

WATAUGA COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD

Minutes

Thursday, November 2, 2023

1:30 pm

Present: Sandra Basel (Chair), Natalie Harkey, Margaret Love, Patricia Swartzbaugh

On Zoom: Cheryl Angel (ex-officio), Max Ruthless

Present for the library: Monica Caruso (Watauga County Librarian), Tammy Holston (ARL Finance and Personnel Manager), Jacob Stark (ARL Director)

Absent: Carol Deal, Braxton Eggers, Roberta Jackson, Laura Johnson, Candice Trexler, Claire Olander (ex-officio)

1. Call to Order & Welcome

Chair Sandra Basel called the meeting to order at 1:37 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes – September 7, 2023

Margaret Love made a motion to approve the September 2023 minutes; Patti Swartzbaugh seconded. Motion passed.

3. Correspondence and Communication

None to report.

4. Report of the Watauga County Library/Five Year Plan Progress – Monica Caruso ([See attached for details](#))

Monica reported that the new van was publicized on October 4 in the Watauga Democrat. The van made five trips in October and served as the photo booth backdrop for the Boone Boo. Other outreach efforts garnered 8 library card sign-ups at the Farmer's Market. Staff and volunteers provided education regarding student access at the event. 30 people signed up to receive the Library E-newsletter.

Monica reiterated that LSTA grant funding requires reported outcomes, including the number of people reached, learning objectives and outcomes, etc.

The Boone Boo event brought over 800 people to the library and included games, a photo booth, and other activities.

WCL staff took part in the [NC Library Association](#) biennial conference, October 16-20, 2023 in Winston-Salem. Staff member Jennifer Earp-Johnson received a scholarship to attend the [Association for Rural & Small Libraries](#) conference last September in Wichita, KS.

Upcoming events:

- Volunteer drop-in on November 10 from 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
- Closed on November 11 for Veterans' Day
- Closed for Thanksgiving November 23-25
- Half-day for staff on November 30 for staff development. Library will open at 1:00 p.m.
- Closed for the Christmas holiday December 25-27
- Closed for New Year's Day January 1

5. Report of the Regional Director – Jacob Stark ([See attached for details](#))

Jacob reported that the Capital campaign committee needs a treasurer. The committee will be working on thank you and holiday letters and discussing a separate endowment (discussion led by Betty Bond).

In staffing updates, there is a part-time Circulation Assistant position open in Ashe County. Amber Combs will start as Youth Services Manager for Wilkes County on November 21.

Changes to the regional personnel policies will be reviewed and approved at the regional board meeting. Changes include:

- 1.) Add a birthday for a floating holiday whereby Class 1 & 2 would have 8 hours and Class 3 would have 4 hours. We have already budgeted for the time.
- 2.) Reword the Sick leave policy and expand upon the language to include more family members
- 3) Thanksgiving /Christmas holiday for class 3 employees immediately if scheduled to work and not needed.
- 4) Digital Watauga Technicians and Interns Exemption from Employed Relatives in the same county

Finances: The fiscal year expenditures and income are on target, with both within range for the budget. The state budget includes a significant increase. Audit results will be presented at the Regional Board meeting by the accounting firm, [Combs, Tennant, & Carpenter](#). An LSTA project grant is being written for adult literacy services and will benefit ESL patrons primarily. Tammy mentioned that current revenue and expenses stand at 30.9% and 30.6% respectively.

Administration: The Appalachian Regional Library continues to outperform other libraries of its size, ranking 6th in NC for NC Kids Digital circulation. Staff will begin a training series on Office 365 in December; there will be 6 lunch and learns scheduled.

County Librarian performance review surveys will be issued to all staff. If staff request follow-up from Jacob, they must provide their names.

Technology: The [E-Rate](#) program (which provides discounted Internet services) begins in mid-November. The Endowment has approved funding for new multifunction copiers for Youth Services and the Western Watauga Branch, and the [MyLibro](#) interface is still being refined and should go live shortly.

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

Monica attended the sorter meeting with Doris Isaacs (Sorter Extraordinaire). They reviewed processing changes and sorting guidelines. Training on the pricing of books was provided to volunteers. The Boone United Methodist Church donated 20 boxes of books from their bazaar.

There is now a free book cart located in the WCPL foyer and efforts will be made to stock Little Free Libraries.

The next WCPL Friends book sale will be December 7-9.

Membership in the Friends has grown to 256 members as of November 1.

Friends' members will write thank you notes to donors of \$100 or more.

The 50th Annual Meeting of the Friends will take place on April 27, 2024. Local historian and former Adult Services Manager Ross Cooper will be asked to be the keynote speaker. The first planning meeting for celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Friends of WCPL will be held on November 6.

The Friends have decided not to pass out cocoa and cookies after the Boone Christmas Parade, as it would be in competition with the Jones House activities.

7. Report of Western Watauga Branch – Cheryl Angel

- Jackie traveled with the new outreach vehicle to Avery County to host a regional Head Start program October 26th. Jennifer and Jacob attended also.

Cheryl Angel reported that the regional Head start event on October 26 served 132 children, with great inter-agency participation. Youth from Watauga, Avery, Mitchell and Yancey Counties attended. Lunch was provided by NC Cooperative Extension. CIVIC Federal Credit Union (formally Local Government Federal Credit Union) sponsored Big Bang Boom (kids Rock Band) Avery County YMCA and Community Center donated their spaces for the program.

Each child was given a free book, funding provided through our outreach vehicle LSTA grant. The new van has seen lots of use, as reported by Monica earlier. The proposed quilt raffle will be postponed until 2024, to capitalize on the success of pairing the raffle with polling places. The Western Watauga branch has a new printer and printer table.

The Western Watauga Branch Book Club meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month. The next meeting will be November 15 @ 2:30pm. The selection for November is [Symphony of Secrets](#) by Brendan Slocumb, and for December It's [Rich Blood](#) by Robert Bailey.

The Western Watauga Senior Center welcomed a new director, Molly Presnell.

The Seniors Christmas Party will be a drive-through event again this year and is planned for December 13, with December 19 as an inclement weather date. [Revolution Boone](#) has offered to make goodie bags again for the event.

The dementia support group has enlisted 4 students to work with the support groups. The meeting dates for these groups have changed for November and December due to the holidays; they will be the first and third Fridays.

8. Old Business – Sandi Basel

None to report

9. New Business

Sandi Basel reiterated her disappointment in the lack of attendance for WCPL board meetings. Secretary Margaret Love will be asked to send letters to those members who have been chronically absent without reason. Reminders of meetings and minutes should be sent at least a week ahead of meetings.

10. Adjournment –

Cheryl Angel moved to adjourn the meeting; Patti Swartzbaugh seconded. Sandi Basel adjourned the meeting at 2:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret L. Love