other, explore new activities, and practice their gross motor skills.
- ★ We tried an infant storytime at the request of a few patrons but didn’t have much success so we went back to open playtime only.
- ★ **Homeschool club has really taken off. We have great attendance weekly and have gotten so much positive feedback. We’re also partnering with the local Farm Bureau and Keep Oconee County Beautiful organizations who provide activities and supplies for one week a month during this program.**
- ★ Upcoming children’s library programs include: **a weekly coding program for tweens, a weekly children’s anime club, a Ramadan storytime and craft program, and a nature storytime at Harris Shoals Park.** We’re also putting the finishing touches on summer programming.

Passive Programs:

- ★ **Children: the children are loving the scavenger hunts around the children's side. We usually have 300 plus children participate each month!** We provide 100 different Grab & Go crafts for kids each week. These are a big hit and the children love to see what the craft will be each week.

Teen Services:

- ★ The Teen regular programs of PRISM, D&D, and Anime Club continue to go strong
- ★ **A monthly STEM program for teens has also been added and every session has been well attended**
- ★ **There is also a monthly program that looks at different cultures around the world through food, music and more. So far the Teens have done Korea, Italy, and France.**

Adult Services:

- ★ Crafting programs continue to be popular and garner a good deal of interest. Craft programs we have offered include: cutting board crafts, pressed flower crafts, and puzzle piece crafts.
- ★ **Zakk, Aaron, and Ash continue to grow our selection of gaming programs with regular Dungeons and Dragons sessions, Chess Club, and a Gaming Lounge.**
- ★ **In March we partnered with Rook & Pawn Board Game Cafe in Athens as well as the Athens, Madison, and Bogart branches to offer patrons First Quest. First Quest allowed patrons to play multiple table top games and we even had Rook & Pawn give themed food and drinks for the event. We are excited to partner with them again in the future.**
- ★ The 3rd Monday Book Club has continued to grow and solidly has 12-15 attendees every month. We have a wonderfully diverse list of books to read this year, all chosen by our patrons.
- ★ Upcoming programs for Adults & Families include a plant swap, Bob Ross Paint & Sip, Eat Like a Bridgerton, Mommy & Me Tea, Macrame Rainbow Wall Hanging Crafts, Austenland, and more. Ash is continuing to work on Summer Programming as well.

Patron Comments:**Bogart:**

We had a number of the usual thank yous for programming, thank yous for our friendliness and helpfulness, but the most touching comment came from one of our ESOL mothers, whose child was very, very shy. "Thank you and bless you for giving my child and these children your time and wonderful memories." An older patron, who attended our programs in place of ESOL for adults (plans underway!) kept saying "Bless you for your help! Bless you."

A grandmother of a three year old with a brand new baby brother said: "Ordinarily I don't share things about my grandchildren on my phone, but I just have to show you this." She proceeded to show us a video of the three year old singing the original opening song Donna uses to center the preschoolers, toddlers and infants at story time. The sweet big sister was worried that her little brother was crying, so Big Sis finished the song with "Don't cry, Brother! This song makes ME happy!" Hopefully, Baby Brother will attend Busy Bee Story Time soon.

Watkinsville:

We had a patron come into the library after FanFest and mentioned that her 80 year old mother had a blast and she hadn't seen her mom smile so much in many years. She showed us a picture of her mother with one of the Cosplayers and she had a big grin as she posed with the cosplayers props.

