

**RUTHERFORD COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES OF MEETING**

Monday, December 4, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tim Bowling	Steve Sullivan
Lauren Brandon	Kory Wells
Rollie Holden, Jr.	Marzee Woodward
Phil King	Shawn Wright
Dina Piazza	Cody York

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Laurie Cantrell

OTHERS PRESENT:

Rita Shacklett, Director, RCLS	Donna Jordon, Branch Supervisor, Eagleville Library
Mindy Barrett, Branch Manager, Linebaugh	Kathleen Tyree, Branch Manager, TEC Library
Ginger Graves, Branch Manager, Smyrna Library	Kate Huddleston, Director, SRRL
Kristen Birckholtz, Branch Supervisor, MGL Library	Bearl Beasley, President, FOLL
	Elsa Britt, Recorder

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (who signed in):

Janice Barkley	Kristen West	Monique Watson
Elizabeth Heftington	Amanda Caperton	Jessica Robertson
Angela Frederick	Gayle Hah	Susan Todd
Emily Julian	Jason Vance	Lori Lewis
Julie Ivie	Frank Lambert	Rebecca Calahan
Beth Cox	Keri Lambert	Leslie Collum
Talitha Cox	Tiffany Fee	Angie McFarlin Kleinau
Kathi Reach	David O’Flaherty	Lauren Gallina
Mark Follis		

OTHERS ABSENT:

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CALL TO ORDER:

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Rutherford County Library System was called to order by Mr. Sullivan, Chair, on Monday, December 4, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. at the Council Chambers, Murfreesboro City Hall, 111 W. Vine St., Murfreesboro, TN.

WELCOME NEW MEMBER/S:

Mr. Sullivan welcomed Ms. Marzee Woodward as a new board member representing Rutherford County. Ms. Woodward is finishing the term of Larry Flowers, which will expire on June 30, 2025.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (action items on agenda): None.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETING:

The Minutes of Meeting held on October 16, 2023, were presented for approval. There being no corrections, revisions, or changes, Mr. Wright made a motion to approve the Minutes as presented. Mr. King seconded. Those who were present voted “aye.” Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA: None.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

Budget and Finance: Mr. Bowling presented the financial report for the month ending October 31, 2023, and made a motion for its acceptance. Mr. Wright seconded. Those who were present voted “aye.” Motion carried.

Mr. Bowling invited Mark Follis of Dempsey Vantrease & Follis, PLLC, to present the RCLS Audited Financial Statements Year Ended June 30, 2023. Mr. Follis highlighted several items in the report and entertained questions/clarifications from the Board. Mr. Follis added that the firm found no issues in conducting the audit this year. There being no objections to the report, Mr. Bowling made a motion to accept it as presented. Mr. York seconded. Those who were present voted “aye.” Motion carried.

By-Laws & Policies: Mr. Wright had nothing to report at this time.

Development & Acquisitions: Mr. King had nothing to report at this time.

Facility Maintenance: Mr. Holden brought an issue to the Board’s attention concerning Smyrna Library building’s structural and foundational issues: initial inspection by Tennessee Foundation Systems found that all four (4) corners of the building showed signs of settling, and cracks were found on the walls inside and outside of the building. Mr. Sullivan talked with the Town of Smyrna City Manager, Brian Hercules, to determine who has the responsibility to fix this problem since the library building is owned by Rutherford County but the land is owned by the Town of Smyrna. Either way, it will be fixed. A structural engineer will also be consulted to solve the problem permanently.

Nominating: Vacant.

Personnel Committee: The committee had not meet, but Mr. Bowling brought two (2) items to the Board:

- The sudden passing of Garrett Crowell, Linebaugh Circulation Manager, on November 18, 2023. Mr. Crowell worked with Linebaugh for nine (9) years and was a great asset to the system. He worked tirelessly to get the new bookmobile, which is almost ready to be delivered.
- On December 1, 2023, Ms. Shacklett submitted her retirement intention to be effective on Thursday, February 29, 2024. Mr. Bowling read Ms. Shacklett’s letter of resignation to the Board.

Board members expressed their tremendous appreciation for Ms. Shacklett’s forty-eight (48) years of impressive service with the library and to the community. Members stated that Ms. Shacklett’s community knowledge, library experience, and good staff relations will make replacing her very challenging.

The Board and members of the public gave Ms. Shacklett a standing ovation.

Mr. Bowling stated that the Personnel Committee (himself, Lauren Brandon, and Marzee Woodward) will work with the Human Resources Manager to come up with a plan for Ms. Shacklett's replacement. RCLS policy requires a nationwide search, which may require hiring a consulting firm that specializes in placements in this sector.

Strategic Planning: Ms. Wells had nothing to report at this time.

Ad Hoc Committee: Mr. Bowling had nothing to report at this time.

REPORTS FROM LIBRARIES & SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS:

Linebaugh Library: Ms. Barrett added the following to her written reports:

- Requested \$12,535 to be taken out of the Linebaugh fund balance at the end of the year, if necessary, to purchase a new table with power outlets plus six (6) chairs for the computer lab. This will free up more space and the area will be easier to monitor. Mr. Sullivan made a motion to approve the request. Mr. York seconded. Those who were present voted "aye." Motion carried.
- Expressed her gratitude to those who supported Linebaugh as they mourned the loss of their colleague, Mr. Crowell.
- Mr. Brandon called for a moment of silence in remembrance of Mr. Crowell.

MGL Library: Ms. Birckholtz had nothing to add to her reports submitted in the packet.

Technology Engagement Center (TEC): Ms. Tyree had nothing to add to her reports submitted in the packet.

