

**BLACKWATER REGIONAL LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
February 21, 2024**

Present

Ora Briggs – Sussex County
Sylvia Claggett – Isle of Wight County
Rita Gibson – Isle of Wight County
Terri Hedgepeth – City of Franklin
Michelle Manfred – Isle of Wight County
Jessica Moore – Sussex County
Pam Vaughan – Isle of Wight County
Bill Worsham – Southampton County
Ben Neal – Library Director
Bonnie Lauver – Assistant Library Director
Debbie Carter – Budget & Finance Manager

Remote (via Zoom)

Judge Alfreda Talton-Harris – City of Franklin

Absent

MeChelle Blunt – Southampton County
Jennifer Cuthbertson – Southampton County
Deborah Dawson – Surry County
Connie Henderson – Isle of Wight County
Pam Lease – City of Franklin
Denise Tynes – Isle of Wight County

Chair, Bill Worsham called the meeting of the Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees to order at 3:09 p.m. at the Franklin Branch.

Agenda

Ms. Moore moved, and Ms. Manfred seconded that the agenda be approved as amended. The vote was unanimous.

Consideration of Remote Meeting Participation Requests

Trustee Talton-Harris requested to attend this meeting remotely. Mr. Neal read the Motion to Permit Board Member to Participate Remotely, filled in the required information, and Ms. Carter conducted a roll call vote.
Ayes: Briggs, Claggett, Gibson, Hedgepeth, Manfred, Moore, Vaughan, Worsham
Nays: none

Minutes

Ms. Briggs moved, and Ms. Manfred seconded the minutes be approved as presented. Ms. Carter conducted a roll call vote.
Ayes: Briggs, Claggett, Gibson, Hedgepeth, Manfred, Moore, Talton-Harris, Vaughan, Worsham
Nays: none

Public Comment

None

Correspondence

Staff thank you notes for holiday gift cards were circulated among Trustees.

Library Director's Report

Central/System-wide Updates

BRL sent four staff members to national conference LibLearnX in Baltimore, learning about library trends and ideas for innovation; overall over 35 trainings were completed by staff system-wide

As of February 13, 2024, BRL is fully staffed.

Circulation is month-to-month/YOY (+26% over previous January) at highest point since pre-pandemic, and has slightly outpaced last 2019-early 2020 numbers.

BRL partnership with Kiwanis' IsleREADS tutoring program has led to a nine point increase in test scores in affected classrooms at Hardy Elementary.

Committee Reports

Budget & Finance – Ms. Moore – The committee did not meet. Ms. Moore stated that Mr. Neal is keeping up with things in the General Assembly. Mr. Neal updated Trustees on the current status of a 2.5 million dollar increase in the budget for State Aid. Mr. Neal also distributed a handout of available budget hearing/meeting dates for BRL localities. Wells Fargo Advisor, Scott Carr, will make his annual presentation at the May 15, 2024 Board meeting.

Personnel & Policy – Ms. Vaughan – In November 2023, the Board of Trustees passed a budget inclusive of fine-free policies. The committee edited the Circulation policy verbiage to reflect that change, clarify and simplify the identification requirement, and excise some language that is duplicative or procedural in nature. The committee unanimously recommended these policy changes for adoption with an effective date of May 1, 2024. Ms. Carter conducted a roll call vote.

Ayes: Briggs, Claggett, Gibson, Hedgepeth, Manfred, Moore, Talton-Harris, Vaughan, Worsham

Nays: none

Accounts Payable

Ms. Vaughan moved, and Ms. Moore seconded that the accounts payable be filed for the Annual Audit. Ms. Carter conducted a roll call vote.

Ayes: Briggs, Claggett, Gibson, Hedgepeth, Manfred, Moore, Talton-Harris, Vaughan, Worsham

Nays: none

Unfinished Business

None

New Business

None

Board Member Comments/Announcements

Ms. Claggett – her sorority will collect new or gently used African-American or self-help books for the library during the month of March.

Ms. Briggs – celebrating Read Across America day on March 7, 2024

Ms. Moore – Wakefield and Waverly continue hosting book clubs. Waverly is planning an Easter program.

Mr. Worsham – was happy to see the BRL banner standing out on the news at the SP Morton event

Ms. Hedgepeth – Rawls Museum Arts is hosting a Gallery Talk with Annette Price on Sunday. Everyone is invited to attend, and to visit the museum to see her work.

Judge Harris – interested in reports/handouts from staff workshops

Announcement of Next Meeting

The next Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees meeting will be on March 20, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. at the Franklin Branch.

Adjournment

Ms. Gibson moved, and Ms. Manfred seconded the meeting be adjourned. Ms. Carter conducted a roll call vote.

Ayes: Briggs, Claggett, Gibson, Hedgepeth, Manfred, Moore, Talton-Harris, Vaughan, Worsham

Nays: none

The meeting was adjourned at 3:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Carter for
Sylvia Claggett, Secretary