Toby Mayfield, Assistant Director for Regional Services - April 2023

- The branch managers and I all continue to meet each Wednesday to discuss important matters and attend training sessions. We often have guests (usually Resource Team Members) to discuss projects or collaborations. On February 15th, Elizabeth Hood -Regional Youth Services Coordinator, spoke with the team on youth services ideas and teen volunteers. On March 1st, we met in person at the Oglethorpe County Library. We discussed our strategic plan and using an Appreciative Inquiry approach in our planning of activities to reach our goals. Our next in person meeting will be August 2nd at the Bogart Library.
- Attended Legislative Day 2023 on Wednesday, February 8th with several staff and board members from around the region. Myself and ACC staff member Theresa Rice visited the offices of legislators representing Oglethorpe County.
- Attended the Library Board of Trustees Training session on Feb 9th.
- Worked with the City of Danielsville to reduce the Madison County Library water bill from January which included the dates in December when the massive leak was discovered and repaired.
- Interviewed candidates for Royston Public Library programming specialist and children's programming specialist with branch manager, Maggie West. **-Hired Nicole Bryant and Erin Lutz.**
- Coordinated Listen Everywhere training sessions for Madison, Oglethorpe, Royston, and Bogart. This is the software used with the hearing loops installed in each of these locations.
- Assisted with the writing of budget proposal narratives for Oconee and Franklin counties.
- Attended the 1st Annual Spring into Wellness event at Wire Park. This was an amazing day with a huge turnout!
- Attended the Southeastern Collaborative Conference virtually March 14 - 16. There were many wonderful sessions including: Beyond Performance Reviews: Calibrating Talent to Grow a Stronger Leadership Pipeline.
- Continued work in the regional strategic planning process, the Wire Park -Watkinsville project, the GEER grant team, and the East Side User Group.

- Included in the list of bond projects in the State Conference Committee budget is an additional \$500,000 for the East Side project, and \$500,000 for the Oconee County Library Watkinsville Branch at Wire Park. Also in the budget is \$0.70 per capita for materials, and MRR and Technology funding. Of course, nothing is final until the Governor signs.
- We completed the **AUP** for FY22. Most of the findings we received were due to the FY 22 import of our financial software Blackbaud to the new software MIP. Clark Outsourcing is working to remedy that situation. One was because we did not include a balance sheet on Board Financials, which as you see we have started doing now.
- **Clark Outsourcing** has been working hard to reconcile the entries from Blackbaud to MIP. The target date to have this reconciled is by the end of the fiscal year.
- I have a meeting scheduled with Julie Walker, State Librarian, and Christopher Evans, GPLS Finance Director, on 4/10/23 to discuss and make recommendations on best practices to restructure the **Business Office** since Mamie's retirement.
- We have completed our work with Fast Forward Libraries, our **Strategic Plan** consultants. The goals and objectives are attached and will be presented to the Regional Board for approval. It will be placed on our website after that approval. The Resource Team, Branch Managers, and Department Heads have now been tasked with developing activities to meet our goals and objectives. This should be completed by the start of the new fiscal year.
- We conducted a very successful **Board Training** on February 9th. Julie Walker was our guest speaker and I believe that everyone learned a lot from that training.
- The **Oconee County Watkinsville Branch at Wire Park groundbreaking** will be held on April 14th from 10:00 - 12:00. Please consider yourselves invited to attend.
- We are hosting a **celebration of Rebecca Ballard's Georgia Library Staff Person of the Year on April 21st from 3:00 - 5:00**. You are all invited to attend and please bring a friend or two. This is a great honor for Rebecca and for ARLS.
- All of the **Hearing Loops** are in place. We are currently testing them and adjusting some tweaks. This has been a long journey with many ups and downs. I am grateful to Greg Deal for his IT expertise in handling these situations. I am also thankful to Sue Plaksin for writing the grant and keeping up with all of the changes.
- The new **website** is up and running. We have received great feedback on our new look for ARLS's 12th and 24-hour branch. I am grateful to Sean Hribal and the website team for all of the hard work that they put into making this transition a success.
- We received a **\$2,000 marketing grant from Georgia Public Library Service to promote early literacy and story time**. The campaign will roll out in April and includes brochures that will be distributed to pediatricians' offices and health departments, a social media campaign, media pitches for interviews with Miss Rebecca, and a Spotify radio ad. It's our third time receiving this grant!