

Oconee County Library Board Meeting
Minutes for July 10, 2023
4:30 p.m.
Watkinsville 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, Laura French and Johnathan Kirkpatrick.

Oconee County Library and Athens Regional Library System members were also present including James Mitchell, Donna Butler, Valarie Bell, Toby Mayfield and Lorrie Lavengood.

The meeting was video recorded by Mr. Lee Becker of the community. Chairman Campbell welcomed the large number of community members that were present. Time permitting, some eighteen Oconee County residents were given the opportunity to address the board for three minutes each based on their order of sign-up. After the completion of public comments, approximately 2/3 of the community attendees departed the meeting.

Upon a motion by Ms. Norris seconded by Ms. French, the minutes of the April 2023 meeting were approved.

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

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

Regional Director Bell reported that the employer share of state health benefits is increasing dramatically each year for the next three years. The first increase is expected to take place in January 2024. This unexpected increase along with the decrease in funds received from the City of Watkinsville have required a revision to the projected budget approved at the April board meeting. The revised budget can support no staff raises this fiscal year. The staff is working on adding tactical elements to the regional strategic plan goals that were established last fiscal year.

Friends of the Library activities reported included a book sale in Bogart planned for September 30th and a fall book sale planned by the Watkinsville friends. Watkinsville friends hosted a successful family fun day with several hundred people attending.

Old Business

Chairman Campbell provided an update to construction progress for the new Oconee County library at Wire Park. New exterior walls are in place. A progress walk-thru is planned for July 11th. Completion in December is still projected which would support an orderly move to the new location in January 2024.

The revised budget (accommodating the increased cost of employer provided health insurance) was presented for board approval. Upon a motion by Mr. Eddy seconded by Ms. French, the revised budget was approved.

Chairman Campbell and Mr. Mitchell addressed a request for reconsideration of material submitted by a resident of Oconee County. Mr. Mitchell explained the staff reconsideration process which culminates in a recommendation to the intellectual freedom committee of the library board. After review, the committee recommended that the book "*Flamer*" be moved from the young adult area to the adult area of the library. Discussion ensued among the board members and library staff. Upon a motion by Mr. Lutz seconded by Ms. Norris, the recommendation of the intellectual freedom committee was unanimously adopted moving the book to the adult area. .

New Business

Chairman Campbell expressed a desire for better communication among board members and library staff. He requested staff to provide a report of planned programs for the upcoming quarter. Chairman Campbell also noted that as an advisory board it is not the board's function to dictate policy or programs to staff. The reports of upcoming events each quarter will keep the board informed and will facilitate board participation and feedback. Mr. Mitchell and Ms. Butler reviewed the upcoming programs planned for Watkinsville and Bogart, respectively. Chairman Campbell requested that the reports for subsequent quarters be provided in advance as "read ahead" prior to the scheduled quarterly board meetings.

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

The next meeting is scheduled for 4:30 p.m. on Monday, October 9, 2023 at the Bogart library.


Mark Campbell, Chairman


Fred Lutz, Secretary

Athens Regional Library System
Engaging Communities, Exceeding Expectations
Branch Manager Report for Library Board of Trustees
Oconee County Library, James Mitchell
Date: 7/10/2023
July 2023 Librarian's Report to Library Board

Bogart Library

Children Services:

- ★ Our numbers are almost back to Pre-Pandemic numbers with LOTS of children showing up for our in-house programming, especially toddler and preschool story times. We've had good turnout for our visiting performers, as well. Our in-house staff presented puppet shows have been a surprising hit, too. Our annual Avenger Tween helper program has over 35 in full-participation, which is as many as Donna & Paul can handle, so we were unable to do a third training for the 10 on the waiting list. We have close to 600 registered "readers" with over 50 already on their second round of reading for buttons. We have over 35 Chapter Book readers over the age of 8, who "accept the challenge" complete with a wooden sword knighting. Some readers have completed close to 75 hours.

Passive Learning Programs:

- ★ Puzzles, Legos, Voting for various topics, blocks, rhyming activities
- ★ **Teens:** Art & A Movie, Trivia, Escape the Record Store Escape Room (huge hit!)
- ★ **Family Events:** Puppet Shows & Crafts, Family Trivia, Lego Saturday, Big Family Read, Pollinator Party
- ★ **Tweens:** Graphic Novel Book Club, Tween Star Wars Bingo, Tween Art, Tween & MS Escape Room, Choose Your Own Adventure, Avenger Volunteer Program

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Outreach: Spring: Donna visited four schools to promote SRP. Summer: Donna visited Sandy Creek & Bear Hollow Zoo for storytelling.

