

ATHENS REGIONAL LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Minutes of April 18, 2024 Meeting
Madison County Library, Meeting Room, 3:30 pm

The meeting was called to order at 3:32 p.m. by Chairman Campbell. Present were Ms. Terrell, Ms. Norris, Mr. Lutz, Mr. Campbell, Ms. Russell, Mr. Woods, Mr. Mason, Ms. Shoemaker, Mr. Garner, Ms. Frey, Ms. Cox, and Ms. Ross. Absent were Ms. Morris, Ms. Brickman, and Ms. Quick.

Staff present were Ms. Bell, Ms. Price, Ms. Shimobi-Obijuru, Ms. Green, Mr. Mendenhall-Turner, Ms. Mendenhall-Turner, Ms. Lavengood, Ms. Mayfield, and Ms. Plaksin

Recognitions and Resolutions - Chairman Campbell took the opportunity to welcome Ms. Cox and Ms. Brickman of Athens-Clarke County to the Regional Board.

The Draft Minutes of the January 18, 2024 meeting were unanimously approved. (motioned by Mr. Lutz, seconded by Mr. Garner)

The April 18, 2024 agenda was unanimously adopted with the amendment to include executive sessions for Annual Documents (Director's Salary and Signatory Authority) discussion. (motioned by Ms. Terrell, seconded by Mr. Garner)

Public Comment - none

Financial Report:

Financial Report FY2024-Q3 was unanimously accepted. (motioned by Ms. Norris, seconded by Ms. Russell)

Regional Reports

Athens-Clarke County:

Ms. Russell gave the report. The ACCL Board of Trustees met during National Library Week. The Board really enjoyed watching the "Love Your Library" videos presented by PIO, Darcy Calia. The videos featured community members sharing all the reasons the library and library workers are an important part of their community. The Friends of the Library book sale was once again a success.

Franklin County:

Ms. Shoemaker gave the report. Unfortunately, the Board of Education will not fund the library. However, the Board met with the superintendent and left the meeting feeling hopeful. Ms. Shoemaker was pleased to report that the library received a \$10,000 grant through ALA. The funds will be used to provide more accessible programming for differently abled patrons.

Madison County:

Ms. Ross gave the report. She reported that the staff is working hard and very busy. She was pleased to report that most of their numbers continue to trend up by nearly 30%. The library is being represented well at several community events and they continue to foster

partnerships within the community. She also reported that the staff attended first amendment training.

Oconee County:

Mr. Campbell gave the report. He was pleased to report that the Wire Park Grand Opening was a success. In March, there were 300 new library users between both branches; it is nice to see both branches growing. The libraries were represented at the downtown festival. The Friends are gearing up for the fall book sale.

Oglethorpe:

Mr. Garner gave the report. He was pleased to report that the Oglethorpe Friends continue to be active and successful. They sometimes host a coffee & tea shop at the local #3 Railroad Store. The library has had several successful programs including the Solar Eclipse Program, PAWS Therapy Dog, and the Watson Bridge Egghunt. In more good news, the Oglethorpe Library received a significant donation from the local Rotary Club. Lastly, Mr. Garner thanked Ms. Bell, Ms. Mayfield, and State Librarian Ms. Walker for their support. They joined him for a meeting with local commissioners to address issues regarding the community's concern with certain books in the library's collection.

Director's Report:

Director Bell gave the report. She began by sharing good news. The Friends of Athens-Clarke County Library, with the help of Elizabeth Hood and Darcy Calia, applied for a grant. The Friends group was awarded a Google Ad for Nonprofits Grant beginning in March 2024. The grant provides up to \$10,000 each month to create Google search ads for the library, its programs and services, and fundraising events. This grant has proven to help other organizations drive donations and connect new individuals with promoted resources. A Friends member with experience in paid search marketing will be assisting the library in using this grant to **promote local and regional services.**

Eight policies were submitted to the Policy Committee and to the Trustees. With the committees recommendation, Ms. Bell is asking for approval of the following policies:

1. Copyright - updated with current copyright law and PINES Policy
2. Our Internet Acceptable Use Policy - updated wording, filtering process, and wireless use agreement
3. Fax Policy - to be stricken because it is outdated technology (policy is covered in fines and fees policy)
4. Patron Responsibilities and Conduct - was revised per Board suggestions
5. Records Retention Policy - was updated to comply with current law
6. Confidentiality Policy - updated with current Georgia law OCGA - 24 - 12 - 30 and PINES
7. Computer Use Policy - updated for current use of computers and wireless use agreement
8. Collection/Materials Donations - Strike as redundant we will use our current Collections Management policy. **(Action Item)**

Ms. Bell gave an IRS update. Her team continues to work with the IRS through the abatement process. Ms. Bell and her team spoke with Agent Kayode. He informed them that the process is ongoing. She is awaiting an update. Ms. Bell is hopeful that this will be resolved by the July meeting or before. As she receives information, she will share it with the Board.

ADP, the new timekeeping software, has a kiosk for staff to check in and check out. The kiosks have to be purchased. Each county in the region will be responsible for the purchase and monthly fee for the kiosk. The cost is \$1.49 per staff person, per month. She believes everyone's current budget can cover the expense this year, but it will need to be factored in next year.

