

RUTHERFORD COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES OF MEETING
Monday, June 02, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Lisa Brewer
Rollie Holden Jr.
Sam Huddleston
Phil King
Dina Piazza
Susan Quesenberry
Kory Wells
Marzee Woodward
Cody York

MEMBER/S ABSENT:

Benjamin Groce

One (1) seat on the board is currently vacant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mindy Barrett, RCLS Interim Director
Cassandra Taylor, Smyrna Branch Manager
Kathleen Tyree, TEC Branch Manager
Leslie Collum, FOLL President
Kate Huddleston, SRRL Director
Elsa Britt, Recorder

PUBLIC (who signed in):

Sharon Stevens
Josh Walker
Matt Fee
Amy Curtis
Wonderland Rogers
W.D. Woodward
Ann Smith
Elana Churchill
Barbara Wiencek
Jeffery Wiencek

Kathy Valdez
Kathryn Thompson
Maria Heffner
Beverley Budds
Tom Budds
Laura West
Jason Vance
Jim Holton

CALL TO ORDER:

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Rutherford County Library System was called to order by Mr. Phil King, Chair, on Monday, June 2, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. at the Council Chambers, Murfreesboro City Hall.

WELCOME NEW MEMBER/S: None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (action items on the agenda): Citing legal, scientific, and ethical concerns, the speakers collectively opposed the board's actions in relation to the March 17, 2025, policy restricting transgender-related materials. The speakers also called for inclusive policies that respect all community members.

1. Josh Walker
2. Matthew Fee
3. Hannah Stromgren

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETING:

The Minutes of Meeting held on the following dates were presented for consideration:

- April 14, 2025
- April 21, 2025
- May 5, 2025
- May 6, 2025
- May 8, 2025

Ms. Woodward made a motion to approve all the minutes with minor corrections on the Minutes held on April 21, 2025; to change the heading from "March 17" to "April 21". There being no further corrections, amendments, revisions, or changes, Ms. Brewer seconded. Those who were present voted "aye." Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA: None.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

Budget and Finance: Ms. Brewer presented the financial reports ending April 30, 2025, and May 31, 2025. Mr. York made a motion to approve the financial reports as presented. Ms. Wells seconded. Those who were present voted "aye." Motion carried.

By-Laws & Policies: Ms. Piazza discussed and made a motion to update policy HR-2007 – Holidays, to align the RCLS' holiday schedule with those of its funding bodies, specifically adding Juneteenth for consistency. Ms. Wells seconded. Those who were present voted "aye." Motion carried.

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

Facility Maintenance: Mr. Holden had nothing to report at this time.

Nominating: Mr. Groce was absent but had provided a list of board members willing to serve as officers for the fiscal year July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026:

- Chair – Cody York
- Vice-Chair – Sam Huddleston, Susan Quesenberry
- Treasurer – Lisa Brewer, Sam Huddleston
- Secretary – Susan Quesenberry, Sam Huddleston

Ms. Wells noted that in the past, a complete slate of officers was presented for approval, but this time, the board would need to vote for each position individually. With that said, Mr. Huddleston withdrew his name from the Treasurer and Secretary positions, and Ms. Quesenberry withdrew her name from the Vice-Chair position, which completed the slate of officers.

When the chair opened the floor for nominations, Ms. Wells nominated Ms. Brewer to serve as chair. Ms. Wells expressed concerns about Mr. York’s suitability as chair due to his social media presence and push for book removal policies, indicating a lack of neutrality which is essential for the chair to serve the entire community effectively. Ms. Wells said that Ms. Brewer, who is an attorney, would be a more neutral leader.

Mr. King opened the floor to a roll call vote for a chair for 2025-26 between Mr. York and Ms. Brewer:

	Cody York	Lisa Brewer
Mr. Huddleston	✓	
Ms. Piazza	✓	
Ms. Wells		✓
Mr. Holden		✓
Ms. Woodward	✓	
Mr. York	✓	
Ms. Quesenberry	✓	
Ms. Brewer		✓

(Mr. King did not vote.)

With a 5 to 3 vote, Mr. York was voted as chair for the July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026 term.

For Vice Chair, Mr. Huddleston was the only nominee after withdrawals, and the board unanimously approved him with an “aye” vote.

For Treasurer, Ms. Brewer was the only nominee after withdrawals, and the board unanimously approved her with an “aye” vote.

For Secretary, Ms. Quesenberry was the only nominee, and the board unanimously approved her with an “aye” vote.

In summary, the slate of officers for 2025-2026 are as follows:

Chair – Cody York
Vice-Chair – Sam Huddleston
Treasurer – Lisa Brewer
Secretary – Susan Quesenberry

Personnel Committee: Ms. Woodward gave an update on the library director search, outlining the timeline, logistics, and evaluation method for candidate interviews:

- Timeline & logistics:
 - June 6, 2025 – tour of the library branches to be led by the Friends of the Linebaugh Library
 - June 6, 2025 at 5:30 pm – reception to be held at the Linebaugh Public Library
 - June 7, 2025 – interview at the TEC
 - 9:15 am – board members arrive
 - 9:30 am – start of the interview
 - 11:30 am – lunch break
 - deliberation
- Evaluation process: Ms. Woodward sent two rubrics to the board: one for evaluating the candidate's mini-presentation and another for situational questions. Each rubric includes assigned point values for different criteria as a guide to organize thoughts, provide structure, and serve as a tool to justify decisions, ensuring the hiring of a highly qualified and capable library director. If the candidate does not meet high standards, the search may be reopened.