Adult Services:

- ★ Bogart: **Lunch & Learns:** Cynthia Jameson presented a military history program on the White Table Ceremony. Penny Mills presented a program on the Constitution. In addition, we've been very pleased with book club and our memoir writing program attendance. Jeannette Waddell, a professional storyteller from Milledgeville was scheduled to do a presentation on William & Ellen Craft at Bogart on June 13th and Athens on June 14th. Unfortunately, she suffered a loss in her family. Ms. Waddell has rescheduled at Athens July 13th, but Bogart will reschedule her visit to a Saturday in September to allow more time to re-advertise the event.

Watkinsville Library

Children Services:

- ★ We offered separate storytime programs for older children to celebrate Asian American Pacific Islander Month, Mental Health Awareness Month, Black Music History Month, Pride Month, and will have one for Disability Pride Month this Friday. We had great turn out for all of these programs with positive feedback from parents about each one.
- ★ The Pride Program of RuPaul biography and our Pride display received considerable feedback of both negative and positive comments. We try to always make sure everyone in the community sees themselves in the programs, books, and displays that we offer. This goes back to our Mission Statement of "We are committed to promoting library services for all of our counties' diverse populations." We also try and treat every group the same. We listened to feedback from parents and have had several good suggestions. We try and keep storytime generic in its subject matter so as many people as possible will come and enjoy it. We don't censor out certain groups or representation however. Normally we have never advertised the book that would be in storytime because it can change and was not necessary. Suggestions from patrons that we publish the book before storytime so that parents can make a decision if the storytime is something they want to attend, is in line with our values and also a good way to get more info to parents so they can decide for themselves.

We also had parents say that if we do a program for Pride Month that we clearly mark it as a Pride Month program. This is once again a good suggestion because it gives more information to parents but stays true to our Mission.

A third suggestion was that instead of doing monthly cultural celebrations for our displays that we do more generic topics but have diversity be part of those displays when appropriate but just not the central feature.

Pride saw lots of feedback about displays and storytimes. I had probably more than a 100 people visit in person or call me on the telephone to either say how much it meant to them that we offered these programs or from those who were against having the programs and displays. Though some people elevated their voices and were passionate about their displeasure with the programs and displays they never crossed a line in person into what I would deem inappropriate behavior. There was a lot of things online that named staff members and was more derogatory. This was an extremely hard month for the staff to see those things said about them and being unable to respond. They did an amazing job though of staying professional and continuing to do their jobs at the highest level. I commend them for that.

- ★ Our children's summer reading program has brought in great numbers. We have given out 1500 logs so far this summer and have had 250 children complete the program already. The children are loving the new way we're doing logs and prizes this summer, a simplified way that helps parents and staff keep track. Our Wednesday morning summer programs have been big hits with attendance numbers ranging from 150-300 people each week.

- ★ Storytime numbers are looking great as well - families are very vocal about how much they are enjoying the program this summer. Each week we're seeing between 35-60 people each week.
- ★ We have a local elementary school teacher who has been leading a game of Dungeons & Dragons for kids each week this summer and it has been a huge success. We have near constant requests for a DnD game for kids so this is a need we're happy we can finally meet.
- ★ We were also able to partner with local authors to offer author visits and creative writing workshops for children this summer.
- ★ In recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month, we partnered with a local therapist to speak with parents and caregivers about how to recognize and navigate their children's emotions.
- ★ In addition to over 20 unique programs in May and June, we also offered 6 weekly programs for including: storytime (0-5 years), open playtime(0-5 years), coding club(8-12 years), builder club (5-12 years), lego club(5-12 years), and anime club(8-12 years).

Passive Programs: the children are loving the monthly scavenger hunts around the children's side. We have almost 200 children participate each month! We continue to provide weekly Grab & Go crafts for kids. We assemble 100 crafts for each week. We provide at least 400 crafts each month.

