



APPALACHIAN REGIONAL LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES

Watauga County Public Library

Thursday, May 15, 2025 at 1:00 p.m.

Present: Patty Swartzbaugh; Margaret Love; Mary Stolberg; Kyle Hall; Karen Moll; Doug Butler; Arnold Lakey; James Bumgarner (substituting for Jan Noffsinger)

Staff Present: Laura McPherson, Tammy Holston, Monica Caruso, Suzanne Manners, Kilby Spencer

Absent: Natalie Harkey, Jennifer Chatham, Jan Noffsinger, Brenda Dobbins, Camilla Lovette-Day

1. Call to Order

Doug called the meeting to order at 1:03 pm

2. Additions/Deletions and Approval of Agenda

- We added a report from the Nominating committee as well as approval of a signature by the Chair for budget changes
- We eliminated the "March minutes from closed session" from the agenda
- Jennifer may join us about 1:30 or 2 virtually.
- A motion was made by Karen to accept the agenda and Kyle seconded it. All approved.

3. Approval of the Minutes

Minutes of the March 2025 meeting -Patty made a motion and Karen seconded it. All approved with the following changes:

- Search committee: the date of January's meeting was 1/16 and it should be in the minutes. The date of 11/21/24 also needs to be put in for November.

4. Correspondence & Communications: None

5. Reports: County Librarians and Regional Director

- Reports were provided.
- We discussed the status of the Institute of Museums and Library Services. (IMLS)
- NC Cardinal might be affected: it may pause lending for 6 months – 1 year.
- Regarding State Aid, the NC House proposed the same amount this year, but next year it would reduce funding by \$1 million .
- The state library is asking people to reach out to federal representatives about this. There were some reversals, and some people came back to work at the IMLS. Mary suggested that the ARL should send a letter stating how this would affect our users. It was mentioned that one of the public library directors had a form letter. Please send Mary the talking points and she'll put together a resolution for Virginia Foxx. It will be put on the private docs page for a July vote. Mary volunteered to write a resolution and send it to board members. Margaret suggested that we call Virginia Foxx's office. Braxton knows her. Board members can send letters to federal representatives.

Kilby, our IT Coordinator, also provided a report.

- He is rolling out new laptops next month and a new managed wireless system Wi-Fi stats have grown a lot.
- E-rate funding would stay the same for now. Our FY 2026 application was approved. He'll file for reimbursement in a couple months.

- In July /Aug – We'll be updating our disaster management system

6. Unfinished Business

Kyle explained how we have to rotate our executive board positions.

2025-2026 Nominations:

- Chair – Wilkes – Jennifer Chatham
- Vice Chair – Watauga - Margaret Love
- Secretary – Ashe – Jan Noffsinger

7. New Business

Margaret made a motion to ensure that Doug has permission to sign off on end of year Budget changes before June 30 so the books can be closed, Mary seconded it. All approved.

8. Reports of Standing Committees:

Budget and Finance:

- Approve - Updated FY24/25 Local Budgets , ARPA, NCDIT (Digital Champion Grant State Aid FY24/25 Budget - Some funds have been put into contingency in case we are not funded.

- Approve Preliminary 2025/2026 State Aid Budget

Mary made a motion to approve the financials and Margaret seconded it. All approved.

- **Approve 2025-2026 Audit contract with Combs, Tennant & Carpenter, P.C. – contract increase of \$500** - Mary made a motion to approve of this, and Patty seconded it. All approved.

- Tammy gave an update on the county's budget proposals for fiscal year 2026:

Watauga's Budget hearing is May 20th . Wilkes had a proposed 9% cut to the library and was working from an old budget. Wilkes's budget hearing will be on May 20th also and we will attend, asking them to reconsider the cuts. Tammy and Laura to meet with Ashe County Commissioners June 2nd.

- Traphill branch lease is due to renew this year, and the landlord has agreed to keep the rent at \$750. Mary made a motion to accept this, and Patty seconded it. All voted in favor.

Governance:

Approve Meeting Room Policy update:

- Kyle told us that a year ago, they were asked to review several policies, and they did some of this. It was decided that the director should work on this and then the committee can look at them and approve. Governance recommends that the board approve the meeting room policy. It clarifies some points regarding who can use the room and has some liability clauses. Doug proposed a change regarding the number of people to use a room: 4 or more OR fewer than 4. The committee recommends these changes and all approved.

Approve change to Circulation Policy – increase of credit/debit card transaction fee

- Square changed their transaction fee from .10 to .15 so we need to change the Circulation Policy so patrons can pay and not library. All approved.

Personnel:

Approve Personnel Policy revision for Adverse weather - All approved the change.

Search Committee: Closed session with Board – update on candidate interviews

- The staff exited the room so the board could go into a closed session.

9. Adjournment

- After the staff came back in, the meeting adjourned at 2:35 pm
Next meeting will be July 17, 2025 in Ashe County @1:00 pm (Committee meetings at 12:30 pm)