

**CATOOSA COUNTY LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Board Meeting Minutes
October 18, 2023 – 4:30 p.m.**

Members Present: Shirley Smith, Rachel Lamar, Sharon Anderson, and Karen Willis

Others Present: Sarah Holmes and Meghan Herbel

Call to Order: Shirley Smith, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m. A quorum was present.

Approval of Agenda: Ms. Anderson made a motion to approve the agenda which was seconded by Ms. Willis and approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: The Minutes of the Regular Meeting on July 19, 2023 were reviewed. Ms. Lamar made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Ms. Anderson and approved with unanimous consent.

Approval of Director's Report: Ms. Holmes, Library Director, presented the quarterly director's report with a side deck of pictures as a visual accompaniment. A copy is included in the packet and incorporated by reference.

The report included a projects and facilities update with special attention to the new flooring in the storytime corner and an expected reopening event of the space once furnishings are acquired. Ms. Holmes also shared recent maintenance updates involving security and safety improvements.

In addition, Ms. Holmes shared an extensive list of outreach and community engagement efforts including, but not limited to our partnership and outreach with Heritage Middle School, Stable 41, Communities in Schools, CHI Memorial, the YMCA, Tiger Creek Elementary, the Catoosa County Parks and Recreation Department, LIFT, the Northwest Georgia Branch of the Chattanooga Area Food Bank, the College and Career Academy, and Parents as Teachers.

Ms. Holmes also presented a summary of what was covered at the most recent staff day and celebrated library staff accomplishments in continued education.

Finally, Ms. Holmes shared a budget update stating that the State Funds Agreed Upon Procedures for the state funds is still in progress but going well. Also, Ms. Holmes announced that the library is receiving an allocation of \$22,568.42 in LIBTECH funds this year. Some discussion ensued regarding the LIBTECH funds and whether they were included in the original budget for technology planning. Ms. Holmes shared that the inclusion is generally added in an amended budget as the allocation amount and the grant itself is not guaranteed from year to year.

Information Items: Ms. Holmes presented the following to the board as information items

Budget Report: A copy of the report is included in the packet and incorporated by reference. Ms. Holmes shared that the library is on target for spending. Ms. Smith asked if the county's timeline of sharing budget reports is causing issues and how the director is handling balancing

the budget with potentially delayed reports. Ms. Holmes shared that she devised an internal process to keep track of the budget which aids in delays and that she makes sure to check progress and communicate with the county with any questions or concerns.

Statistics Report: A copy of the report is included in the packet and incorporated by reference. Ms. Holmes shared how the library is continuing to grow in both attendance to programs and usage of materials. Ms. Holmes especially pointed out an increase in digital library usage and shared expectations of how that number is inclined to grow over time. Ms. Smith commented on whether this digital increase reflects how we have been better prepared to serve our patrons digitally since COVID. Ms. Holmes affirmed that COVID definitely had an impact on the necessity to make sure our services were able to be accessed digitally as well as physically and that we are constantly improving.

Discussion Items:

Fines free – Ms. Holmes shared that the PINES Executive Committee gave the green light for PINES libraries to go fines free. Ms. Holmes presented the data the PINES Executive Committee shared when the fines free pilot started and asked the board for their thoughts on the Catoosa County Library going fines free. Discussion ensued regarding what this would look like in action with library materials and what would be the costs versus the benefits of going fines free. Ultimately the goal discussed was removing barriers to library access to materials and curating an environment where patrons would have minimal barriers to information and literacy resources.

Support for this project was shared as long as it does not negatively affect the library's operating budget. Suggestions for offsetting the costs were discussed such as charging fees for using the meeting room for commercial purposes and a "make a donation" suggestions in place of fines. Library management will work to answer the questions raised such as what is the number of patrons currently blocked and what are the current bill totals, as well as acquire updated statistics to garner a better picture of how many patrons would immediately benefit from this move to fines free.

Action Items:

Approval of Director travel to Georgia Directors Winter Meeting in Savannah December 11-13 (would need to drive down on December 10): After some discussion on rising costs to travel and assurance of making safe choices regarding parking, a motion to approve was made by Ms. Anderson and seconded by Ms. Lamar and approved by unanimous consent.

Approval of Saturday Closures around Catoosa County's approved 2024 Holiday Schedule: The following Saturday Closures were approved unanimously after a motion by Ms. Willis that was seconded by Ms. Lamar.

- Saturday, December 30, 2023
- Saturday, March 30, 2024
- Saturday, November 30, 2024

Approval of Monday, February 19 (Presidents' Day) as Staff In-service Day: Unanimously approved after a motion by Ms. Anderson and second by Ms. Willis.

Approval to pursue camera security project: Ms. Holmes presented a copy of the library's floor plan with potential camera placements to update the library's current security system. The cost is estimated to total \$20,000 for 35 cameras plus installation. Some discussion ensued in which Ms. Smith shared support of this project as it increases safety for staff and patrons and lowers liability. Ms. Smith asked if Dependable would be quoting the system and whether or not it would be county-wide and work in conjunction with the fire department. Ms. Holmes shared that RTC gave the initial estimate, but that the proposal was shared and approved by the county manager to move forward with the project and will be pursued by following county purchasing procedures for a project of this size. Ms. Lamar made a motion to approve. The motion was seconded by Ms. Anderson and approved by unanimous consent.

Approval to pursue library renovation: Ms. Holmes presented a copy of the library's floor plan with a proposed rough draft of a plan to extend the library by 1,920 square feet. The initial cost estimate is approximately \$576,000 and would be made possible by using current and requested SPLOST funds or possibly a matching Major Repair and Renovation grant. Ms. Holmes shared a short version of the 2024 SPLOST presentation with the Library Board that was presented to the Board of Commissioners. The Library Board expressed excitement about this possible renovation that would mostly contribute to additional community spaces, study rooms, a conference room, and a possible additional multipurpose room, to meet the growing needs for community space. Ms. Willis suggested we attempt to expand the library's footprint even further for more square footage. Ms. Smith supported this suggestion and shared that the library could ask for a variance to build closer to the property line. Ms. Holmes will work to see if this additional footage is possible. Ms. Willis made a motion to move forward with the pursuit of this renovation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lamar and approved unanimously.

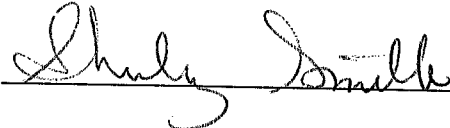
Public Comments: N/A

Trustee Comments: Ms. Lamar commented that the library management staff was doing well in their efforts. Ms. Smith commented her excitement about our security plans and the expansion project. Ms. Willis asked whether the board meetings were communicated as open to the public since it doesn't feel that way based on the wording in the newsletter. Ms. Holmes shared that while the newsletter dates and comments are designed to save space, on our website, there is a note that these board meetings are "open to the public." Ms. Willis also asked a question on how hoopla bonus borrows worked which Mrs. Herbel explained. Ms. Smith commented on the fact we now have a radon testing kit, how cool!

Next Meeting Date: The next Regular Library Board of Trustees Meeting is set for Tuesday, January 16 at 4:30 p.m. in the library's meeting room.

Adjourn: Ms. Anderson made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lamar and approved unanimously.

Minutes submitted by: Sarah Holmes

Approved:  Date: 1-23-2024