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

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

REPORTS FROM LIBRARIES & SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS (as needed):

Linebaugh Library: Reports submitted in the packet. Ms. Barrett highlighted a Storybook Walk to be set up on the Murfreesboro City Plaza to promote the Summer Reading Program. The book being featured is *Anywhere Artist*, and will allow visitors to read a story while enjoying the outdoor setting and fountains. It will be available for a few weeks.

MGL Library: Reports submitted in the packet. Kristen Birckholtz has submitted her resignation, and the position has been posted, with interviews scheduled for the following week.

Technology Engagement Center (TEC): Reports submitted in the board packet. Ms. Barrett highlighted the End of Year Celebration with 37 attendees and a Butterfly Education and Awareness Day with 22 attendees, both considered strong turnouts.

Bookmobile (BKM): Reports submitted in the board packet. Ms. Barrett highlighted that May is the busiest month for the BKM with 4,500 visitors.

Historical Research Center (HRC): Reports submitted in the board packet. The center is digitizing high school yearbooks sent by local high schools to ensure digital preservation and access to images.

Friends of Linebaugh Library (FOLL): Reports submitted in the board packet. Ms. Collum reported that FOLL will be conducting a fundraising in partnership with Panera (on Memorial Boulevard) on June 4, 2025, from 4:00 – 8:00 p.m. Panera will donate 25% of net sales during this period to FOLL.

Smyrna Public Library (SPL): Reports submitted in the board packet.

Friends of Smyrna Library (FOSL): Reports submitted in the board packet.

Eagleville Library: Reports were submitted in the board packet.

Rutherford County Library System (RCLS): Reports submitted in the board packet.

- For the Summer Reading program, the library system is expecting 5,000-6,000 participants. Each branch hosts programs, and participation is tracked through event attendance and sign ups.
- Ms. Barrett mentioned a report from the 2024 County Profiles on child well-being: Nearly half of 3rd-8th graders in Rutherford County are not proficient in reading or math. Neighboring counties (Bedford, Cannon & Coffee) fare worse, with 70-80% of students improficient. Ms. Barrett flagged this issue as an “emergency” to be addressed in the library’s upcoming strategic plan, emphasizing the library’s role in improving literacy.

Stones River Regional Library (SRRL): Reports submitted in the board packet. Ms. Huddleston gave a certificate of completion to Morgan Fipps for completing the 10-hour core competency training.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (non-agenda items): The first 3 speakers’ comments reflected their concern over the library board’s actions, particularly around book banning and inclusivity. These speakers oppose bans on LGBTQIA+ materials, arguing that such bans interfere with parents’ rights to choose their children’s reading material, contradict the library’s mission, and risk costly lawsuits. They urged the board to represent all community members and uphold access to diverse resources. The fourth speaker highlighted possible racial bias in library policy enforcement, calling for a fair appeal process and staff training.

1. Tatiana Silvas
2. Jessica Bruce
3. Wonderland Rogers
4. Elizabeth Whalen

OTHER BUSINESS:

- Recognition of Service: Mr. King presented each of three departing board members with a book, *Books and Our Town: The History of the Rutherford County Library System* by Lisa Ramsay:
 - Kory Wells, who served 3 years and is not renewing for a second term, was recognized for her diligent service as secretary and active participation in various committees.
 - Marzee Woodward, who served 1.5 years, finishing Larry Flowers' term, and is not renewing for a second term, was praised for her expertise and significant contributions, particularly in the ongoing process of hiring a new library director – a task the board has not undertaken in 17 years. Ms. Woodward's work has been crucial in navigating this unfamiliar process.
 - Rollie Holden, who served 9.5 years and the maximum number of terms was acknowledged for his extensive institutional knowledge. Mr. Holden also served as chair three times during this period.

With comments led by Ms. Woodward, the board also thanked Mr. King for his service. It was noted earlier in the meeting that he is also leaving the board at the end of June, one year early in his three-year term. March 17, 2025 Resolution

- Mr. York made a motion to bring back to the table the motion made by Ms. Wells at the April 21, 2025, meeting, concerning the March 17, 2025, resolution regarding materials concerned with transgender issues.

Mr. York noted that the original motion was tabled to allow consultations with attorneys, who advised that the resolution would likely not withstand legal challenges due to inconsistencies with existing library policies.

Ms. Quesenberry seconded.

Several board members made comments:

Mr. York emphasized the need for a comprehensive library policy rewrite to address inappropriate materials in a legally defensible manner, rather than pursuing short-term actions.

Ms. Wells mentioned the financial costs (legal fees) and community division caused by the resolution.

Ms. Woodward shared personal reflections on libraries as safe, innocent spaces for children, questioning the introduction of materials that "sexualize" young children. She expressed support for protecting childhood innocence.

Ms. Quesenberry recounted an email from a former student's father encouraging opposition to book bans. She clarified she would support banning books inappropriate for reading aloud to a first-grade class, reinforcing her stance on age-appropriate content.

The motion to resume the question of rescinding the March 17, 2025, resolution was approved by acclamation, with one abstention.

- With the motion to rescind the March 17, 2025, resolution back on the table, and with no further discussion, Mr. King called for a roll call vote.

Mr. Holden – Aye
Ms. Brewer – Aye
Ms. Wells – Aye
Mr. York – Aye
Ms. Woodward – Aye
Ms. Quesenberry – Aye
Ms. Piazza – Abstain
Mr. Huddleston – Aye

The motion to rescind passed, nullifying the March 17, 2025, resolution to “remove materials that promote, encourage, advocate for, or normalize transgenderism or ‘gender confusion’ in minors.”

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Approved by:

Kory Wells
Secretary
RCLS Board