

Cleveland Bradley County Public Library

November 25, 2025

Board Meeting Minutes

PRESENT: Keith Barrett, Vanessa Hammond, Brittany Katz, Leon Shahan and Scott Webb.

Others attending: Director: Keisha Parks, Director of Ocoee River Regional Library: Liz Schreck, President of the Foundation for the Cleveland Bradley County Public Library: Meg Campbell, President of Friends of the Library Association: Lynn Dunlap, Youth Services Supervisor: Jennifer Kring.

Keith Barrett called the meeting to order. The Library Board minutes from October 2025 and the Committee Minutes from September and October were reviewed.

Scott Webb made a motion to approve all sets of minutes. Vanessa Hammond seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and the minutes were approved as submitted.

Regional Report

Liz Schreck reported on a recent successful multi-generational workplace in-service titled "Generational Fluency for Team Building". She also announced an upcoming tech round table focused on Google tools, primarily presented by Nikk Branam-Snyderi, maximizing efficiency.

Liz Schreck reminded the Library Board about the Governor's Early Literacy Foundation Storybook Trails grant opportunity, which this cycle includes funding for both new trails and the refurbishing and sustainability of existing ones. She also encouraged trustees to complete their online certification and reminded the Library Board about the Tennessee Semi-Quincentennial (TN250.com) grants, where the Tennessee Commission has \$3.5 million available in public grants, in \$20,000 to \$25,000 increments.

Training surveys are being conducted statewide to determine desired professional development topics for the Library Board members and Library staff. Liz Schreck also shared the October Tennessee READS/circulation statistics.

The annual Tennessee Standards for Public Libraries survey report for 2024-2025 was presented, which serves as an in-house evaluation tool. It showed the Library's response (Level 5 Library) compared to other Level 5 libraries and the state average. Keisha Parks noted that two standards were unmet: salaries and benefits are "not quite" comparable to county/municipal positions, though the Library is on a three-year plan, and the Library has not yet established a technology plan. Liz Schreck confirmed that these standards are goals, not requirements.

FOLA Report

Lynn Dunlap reported on the renovation of the Book Nook. To reduce the heavy labor of moving books to the basement, FOLA held a "brown bag of books" sale for \$5 per bag, selling 70 bags (estimated over 1,000 books). The Book Nook has been painted and the old shelving has been removed. New shelves, made of ash, will be placed in the center, and the old shelving will line

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the walls. Tiling is scheduled for December 4th. The goal of the renovation is to transform the Book Nook from a "foreboding" space to one that is "bright and cheerful". A grand opening is planned.

The fall jewelry sale (Secondhand Bling) was the most successful jewelry sale FOLA has had, with great turnout and significant profit. FOLA is preparing for "Santa's Reindeer Games" and plans to give away 75 toys to 75 children, encouraging the donation of inexpensive, neighbor-kid-appropriate toys.

The "Old Christmas Tea" is scheduled for January 10th at the History Branch (\$40 a ticket, sales start December 1st). Lynn Dunlap noted that hosting events there is difficult due to the lack of a kitchen, requiring dishes to be hauled in and out for washing, suggesting that a kitchen would be a beneficial long-range project.

Foundation Report

Meg Campbell reported that the Foundation is focused on end-of-year work with donors for endowments. The Foundation brought on three new Board members to replace two, targeting a younger demographic, and is looking to interview a fourth. They are working on two or three grants, including one with Keisha Parks and Ellen Dobbs. The Foundation is currently waiting on the Franklin Architects plan before they can utilize a \$200,000 grant. A donor thank-you event is scheduled for December 4th in the History Branch.

Old Business

Keisha Parks shared policy updates that the Library Board reviewed between meetings. Brittany Katz made a motion to approve the policies as presented. Scott Webb seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Keisha Parks provided a construction update, noting that the Carmichael House porch work is almost finished, though it needs a few more coats of paint. Franklin Architects visited and had questions regarding the tower and the two flat roofs. The Architects are working to finalize the plan, which is sponsored by the Foundation. Keisha's goal is to receive the completed plan, which includes establishing a long-term maintenance strategy, before the end of the year. The Foundation reported that they are waiting on this plan so they can move forward with a large \$200,000 grant.

New Business

Jennifer Kring, the new Youth Services Supervisor, introduced herself and gave an update. Abbie Collins, who previously worked for the Bookmobile, was hired part-time to assist with tweens and cover Shannon's upcoming maternity leave.

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Youth Services has seen incredible participation increases across all programs (up to 75% or 100% on some), attributing the success to collaboration with Arielle Williams in marketing to showcase programs before they happen. Jennifer Kring noted that she is working on partnerships for programs, connecting with Michaels for the Artist Collective and possibly Key Foods for a "Little Debbie Bingo" event.

The Youth Services department submitted its contribution for the First Horizon grant (sent to Ellen) to purchase new iPads. The current iPads, purchased in 2017, can no longer support the necessary software for STEM/robotics programs, which have gained popularity and are now advertised across the state via the Tennessee STEM Festival.

Jennifer Kring has also started work on a Storybook Trail application. The YMCA free meal program has been implemented, providing 10 to 15 free meals during the 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. hours, increasing traffic in the evening. Volunteers are critical for all of these programs and services.

Regarding the Secretary of State's letter, the staff presented three materials for reconsideration. This action was initiated by the Library Board in response to the state letter, which stemmed from concerns about a book ("Fred Gets Dressed") potentially violating an executive order on gender ideology. Staff ran search terms against materials purchased with state and federal funds. The recommendation was to move these three items to the existing Parent Resource Center, which was established nine years ago for sensitive topics like mental health and sexuality.

Scott Webb made a motion to approve the staff's recommendation to relocate the materials to the Parent Resource Center. Vanessa Hammond seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Committee Reports

All Committee Reports are included in the Library Board packet. They are no longer read aloud at meetings but discussed if necessary.

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

Keith Barrett noted that the Human Resources & Operations Committee plans to develop an assessment form/template for the Director, Keisha Parks, who has been in the role for two years.

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Director Report

Keisha Parks reported that the Library suffered a water heater rupture and has been closed since November 23rd. The plumber is expected on November 26th, and the goal is to reopen November 29th at 9:00 a.m.. The new part of the Library and the Carmichael House share a water meter and are without water, while the Jarnigan House is currently being used for restrooms. Staff has been working throughout the closure and is offering curbside reserves for patrons. Keisha Parks praised the staff for their flexibility during this "doozy" of a time and announced a holiday staff reception next Friday, December 5th.

Keisha Parks also reported on the exterior projects: the solar charger is being installed near the bike racks, which requires removing three boxwoods. A sturdier, more traditional bike rack is also needed, as the current one is being used as a "jungle gym" and is "rickety". The Library is still searching for a Bookmobile person, noting that the hiring process has been challenging.

Respectfully submitted,

Keisha Parks, Secretary