She continued by sharing what ARLS is doing to choose what materials are appropriate for their families, while still providing access to our collections. Ms. Bell shared the Parental Review Resource Guide with Trustees. The guide will also be available to patrons as a flier and as posters throughout our libraries. Director Bell noted that ARLS is not political, does not take sides, and does not have an agenda. We do offer a balanced collection intended to meet the diverse needs of all our residents. Some patrons have voiced a need for more resources to find books that meet the needs of their families and children. Accordingly, a two prong approach was established that we believe will help parents engage with their children on what they are reading:

- A "Middle Grades" category has been established in the Teen section. It is clearly marked "Middle Grades" and the books are labeled "[Middle Grades](#)". Reviews indicate these books are suitable for grades 6 - 8. This was tested with three libraries so far, and we plan to roll it out to all other libraries before the end of April. There is a lot of work involved in the process.
- A Parental Review Resource Guide was established so that parents will have the ability to read the reviews of the books their children bring home.

ARLS believes that these steps will help parents ensure that the reading material their child has chosen from the library is in line with their own personal family values.

Additionally, we have already established an in-depth request for reconsideration review process. This process involves a team of professional librarians, who read the book in its entirety and compare it to the Library Selection Criteria. They then perform an exhaustive research on reviews of the materials. They meet as a committee and discuss each book. The committee then makes an informed recommendation to the local Board of Trustees Book Action Committee. The Book Action Committee is charged with reading each book in its entirety and reviewing the documents provided by the professional library review team. The local Book Action Committee then makes a recommendation that is put before the full Library Board of Trustees for a vote.

There has been a rise in FOIA requests. The last 4 were from Massachusetts. After speaking with Chairman Campbell, we do believe the Region should have an attorney on retainer.

(Action Item)

Our PIO, Darcy Calia, has established a Social Media Committee and they have had their first meeting.

Finally, Ms. Bell updated Trustees on all the work our IT department has accomplished and continues to work on. The necessary forms to secure E-rate funding for networking and relevant equipment for all branches have been submitted. Additionally, the IT Department has processed over 60 help desk tickets for computer and technology-related issues, updated and reimaged over 100 computers, and over 30 Chromebooks and 30 Hotspots are circulating monthly.

Committee Reports:

Finance - Mr. Campbell gave the report. The committee met and discussed moving funds into a more stable and profitable account. The committee recommends moving Regional funds from Vanguard to Georgia Fund 1. *(Action Item)*

Personnel - Mr. Campbell reported that the Personnel Committee will need to meet within the next couple of months to discuss Director's Evaluation data and sign annual forms before the end of the fiscal year.

Policy - Ms. Shoemaker gave the report. The committee has reviewed all policies put before the Board. It is the committee's recommendation that the Board moves forward with a vote. *(Action Item)*

Approve all policies as amended: Strike Collections/Material Donation Policy and Fax Policy, Internet Policy (edit, change "country" to "county") Unanimously approved. (motioned by Mr. Lutz, seconded by Ms. Cox)

Nominating - None

Old Business: None

New Business:

- a. Approval to have Attorney Malcom McArthur on retainer (as recommended by State Librarian) - Unanimously approved. (motioned by Ms. Terrell, seconded by Ms. Shoemaker)
- b. Approval of Annual Documents; the Application for State Aid will be ratified at the July meeting once all necessary paperwork has been completed - Unanimously approved. (motioned by Ms. Norris, seconded by Ms. Shoemaker)
- c. Approval to sign Application for State Aid at a later date once all steps are completed. Unanimously accepted. (motioned by Ms. Norris, seconded by Ms. Frey).
- d. Approval of policies put before the Board as amended - Unanimously approved. (motioned by Mr. Lutz, seconded by Ms. Cox)
- e. Approval to move Vanguard funds to Georgia Fund 1 - Unanimously approved.

Announcements: None

The ARLS Board of Trustees entered Executive Session at 4:45 pm. Unanimously approved. (motioned by Ms. Shoemaker, seconded by Ms. Russell)

The Board adjourned their executive session at 5:27 p.m.

Adjourn: With no further business, Chairman Campbell called for adjournment at 5:28 p.m. Unanimously approved without opposition.

Next Meeting October 17, 2024 at 3:30 pm.

Location to be determined.

Board Actions

- Approval to move Vanguard funds to Georgia Fund One Account - Unanimously approved without opposition.
- Approval to hire attorney (on retainer) - Unanimously approved (motioned by Ms. Terrell, seconded by Ms. Shoemaker).
- Approval of policies put before the Board : Copyright, Internet Use (approve as amended; page 2 grammatical edits), Fax - struck, Patron Responsibilities & Conduct, Records Retention, Confidentiality, Computer Use, Collection/Materials Donations - struck. Unanimously approved as amended (motioned by Mr. Lutz, seconded by Ms. Cox).
- Approval to sign Application for State Aid at a later date once all steps are completed. Unanimously accepted (motioned by Ms. Norris, seconded by Ms. Frey).
- Approval of Annual Documents (Signatory Authority and Director Salary Approval Form) - Unanimously approved. (motioned by Ms. Norris, seconded by Ms. Shoemaker)