Teen Services:

- ★ Teen Summer Reading has been moving along smoothly. The teen department has added additional events during on select Mondays and Fridays to accommodate a wide range of teen schedules this summer in addition to the usual evening programs. There will be 22 events for teens this summer.
- ★ The first month of summer reading has had 64 Teens sign up to read with registered teens reading over 400 books.
- ★ The teen department is trialing a coding arduino and robotics sign up which is in place for teens to use this summer. They can use the arduino and 30 Days Lost in Space to teach themselves coding and circuitry and can use our robotics kits independently. Currently we have one teen working weekly on this. We hope to increase use of STEAM items in the new library space.

- ★ The Teen Department is running a ten event year long program called Around the World Food Showcase with teens learning to cook and/or appreciate international or regional foods.
- ★ The teen department has applied for and been granted over \$1100 in STEAM equipment - including 2 telescopes, 2 robotics kits, a coding arduino and renewable energy items through Civil Air Patrol. These items were granted at no cost for use at the library.
- ★ The Teen Department has a formed working relationship with the Cornell Center for Materials Research Lending Library of Experiments to access dozens of high school level STEAM kits free of charge increasing our ability to bring quality STEM programming to the library at no additional cost.
- ★ There are 20 teens participating in the July 15th Teen Makers Market.
- ★ The Teen department has been accepting applications and will host a teen art show in the month of August in the library's auditorium. There will be a reception on Wednesday, August 23rd to recognize teen artists.
- ★ The Teen department is coordinating with the adult and children's departments to host a Homeschool Expo and Swap on August 19 and 20.
- ★ Since the last board meeting the Teen Department ran monthly club events for STEAM Club, Anime Club, Prism Club and D&D (D&D has been halted for summer to make room in the schedule for extra summer reading events). The Teen Department walked with staff from across ARLS and Prism Club teens/parents at the 2nd annual Pride Parade and attended the public Pride Festival outreach event with the Athens Library Teen Department after the parade. STEAM Club hosted teens to wire bug bots and buzzer games in April and ran a Forensic Science class in May. Summer STEAM Club has open lab stations where teens can work independently.

- ★ Since the last board meeting the Teen Department has run the following special events:
Luau Night (get ready for Asian/Pacific Island heritage month by learning to cook spam musubi)

A Night in Paris (learn to make and cook crepes/watch a movie)

Teen Makers Market Info Session

Summer Reading Kickoff (crafts and a trivia competition)

Quality Quidditch Supplies (create Hogwarts themed brooms)

Sorcerer's Stone House Cup Competition (A series of challenges and relay races)

Robotics Coding and Information session

Time Turner Crafts (we offered the crafts from the kickoff event for teens who could not make the first event)

Magical Menagerie Movie Matinee (make paper creatures, eat popcorn, watch a movie)

STEAM Club drop in lab (polymers, microscopy, robotics and building stations)

Meet the Author Event: Julian Winters (a talk about writing and a book giveaway)

Gaming Night for Teens (handheld games and the new Harry Potter game as well as VR headsets from the Athens Library),

Gringotts Bank (decorate a wooden bank craft)

TriWizard Tournament House Cup Competition (competitive paper crafts, water game relay outside, a treasure hunt and learn to use a computer to look up books in Pines)

Harry Potter Escape Room (We did 3, 1 hour sessions of an escape room - this was a huge hit)

July House Cup Competition (trick shots with ping pong balls and other team based indoor challenges)

Honeydukes Sweets (Hogwarts themed candy making- teens decorated chocolate frogs and made bitter lollipops).

- ★ The teen department has received favorable feedback from several parents for our themed summer reading events we have held this summer, our work on the Teen Makers Market as well as from multiple community members and parents who have thanked us for Prism Club.

- ★ The teen department has offered the following take homes for teens since the last board meeting: Mason Bee Houses, Tiny Books, Teen Summer Boredom Buster Coloring Book, Teen Summer Boredom Buster Puzzle Book, Fathers' Day Craft

Adult Services:

