

Cleveland Bradley County Public Library

July 25, 2023

Board Meeting Minutes

PRESENT: Kelvin Bishop, Amy Moore, Cheryl Dunson, Rebcca McIntire, Keith Barrett, Milan Blake, and Vanessa Hammond.

Others attending; Director: Andrew Hunt, Director of Ocoee River Regional Library: Liz Schreck, President of the Foundation for the Cleveland Bradley County Public Library: Meg Campbell, Centennial Committee: Margaret Schenck, Library Employee's: Rebecca Hensond and Jill Barnett.

Kelvin called the meeting to order. Library Board minutes from May 23 and Library Committee Minutes from May and June were reviewed.

A motion was made by Cheryl Dunson to approve all sets of minutes. This was seconded by Keith Barrett. All minutes were approved as submitted.

**Regional Report**

The region has received approval for their training plans for the new fiscal year. There will be 3 Solar Eclipse Activity Workshop's throughout the region. Liz emphasized the importance of Board members attending the Annual Trustee Workshop, a State Library & Archives Initiative. It will be at Art Circle Public Library in Crossville, TN on Thursday September 28th. Library Directors have been busy with Summer Reading, year end statistics, Techna grant applications, quarterly statistics, standard survey, and Title IV Survey. There is a new cohort at the Public Library Management Institute.

Liz encouraged all Library Board members to complete their online trustee certification. READS growth has been exponential and continues to grow this past year. An updated Library service agreement has been shared with Andrew Hunt. Liz will be delivering the official service area population agreement. She will also share the maintenance of effort form when we are ready. Reminder that for a Library Director to attend the Annual Trustee Workshop they must be accompanied by a current Library Board Member.

**Finance Committee**

End of fiscal year finances were discussed. Maintenance and utilities were running over. To offset those expenditures, savings from salaries and benefits were used. The amended budget was thousands less than the original budget at less than \$1,410,000. Annual revenues were \$1,411,017.00. The gift & memorial account ended with \$29,406. That account collected just under \$50,000 with expenditures equaling \$78,792. Those funds are from grants and in-kind donations made to the Library. CD's totaling over \$300,000 will mature in a few weeks and need to be renewed at a better rate. Rates at the bank should be better.

Kelvin mentioned that Andrew always does a great job at keeping the Library under budget. Especially during this past year which was very tough. He also reminded the Board that gift and memorial accounts are restricted funds that can only be used for specific things like technology, curriculum, etc

The new budget was discussed. The City & County funds the Library 50/50. This year the Library requested \$708,850,000 from both the city and county, but only \$690,000,000 was approved overall for a \$12,000 increase. These funds are for the operational expenses only. The City gives what the County gives. The amended budget is balanced but has no salary changes affected. Increases, known and unknown, in utilities and service contracts took the whole amount of new funding. The Board will be reviewing the budget as the year goes on for ways to create savings that will then be used to give raises to the Library employees.

Kelvin stated that only \$300 was left after increases were made to last year's budget. To give employees a 1% raise would require roughly \$10,000. The Board is committed to review the budget for savings, possibly using restricted funds, but that would only be a one-year fix. The Board is also committed to building better relationships with elected officials to discuss issues. Before the new director begins, they will find a way to give something to employees because in this day and age, the Library can't retain employees if they don't offer raises. It is a shame that the Library was not given funds to give those when others have been given raises.

Andrew brought up that the materials budget has been hindered in the past by taking from that for employee raises. It's a challenge to keep employees and provide one of the main things a Library does.

### **FOLA Report**

Maureen was unable to attend so Andrew presented her report. The biggest fundraiser of the year is coming up on August 11. The Murder Mystery Play will feature well known community members. It will be held at Cleveland State with VIP and general admission tickets available.

### **Foundation Report**

The Foundation has been busy collecting funds. Their first luncheon was a success, even receiving 4 checks from attendees. They are taking care of covering costs for the Centennial events.

Kelvin made a special thanks to FOLA and the Foundation, stating the Library could not exist without these fundraising groups.

## **Centennial Celebrations**

Events from the year were highlighted with LibraryCon being the most recent. It was a huge success and our own Margaret was Wonder Woman for the event! The next event will be Author Eric Litwin of "Pete the Cat," at the Dixon Center on Aug 5th. The centennial play script is completed. The play will feature music and dancing with the historic doors from the History Branch and book pages with characters coming through. It will be October 20 - 21 also at the Dixon Center. Tryouts were held on July 31st. Actors, crew, costuming, and all other aspects of the theater are needed to make this successful. A huge thank you to all who are giving their time already.

Margaret reminded us that all of the centennial events have been free to the public, thanks to the Foundation! Tickets to the play will not be sold, you only need a public Library card to attend. A representative from the Library will be present at the Dixon center to sign anyone up that doesn't have one.

