



AHJ REGIONAL LIBRARY BOARD
Estill Public Library
Tuesday, January 9, 2024
4:00 PM

MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The quarterly regional board meeting was called to order at approximately 4:08 p.m. by Sandi Vito, chair. Trustees in attendance were Sandi Vito, chair, Frances Chavous, Glenice Watts, Charles Carlson, Emerson Wiles, Julie Mikols, Artheen Fitts, Dawn Winn and Carolyn Fortson, regional director.

INTRODUCTIONS

Everyone in attendance introduced themselves.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A personnel matter was discussed in Executive Session.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the October 10, 2023, meeting were approved with a motion: Trustee Frances motioned to approve. Trustee Emerson seconded. Motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

Update on the Late Appropriations from Counties

Carolyn stated that the 1st quarter appropriations for Allendale and Hampton had not been received to date. Sandi informed Carolyn to please let the trustees know if she needed assistance to secure any appropriations. Carolyn stated that she would definitely do so, if necessary.

NEW BUSINESS:

Discussion and Approval of Policies:

Collection Development Policy

Carolyn stated that the policy is almost ready for review and approval. The decision was made that Carolyn would email the policy to the trustees once it is ready and approval would be granted via email to not hold the policy up until the next meeting in April. Carolyn also plans to have the Personnel Manual ready by the next meeting in April. There are other policies that will need to be approved once they are ready for review and approval.

Audit and Finance Committee Report

Sandi provided an update on the meeting that took place with the Auditor. Sandi, Julie, and Carolyn

met with the auditors on November 10, 2023. Artheen was not able to attend). Sandi shared some good news:

- 1) The overall deficit that shows up repeatedly in the budget, which had concerned Sandi, consists largely of the library system's share of the un-funded State Pension liability. In the highly unlikely event of the State Pension authority folding, we would in theory be liable to pay out pensions of \$405,000 for current and former Library employees. Sandi stated that this is nothing to be alarmed about; it is fairly common for state pensions to be underfunded.
- 2) Net assets of \$441,719 are available to the library system. Trustees should be focused on what needs to be done strategically but via the Strategic Plan we can work on the following – access to Kindle books, new BKM (use some of the funds and raise the other), collections not up to par (patrons say they visit the Bluffton Library instead of the Hardeeville Library because the collections need updating. The Board needs to be participants in the Strategic Planning process with prioritizing the needs for spending.
- 3) Question – Julie--Standard reserve for a library system of our size. Of course, we do not want to spend all of the money, but we need to have a reserve; for example, to be available to use for late appropriations if needed.

A question was raised about the general reserve fund: Carolyn stated that the carryover money most likely was accumulated because it was not all used in previous years. She reiterated that the State Aid must be spent by June 30th. She stated for the current year, all of it has to be spent by June 30th.

A second question was asked about the General Fund and how often money is added to the fund. The response from the chair was probably due to underspending over the years.

Trustee Julie added that from page 13 of the auditor's report, there was a change in the fund balance; there is an increase of about \$80,000.

Strategic Planning Presentation

Carolyn presented each trustee with a PowerPoint handout. She talked about goals and objectives for AHJ to begin the Strategic Planning process. Trustees shared their excitement about the Strategic planning! Carolyn will send an email with the committees—have as few committees as possible. Emerson says start with one committee, then draw from that committee to move forward. Need to have board members from each county and library staff on the committee.

Concern - Bookmobile Community Outreach

Sandi shared that she received (aggressive) feedback from a Jasper County Council member that the Bookmobile is not reaching enough of the rural areas. People in the county feel the schedule on the website is light—want to see the BKM in more places and more frequently. Frances agreed; says she looked at the schedule and said some areas may be hurting for books. Look at underserved areas. Updated schedule from Tommy of his stops. I will be riding the BKM and visiting the areas and see what changes need to be made. The State Library – database –Gale Analytics- shows up underserved areas—homes 5 miles from the branch locations. Tommy knows that we will be getting together and that we have work to do---and he is fine with it.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

SC LENDS

Carolyn talked about how training is needed for the new manager as well as for some other staff. She is hoping to have a presenter at the Retreat.

Collection Development

Carolyn mentioned that we must spend the State Aid funds by June for this year. The managers are working on weeding and ordering new books to update their various collections.

New Allendale Manager

Abigail Barna-Ashley is scheduled to begin working on January 16, 2024. She is a go-getter and fresh out of library school she will be beneficial to us. She will be going through detailed training.

Manager's Retreat

Sonesta Resort, Hilton Head Island, SC, February 8-10, 2024.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is Tuesday, April 9, 2024, at 5:00 PM at the Estill Public Library.

Respectively submitted,
Carolyn Fortson, Regional Director
March 11, 2024