Bookmobile (BKM): Ms. Shacklett reported the following:

- the bookmobile should be delivered by 1st week of January 2024. The Board may view it at the County Courthouse parking area before or after the Board meeting in February.
- Ms. Shacklett showed the picture of the graphics for the new bookmobile.
- Mr. Sullivan left it to staff to come up with ideas for the best way to honor Mr. Crowell's role in obtaining the new bookmobile.

Historical Research Center (HRC): Reports were submitted in the packet. A new HRC brochure designed by Ms. Howard was distributed to the Board.

Friends of Linebaugh Library (FOLL): FOLL's report was included in the packet. Mr. Beasley highlighted that this will be his last meeting as President of FOLL and introduced the incoming FOLL president, Ms. Leslie Collum, for 2023-24.

Smyrna Public Library (SPL): Ms. Graves had nothing to add to her reports.

Friends of Smyrna Library (FOSL): Ms. Pickett was absent and her reports were submitted in the packet.

Eagleville Library: Ms. Jordon had nothing to add to her reports.

Friends of Eagleville Library (FOEL): The FOEL will be participating at the Eagleville Christmas Parade on Saturday, December 9, 2023 at 5 pm.

Rutherford County Library System (RCLS): Reports were submitted in the packet. At the Rutherford County Steering Committee Meeting held on November 6, 2023, the RCLS Board was asked to formulate an action plan to be presented in sixty (60) days on how to proactively curate the RCLS collections to assure adherence to state and local laws and to explain the implementation of the new age-restricted library cards. The Board will present this plan and information at the January 8, 2024 meeting of the Steering Committee. (**Note: the meeting is now scheduled for Monday, March 4, 2024**). After reviewing a preliminary document that Ms. Shacklett presented, the Board decided to have a Special Called Meeting to further discuss and refine the plan. Ms. Wells called for a proactive presentation of the plan and Board support of the staff to address comments at the Steering Committee Meeting in order to comply with the state and local laws. She also asked for clarification of what policies apply to board members speaking about Board business, which Ms. Shacklett will report back on.

Mr. Sullivan stated that “if the Board and the staff can’t give the Steering Committee comfort that everything reasonable is being done to adhere to the laws, then the RCLS funding is definitely in jeopardy.” (Note: Rutherford County funds 56% of the RCLS budget with the exception of Eagleville who gets 61%). Mr. Sullivan emphasized that the county’s goal is not to defund RCLS, but to assure compliance with the state law and Murfreesboro city ordinance. Mr. Sullivan also stated that a reduction or withdrawal of funds would likely not result in libraries closing down but in reverting to the cities for support and maintenance. Library staff would become employees of the respective city (Smyrna, Murfreesboro or Eagleville).

Ms. Shacklett will arrange the date for the Special Called Meeting, making sure a quorum is met.

The new age-restricted library cards are slowly being rolled out:

- The new application for a card becomes effective December 1st.
- The change has been communicated in numerous ways including
 - Signs in English, Spanish, and Arabic posted on the website and social media
 - Notice sent to parents in the Murfreesboro City Schools through Peachjar, and to Rutherford County Schools and media specialists,
 - A video clip with Murfreesboro City TV,
 - A piece on WGNS's Action Line on Monday morning, December 4th.
- Ms. Shacklett will also send notices to the Board for them to spread the word
- The new age-restricted profiles will be turned on in Koha on December 18, 2023. This will automatically limit card holders under 18 years of age to checking out materials classified for their age group unless a parent/guardian gives permission to allow access to other areas.

Foundation: The Foundation Board will meet on Wednesday, January 17, 2024.

Stones River Regional Library (SRRL): Reports were submitted in the packet. Ms. Huddleston highlighted the following:

- R.E.A.D.S (Regional E-book and Audiobook Download System) update:
 - * The Advantage Plus sharing feature has been turned off to support “direct local autonomy.” This ensures that books purchased by a local library will be available only to that library (or patrons of all libraries in a county library system). This means, for example, that digital resources purchased by other libraries in Tennessee will no longer be available to RCLS patrons. Patrons

will also have access to the state-purchased titles that will continue to be shared to any patron accessing READS.

- * Ms. Huddleston asked the Board if it needs a list of services the County and the cities would lose if the Maintenance of Effort agreement is not kept.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (non-agenda items):

1. Tiffany Fee, a Christiana resident, library card holder, and founder of the Rutherford County Library Alliance, spoke about accessibility, equality, and concerns over statements made at and regarding the November 6, 2023, Steering Committee meeting.
2. Keri Lambert, a Murfreesboro resident and library card holder, shared her concerns with the direction the library is headed and the waste of taxpayers' dollars fighting possible lawsuits. She also stated that comprehensive sex-ed is not pornography.
3. Angela Frederick, a Smyrna resident and library card holder, spoke in support of the RCLS staff and asked the board to protect First Amendment rights.
4. Julie Ivie, a Murfreesboro resident and library card holder, spoke in support of the RCLS and expressed her love for the institution.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- Mr. King encouraged everyone to do business in Rutherford County to increase sales tax revenue as a good portion of it helps fund basic services like schools, police, and fire.
- Mr. Holden recited some impressive statistics about RCLS that reflect the importance of the system to the community, and urged staff to post this on the website
 - ✓ We have over 209,000 items in our collections, and only a handful of issues in relation to the decency law/ordinance.
 - ✓ 1.2M+ circulation (2022-2023)
 - ✓ 60,000-70,000 attended programs and computer usage (2022-2023).
 - ✓ Success stories from patrons
 - ✓ The bookmobile and its staff
- Since Ms. Cantrell could not be present at this meeting she sent an email to Mr. Sullivan sharing her thoughts/comments/opinion about the action plan, which Mr. Sullivan read.

The meeting adjourned at 7:08 pm.