

**Oconee County Library Board Meeting**  
**Minutes for January 8, 2024**  
**4:30 p.m.**  
**The Oconee County Library at Wire Park**

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, Laura Moore, Deann Craft, Mike Eddy, Daphne Norton and Matt Stephens.

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

Upon a motion by Ms. Moore, seconded by Ms. Craft the minutes of the October 9, 2023 meeting were approved.

The meeting was video recorded by Lee Becker of the community. Chairman Campbell welcomed the approximately thirty community members that attended. Fourteen Oconee County residents were given the opportunity to address the board for three minutes each based on their order of sign-up. Comments from the speakers to the Board were wide-ranging and included expressions of thanks to the Board, recommendations to let the library professionals decide where books should be shelved, requests for specific reclassifications, concerns that some books are not being shelved in age appropriate areas, appeals to act in the best interest of children and exhortations to not ban books. Chairman Campbell thanked the community representatives for their interest and their input.

The Branch Manager's report was provided by Mr. Mitchell. Significant events since the previous Board meeting include Gingerfest, teens writing cards to senior centers, robust D&D sessions, facilitating writing groups, tree lighting, ghost stories, marching in the Christmas parade and hosting an old library remembrance day prior to closing the Watkinsville branch after Thanksgiving to support the move to Wire Park. The library received the most valuable team award among libraries in the ARLS region. Jessica Simpson was able to obtain a grant from the Civil Air Patrol which will provide robots for construction by library users. Mr. Mitchell also briefed anticipated library events in Watkinsville and Bogart in the current quarter. He provided a thorough written report of planned events at both Oconee County branch libraries.

Director Bell reported major current actions in the region which include the continued configuring of the outsourced payroll and accounting system, placing the regional strategic plan into a project management tool, expanding the number of users of the Hoopla streaming service, updating the proposed Patron Behavior Policy and conducting a successful Staff Development Day. Notably, the Heritage Room was honored with the **Award for Excellence in Archival Program Development by a Local History Repository or Local Government.**

Mr. Mitchell reported that the next Oconee Friends of the Library book sale would take place February 8-11, 2024 at the Oconee Civic Center. Receipt of book donations will be started when storage space becomes available.

### **Old Business:**

Two items of old business were addressed. The new library at Wire Park is nearing completion. Furniture and shelving will be delivered in the near term. The library will have multiple access points. Sidewalks, ramps and landscaping are being finalized. The new library opening is scheduled for February 3, 2024.

Three members of the Board have volunteered for the Art Committee to assist with appropriate décor and dedication plaques for the new library. Chairman Campbell thanked Daphne Norton, Laura Moore and Angela Moss-Hill for volunteering to serve on the Art Committee. A motion approving the committee assignments was offered by Mr. Lutz seconded by Ms. Norris and was unanimously passed.

### **New Business:**

Chairman Campbell stated that four books would be addressed by the Board based on requests for reconsideration submitted by Oconee County residents. The review process includes a formal review by the Athens Regional Library System staff. The professional staff recommendation is then reviewed by the Oconee County Library Board Trustees Book Action Review Committee with a recommendation provided. The Board of Trustees then makes a decision in open session. Director Bell advised that ARLS staffing permits a total of five books per quarter to be reviewed within the ARLS region. The Book Action Review Committee (Chairman Campbell, Ms. Norris, Ms. Craft, Ms. Marable, Mr. Eddy and Mr. Stephens) provided recommendations on four books with the following actions:

1. Based on a motion by Ms. Norris seconded by Ms. Moss-Hill, the book, *Different Kinds of Fruit*, was retained in the juvenile section.
2. Based on a motion by Ms. Moss-Hill seconded by Ms. Norton, the book, *Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up With Me*, was retained in the young adult section.

3. Based on a motion by Ms. Moore seconded by Ms. Craft, the book, *Man O'War*, was retained in the young adult section.
4. Based on a motion by Ms. Craft seconded by Ms. Moss-Hill, the book, *Tomboy*, was retained in the young adult section.

Mr. Lutz requested a clarification regarding the banning of books. After a brief discussion, Board members concurred that no actions have been taken by the current board to ban any books from the Oconee County libraries.

There being no further business, upon the motion by Mr. Lutz seconded by Mr. Stephens, the Board adjourned the meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for 4:30 p.m. on Monday April 9, 2024 at Bogart Library.



Mark Campbell, Chairman



Fred Lutz, Secretary