

MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The quarterly regional board meeting was called to order at 5:03 p.m. by Sandi Vito, chair. Trustees in attendance were Sandi Vito, chair, Julie Mikols, vice-chair, Frances Chavous, Glenice Watts, Charles Carlson, Emerson Wiles, Artheen Fitts, Dawn Winn and Abigail Barna-Ashley, interim regional director.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Trustee Chavous made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 9 meeting with a verbiage change in the last sentence of the first paragraph on page 2 from “Trustee Fortson” to “Director Forston”. Trustee Winn seconded the motion. All were in favor, and none were opposed. The minutes were approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Financial Report / Approval of Budget

Trustee Mikols provided an overview of the July 2023 – June 2024 fiscal year. The overview highlighted the regional income of approximately \$1.5 million. Income was larger than budgeted due to carryover not being incorporated in the budget. Carryover is reflected in the current fiscal year’s budget. All State Aid and County Appropriations were received in the July 2023 – June 2024 Fiscal Year. Expenses were also highlighted in the overview. County Expenses were under budget by approximately \$34,000 due to unfilled staff openings throughout the year. There was also slight State Aid carryover at the end of the July 2023 – June 2024 fiscal year.

Trustee Carlson made a motion to receive the July 2023 – June 2024 end of year financial document which would then move to audit. Trustee Fitts seconded the motion. All were in favor, and none were opposed. The end of year financial document was approved, moving it to audit.

Trustee Mikols provided an overview of the July 2024 – June 2025 budget. Actual income and expenses from July 2024 were represented in the budget. No state aid money or county appropriation money had been received, highlighting the importance of previous year’s carryover money to support the library system while awaiting funds.

Hampton County reduced the amount of annual funding from \$195,500 to \$186,154 following the State Library’s requirement that county appropriations must match the county expenses of two fiscal years ago. Trustee Wiles provided insight into the status of Hampton County funding by discussing the Hampton County Council meeting that took place on October 7, 2024. The Council meeting was attended by Trustee Wiles and interim regional director Barna-Ashley to secure a signed Maintenance of Effort Certificate. The document was obtained and funding for Hampton

County was secured with a promise for first quarter appropriations to be released by October 11, 2024.

Trustee Mikols addressed the increase of budgeted funds within the eBook section of the budget to include Hoopla, a previously approved project.

Trustee Chavous made a motion to approve the July 2024 – June 2025 annual budget. Trustee Watts seconded the motion. All were in favor, and none were opposed. The July 2024 - June 2025 annual budget was approved.

INTERIM DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Interim Regional Director Barna-Ashley introduced herself to the Regional Board since stepping into the role at the end of September 2024. Interim Regional Director Barna-Ashley provided an update on previous projects that were inherited from the previous Regional Director

Hoopla Update - Interim Regional Director Barna-Ashley informed the board that a contract with Hoopla will be signed shortly allowing patrons to have access to a wider range of electronic materials charged to the library per circulation of materials, a cost that was incorporated in the July 2024 – July 2025 budget.

Bookmobile Purchase Update – Interim Regional Director Barna-Ashley informed the board that she is moving forward with the Sprinter Outreach Van LSTA Grant from the State Library for \$50,000 but needs to make edits to the grant application before getting approval of the application from the State Library. Due to unexpected high costs of fully outfitted outreach vans, the plan is to purchase a sprinter van with the LSTA Grant money and then outfit the van later as additional funding becomes available. Representatives from the State Library encouraged AHJ leadership to reach out to South Carolina State Senators to obtain funding in the State Budget next fiscal year.

PEBA Update - AHJ will become an Optional Employer with PEBA beginning January 1, 2025. Interim Director Barna-Ashley and Lainey Reed, Bookkeeper, have begun training with PEBA to prepare for the transition. Coverage will not change for AHJ Employees. There is potential for a slight increase in employer contributions, but the July 2024 – June 2025 budget allows for this change of rates.

INDIVIDUAL COUNTY REPORTS

Jasper County – Trustee Mikols informed the board that Jasper County approved pricing for the Pratt Renovation Project and renovations will begin shortly. Jasper County is providing a temporary location for the Pratt Library to move to while renovations are taking place. The temporary location requires minor renovations before the library moves into the space. Trustee Mikols shared the fundraising success of the Pratt Library Friends Group during the Gopher Hill Parade. Trustee Watts shared her appreciation of AHJ for allowing the bookmobile to attend the Gopher Hill Parade.

Allendale County – Interim Regional Director Barna-Ashley shared that programming is continuing while she serving as both Interim Regional Director and Allendale County Library Branch Manager. Organizations in the county, Department of Transportation and Denmark Technical College, have been utilizing library facilities to conduct classes. Interim Regional Director Barna-Ashley also

shared her plans to attend the upcoming Allendale County Council meeting to discuss building maintenance that has not been conducted in a timely manner, including AC repairs.

Hampton County – Trustee Wiles provided an update on two new Hampton County Board Members. Both new board members have been presented to the Hampton County Council, but the Hampton County Council has been slow to approve the appointment of the new members. Trustee Vito expressed the Regional Board’s support should Trustee Wiles and Trustee Winn require assistance getting these new Hampton County Board members approved by Hampton County Council.

ANNOUNCEMENTS – No announcements were made.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The meeting moved into an executive session to discuss a personnel matter.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is Tuesday, January 14, 2025, at 4:00 PM at the Estill Public Library.

Respectively submitted,
Abigail Barna-Ashley, Interim Regional Director
January 3, 2025