

**RUTHERFORD COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**MINUTES OF CALLED MEETING**  
**Monday, December 18, 2023**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Tim Bowling  
Laurie Cantrell  
Rollie Holden, Jr.  
Phil King  
Dina Piazza

Steve Sullivan  
Kory Wells  
Marzee Woodward  
Shawn Wright

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Lauren Brandon

Cody York

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Rita Shacklett, Director, RCLS  
Mindy Barrett, Branch Manager, Linebaugh  
Ginger Graves, Branch Manager, Smyrna Library  
Kristen Birckholtz, Branch Supervisor, MGL Library

Kathleen Tyree, Branch Manager, TEC Library  
Kate Huddleston, Director, SRRL  
Bearl Beasley, President, FOLL  
Elsa Britt, Recorder

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (who signed in):**

Leslie Collum  
Kristen West  
Rebecca Calahan  
Keri Lambert  
Frank Lambert  
Linda Sully  
Lori Lewis

Amanda Caperton  
Nathan Gerard-Bowen  
Kathryn Gerard-Bowen  
Jason Vance  
Cassandra Taylor  
Jessica F. Robertson  
Susan Todd  
Scott Lewis

**OTHERS ABSENT:**

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**CALL TO ORDER:**

The special called meeting of the Board of Directors of the Rutherford County Library System was called to order by Mr. Sullivan, Chair, on Monday, December 18, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. at the Rutherford County Courthouse, Public Square, Murfreesboro, TN.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS (action items on agenda):**

1. Frank Lambert- a Murfreesboro resident, library card holder, and former RCLS board member, expressed his concern regarding the book banning and censorship being forced upon the staff at the RCLS as initiated by the Board of Directors in response to city and state laws and funding discussions.
2. Kristen West – a Rutherford County resident and library card holder, encouraged board members to proactively communicate with community leaders regarding the action plan for the Rutherford County Steering Committee and the library system in general.

In response to Mr. Lambert’s comments, Mr. Sullivan stated that he does not believe the library system has the legal authority to sue, as some citizens have been urging.

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**ACTION PLAN FOR THE RUTHERFORD COUNTY STEERING COMMITTEE.** The plan was sent to all Board members days on the Friday before the called meeting. Discussion by all board members resulted in the following recommended changes/addendum to the document:

- Clarify who “selectors” are in the process
- Better convey that when a material is touched, NOT just when it is ordered, staff has been trained to consider new vetting constraints. This will be during shelving, weeding, etc.
- Include a timeline to assure that existing juvenile and young adult materials are in compliance with the law, prioritizing subject areas such as graphic novels, non-fiction and any other areas staff suggests
- Report progress already made and actions implemented immediately after the ordinance was passed. Note that the City ordinance was passed on June 15, 2023 and went into effect on July 1, 2023.
- Communicate that the Director of Libraries and the Collection Development Coordinator submitted their retirement and resignation, respectively. These are critical positions that ultimately have the final say on ordering books.
- Emphasize the implementation of the new Juvenile and Young Adult library cards and how this is already implemented to comply with state law.
- Emphasize that the action plan was put together by staff. Present in a PowerPoint or similarly graphical, “friendly” format.
- Additional points to include:
  - \* The importance of the library as a cultural institution to our growing community.
  - \* The difference between the new process of ordering books (since the ordinance took effect) versus the old process.
  - \* The number of RCLS collections versus the number of Request of Reconsideration received (and stats on the reconsideration requests).
  - \* Prior to the passing of the ordinance, the Board was not involved in the Reconsideration process.

Ms. Wells made a motion to approve the action plan with recommended changes/addendum as discussed at today’s meeting. Ms. Woodward seconded. Those who were present voted “aye.” Motion carried.

**RCLS DIRECTOR OF LIBRARIES SEARCH.**

Board members discussed the timing of funding issues and the importance of selecting a new director who will be an excellent fit and likely to serve a long tenure, as our previous directors have. Mr. Wright made a motion for the Personnel Committee to identify candidate(s) for an interim director, setting aside the Master in Library Science requirement in the job description, and to be approved by the Board, to serve the RCLS until a replacement for the position of Director of Libraries is found. Ms. Wells seconded. Those who were present voted “aye”. Motion carried.

(Note: The hiring of a consulting firm to conduct a national search for the Director of Libraries position will depend upon the budget for FY 2024-25.)

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 pm