- ★ During SRP, Adult Services has offered over 25 different programs, weekly drawings for prizes, and a BINGO sheet for an end of summer drawing. Each week sees 15-20 different people enter the weekly prize drawing and most programs have between 5 and 20 attendees, depending on the program.
- ★ During the first month of SRP, Adult Services has handed out over 250 BINGO cards for patrons to track their reading and participate in the end of summer prize drawing.
- ★ Adult Services is pleased to announce that this fall we will begin offering a monthly fiction book club that coordinates with monthly celebrations. Book Clubs that are currently on the schedule celebrate Women's Equality Day (August), Hispanic Heritage Month (September), Filipino Heritage Month (October), and Native American Heritage Month (November).
- ★ Adult Services is working on planning a number of programs for the fall with the Oconee County Senior Center, Keep Oconee County Beautiful Commission, and Oconee County Extension Office.
- ★ Adult Services has continued to offer monthly craft programs and book clubs. Some of these have included: 3rd Monday Book Club, Reading Rainbow, Bob Ross Paint Night, DIY Spa Night, Mason Jar Crafts, Sketch & Stretch, and Macrame Rainbow Wall Hanging.
- ★ One of our Circulation staff members, Aaron Dial, has been running monthly D&D games for Adults. These have become so popular that he has opened up another game on a different Wednesday night and another game on Saturdays. Due to high demand, he will now be offering three different monthly events.
- ★ Adult Services continues to coordinate with local artists to display their art in both the Library Gallery Space and the Auditorium Gallery Space. These spaces are booked until we move to Wire Park.
- ★ Adult Services worked in conjunction with Childrens to host a Mommy & Me tea for Mothers Day that was entirely full with 30 people. We had tea and food as well as crafts of making your own sunhat and making a mothers day card.

- ★ Adult Services hosted and organized an all ages program that celebrated Jane Austen and her works of fiction. Patrons decorated cupcakes, learned calligraphy, learned how to age paper with coffee, learned how to embroider, learned how to play croquet, and more.
- ★ AS has started a Writing Club for adults who are interested in getting peer reviews from other writers in our community. It is a chance for us to network and meet other authors as well as receive feedback from one another. We have had great success and patrons have connected outside of the library to support one another in writing.
- ★ AS does outreach at the Oconee County Farmers Market once a month.
- ★ AS did a few movement programs that combined stretching with art as well as yoga with healthy eating.
- ★ The History Lecture Series continues to be one of our most popular programs for adults and allows patrons to give lectures on history topics that they are passionate about. This program has continued to grow and is one of our most attended programs.
- ★ This summer, Adult Services have offered multiple programs partnering with local experts including: Keep Oconee County Beautiful Commission for a composting program, Dr. Maurice Snook for an astronomy program, and Erika Massie for a book binding program.
- ★ AS will coordinate with local artisans to provide demonstrations of their hands-on skills like pottery, quilting, looming, woodworking, sewing, and more for patrons. The Artisan Exposition's goal is to encourage and inspire patrons to learn a hands-on skill.
- ★ Passive Programs in Adults:
 - Puzzles - we have to replace every few days
 - Never be Bored Board- weekly questions that patrons can respond to
 - Adult Coloring Sheets- allow patrons to relax and sheets usually have to be replaced at least once a week

Patron Comments:

Bogart:

Watkinsville:

Toby Mayfield, Assistant Director for Regional Services - July 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 May 24th & 30th, Anna Tench -Technical Assistant and Trainer, spoke with the team on circulation procedures for the chromebooks and launchpads. On June 21st, Darcy Downie -ARLS Public Information Officer, met with our team for the first time. Our next in person meeting will be August 2nd at the Bogart Library.
- Attended all library board meetings: Winterville, Madison, Franklin, Oconee, Athens-Clarke, Oglethorpe, and ARLS from April 6-21.
- Interviewed candidates for the Oglethorpe County Library branch manager with Executive Director, Valerie Bell, and Board of Trustees Chair, Mike Garner. **-Hired Katherine Ratcliffe**
- Interviewed candidates for the Madison County Library library assistant position with Branch Manager, Aleta Mendenhall-Turner. **-Hired Megan Dudley**
- Attended the Marigold Festival where our very own, Deirdre Murry, Branch Manager of Winterville Library, Co-Marshalled the parade with State Librarian Julie Walker! Regional Children's Librarian, Rebecca Ballard, performed with her Rebecca Sunshine Band on the stage at the Front Porch Bookstore. Winterville Library Assistant, Sam Watson, performed a lovely storytime for the children in the audience.
- Attended the Franklin County Board of Commissioners meeting on June 5th.
- Attended the Oconee County Board of Commissioners meeting on June 6th.
- Continued work in the Wire Park -Watkinsville project, the GEER grant team, and the East Side User Group as well as the regional strategic planning process -created activity plans for Watkinsville, Bogart, Madison, Oglethorpe, Aaron Heard, Lay Park, and Winterville. All remaining branches will be completed by the end of July.
- Completed or reviewed annual reviews for all branch managers and branch staff.