

WATAUGA COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD

Minutes

Thursday, May 2, 2024

1:30 pm

Present: Cheryl Angel (ex-officio), Natalie Harkey, Roberta Jackson, Margaret Love, Patricia Swartzbaugh, Candice Trexler

On Zoom:

Present for the library: Monica Caruso (Watauga County Librarian), Tammy Holston (Appalachian Regional Library Finance Director), Jacob Stark (ARL Director)

Absent: Sandra Basel (Chair), Braxton Eggers, Laura Johnson, Claire Olander (ex-officio)

1. Call to Order & Welcome

In Sandi Basel’s absence, Patti Swartzbaugh called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes – March 7, 2024

After review, Margaret Love moved to approve the minutes; Cheryl Angel seconded; minutes were approved.

3. Correspondence and Communication – None to report

4. Report of the Watauga County Library/Five Year Plan Progress –Monica Caruso

- Monica reported that Monday afternoon movies are ongoing, though attendance has not been optimal. The WCL is now showing “sensory-friendly” movies for those with special needs. Accommodations include lower lighting, lower sound, the freedom to move around, and snacks.
- National Library Week (April 7-13) activities included an eclipse viewing party among other displays and events.
- Story times continue, with average attendance of 25 people.
- Hardin Park will bring a field trip to the library for their second grade students.
- WCL had a table and activities at the BuildFest (sponsored by the [Children’s Playhouse](#)) on Saturday, April 12, with shadow puppets and Lego® building.
- The WCL has requested \$10,000 from the Town of Boone for materials.
- The Annual Report will be submitted to the Watauga County Commissioners and others.
- The WCL and the Friends of the Library sponsored a Shred Truck on site on Friday, April 26. Over 8,000 pounds of papers were shredded. This secretary wishes she had convinced her husband to go and bring about 20 pounds of unnecessary old bills from places we don’t even live anymore. Sigh.
- The WCL will also have a table and presence at the Adult Services Expo on Thursday, May 2 at Watauga Community Recreation Center. Three raffle item baskets will be offered, donated by the Friends of the Library.
- The WCL has submitted a “wish list” to the Friends, as well.
- The 2024 Tax Assistance Program ended successfully, with over 300 people helped. Tax assistance volunteers were treated to a wrap-up dinner at Lost Province on April 27 as a Thank You.
- The WCL will hold a “Device Diagnostics Day” on May 18. Guests may bring their device and have students from Appalachian State provide troubleshooting and tech support.
- Alpha Contractors will begin HVAC replacement on May 13. The work will take approximately 2 months, and will be done in sections to avoid disruption to patrons and staff.
- The Library will be closed on June 15 for Boonerang.

5. Report of the Regional Director – Jacob Stark

- Jacob reported that budget requests for all county libraries are submitted. Jacob met with Watauga County Manager Deron Geouque, and is confident that the requested increase in salaries will be approved.
- More technology partnerships are being developed with eBooks. Overdrive platform fees are being reduced; the savings will be applied to purchasing additional electronic content.
- The Patron Code of Conduct and Program Policies are being reviewed and revised by the Governance Committee of the Appalachian Regional Library Board.
- The ARL is applying for a large grant through the Department of Commerce, to apply to renovation efforts. The grant is due June 18.
 - In other renovation news, the library expansion has a new website: www.wataugalibraryexpansion.org.
 - The expansion committee is continuing to meet on the first Fridays of every month at 10:00 a.m.
 - Jacob mentioned that a land sale donation is pending, which will be a substantial benefit to the Friends of the Library.
- All staff training took place on April 19. Requests/issues that arose included more training in donation handling and tech services; filling substitute scheduling, especially for circulation staff; funding for adult services; and idea exchanges for youth services.
- Jacob reminded the Board that there are Board vacancies at the regional and county level.
- The Friends of the Library 50th anniversary celebration will be held on September 21.

6. Financial Report – Tammy Holston

- Tammy reported that preliminary budgets are completed. She reviewed budget adjustments and transfers, including a \$4,377 donation from the Watauga Historical Society, to be applied to Digital Watauga salaries, and a restricted donation of \$300 to support the VITA tax assistance thank you dinner. The budget changes were approved.

7. Friends of the Library – Monica Caruso on behalf of Claire Olander

- The Friends of the Library met on May 1, and approved a designation of \$30,000 for the WCL budget.
- Membership is currently at about 250; there have been 5 new members in the last 2 months.
- The spring newsletter has been emailed to members and supporters.
- The Friends have a new Instagram page as well as updates to the Friends website.
- The Book Sale is Coming! The Friends Spring 2024 Book Sale will be held June 6-8. Donations are being collected through May 31.
- Meanwhile, the in-house book sales continue. Displays featuring puzzles and other fun donations are in the lobby.
- The Friends have been exploring pop-up book sales with specialty themes, such as fly fishing, art fairs, and cookbook/food centered events.
- Book sales also continue online with Facebook Marketplace, Amazon, eBay, etc.
- Two new volunteers have joined the Friends, for a total of 150!
- The hospitality committee provided snacks to the library staff during National Library Week.
- The Friends will have a table at Boonerang, and will hold a staff appreciation luncheon in the fall.
- A fee increase has been approved: for those under 18 years old, the fee will be \$5; for individuals, the fee has increased to \$10; and the rate for families is now \$15. The rates for the Watauga County Friends of the Library remain some of the lowest in the state.

8. Western Watauga Branch – Cheryl Angel

- Western Watauga celebrated 3 new members (2 lifetime and 1 annual)

- Cheryl requests large baskets to be donated for their basket fundraiser, to be held in November on Election Day.
- 3 sets of dulcimer books were donated (to WCL, Western Watauga, and Bethel School) as a follow-up to the successful dulcimer education program.
- The summer reading program will commence shortly, with programs on gem mining, a foam party, “critters,” magicians, “take & investigate” kits, and other fun stuff.
- Like other area libraries, the Western Watauga Branch held an eclipse viewing event, with over 40 guests in attendance.
- A musical story time featuring storyteller [Sharon Clarke](#) was held on April 11.
- The Book Club is looking forward to a field trip to the Barter Theater in Virginia to see [Grandma Gatewood Took a Walk](#) on May 16. The play is based on the Book Club book by Ben Montgomery, [Grandma Gatewood's Walk: The Inspiring Story of the Woman Who Saved the Appalachian Trail](#).
- The Dementia Project continues its successful programming. Groups are still closed to new members because they are at capacity. The next meeting will be held at the end of June.

9. Old Business – Monica Caruso

- Monica reminded the Board that new members are still needed. Three applications have been submitted thus far.

9. New Business – Monica Caruso

- Nominations for new board members and officers will be reviewed and approved at the next Board meeting.
- The issue of the timing for meetings was tabled until new board members could weigh in on the decision.

10. Adjournment – Patti Swartsbaugh adjourned the meeting at 2:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret L. Love