The final event will be a dinner on November 3rd hosted at the new PIE Center here in Cleveland. It will be a thank you to everyone that has given to the Library buildings and well-being, for the past 100 years. Recognition will be made to the Johnson Family, Stuart Family, Jones Foundation, Cleveland City County and Bradley County Commission, Library employees, FOLA and of course, the Foundation! Attendance is expected to reach 250 but could increase to 300. Portions of the centennial play will be performed, a photo montage of all centennial events will be shown and a sit-down dinner will be enjoyed. She hopes the entire Board can attend. It has been a great year and she is exhausted! Save the dates will be going out soon.

There will also be a centennial tree planted on the Library grounds. A red oak will be placed this Fall! Centennial tours are still going on but a reservation is required.

## **Committee Reports**

- Building & Grounds
- Human Resources & Operations
- Technology
- Public Relations
- History Branch

Reports were emailed. They will not be read out loud at meetings anymore but questions or concerns can be addressed. No comments at this time.

### **New Business**

Kelvin informed the Board that work is being done on the Capital Project. He officially welcomed new Board member, Vanessa Hammond, and confirmed Rebecca McIntire is taking over a county position instead of the city. Thanks was given to John Coates (not in attendance) for his years of service to the Library.

### **New Director Committee**

The committee was made up of 4 members of the current Library Board, the past Board President, the current Foundation President and Vice President. 13 applicants were reviewed and 8 were given the opportunity to interview in the first round. Those were held in-person for local applicants and over zoom for long-distance candidates. 3 applicants were chosen for a second round of interviews, all in-person. One person was from out of state and the other two were from our area.

The committee unanimously elected Keisha Parks, the current Children's Librarian, to take on the Director role! She was offered the position and her terms have been agreed upon, pending ratification by the Library Board. Ms. Parks resume, and letter of intent were shared with the Board and the floor was opened for questions. None were presented. Kelvin noted that all 3 final candidates were great, even others besides the final, but that it is only a one-person's job so only one person could fill-it. The Board was asked again for any questions or concerns.

Milan Blake asked when her official start date would be. Andrew said she would begin training with him beginning September 1st. There will be one month of overlap. Milan then asked about hiring a new Children's Librarian and if that would be solely left to Keisha to decide. Andrew said it would be both of them interviewing on but ultimately up to her. Kelvin confirmed that this was all discussed with him and he approved the one month of overlap and the hiring of the Children's Librarian. This hiring might not take place before the end of September but Keisha does know she might be pulling double-duty for a time.

Margaret Schenck asked about how the public will be informed of the new Director. Andrew is currently working on that. The information will be shared with the Library tomorrow. Kelvin shared that during the interview process it was mentioned that the Director would have to hit the ground running in being introduced to our community. Kelvin would like the Board to strategically figure that out. There will be ways for the Board members to assist Keisha in her new role. Milan mentioned her coming to the next County Commission meeting on September 25th to be introduced. Andrew is also being recognized for his years of service that night. Kelvin asked if someone from the Board could attend since he is out of town. Margaret Schenck volunteered to do so.

Amy Moore shared how we can boost the involvement of our City Council and County Commissioners by building better relationships with those elected officials. Ways to do this include; having a Board member and Library employee at every city and county meeting, one-on-one sit downs with officials, and personal invites to the Centennial Dinner. Anything the Board can do to keep the Library fresh in the minds of these officials and help get Library employees a pay raise. Margaret shared that she doesn't mind speaking at the County meeting on the 25th to invite them all to the upcoming centennial play and dinner!

Kelvin addressed that the Board and Library need to be intentional in all we do. Partnerships with the United Way and utilizing the Patron Survey responses from the region are two things in the limelight now. Keisha shared a five-year plan during her interview that excited them.

Amy continued that many members of the public don't know what all goes on at the Library, even herself at first. The calendar of daily activities is full of educational activities for all ages. The Library is not just a building full of books but an asset to our community. Kelvin seconded this by referencing how much traffic the interview committee saw in their few days here.

A motion was made by Amy Moore to approve Keisha Parks as the new Director. This was seconded by Rebecca McIntire and carried by all.

### **Director Report**

Andrew announced he was excited for Keisha to begin and ready for the change. Annual statistics for the Library were shared. Circulation numbers have returned to what they were pre-pandemic. The E-materials check-outs have been exponential and continue to do so. It was mentioned that purging Library cards is difficult when some patrons utilize online resources. Liz shared that the region can assist with running accurate reports so those patrons are not purged. Resource sharing (Inter-Library Loans ) was halted during this year when there was an issue with our carrier Firefly. Usually there are over 1200 resources shared for the year but it was only 444 this past year. We play a major role in resource sharing across our state. More than 10,000 people attended programs at the Library and through outreach. Wireless access at the Library is over 50,000 users for the year.

Cherly Dunson gave thanks to the Library on behalf of the SPCA and the Ark for letting them host a donation event on the Jarnigan front lawn. No adoptions were made but many vaccinations were given to pets.

Kelvin emphasized the importance of having all our Board members complete the trustee certification process. This helps with grants the Library is able to apply for.

Ms. Keisha Parks was then introduced to the board and she extended her gratitude about being trusted with the role of director.

There being no further business, Kelvin made a motion to adjourn. This was seconded by Milan and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Andrew L. Hunt, Secretary