

WATAUGA COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD (hybrid via Zoom)

Minutes

Thursday, January 6, 2022

1:30 pm

Present: Cheryl Angel, Sandi Basel (Chair), Natalie Harkey, Roberta Jackson, Laura Johnson, Margaret Love, Max Ruthless, Patty Swartzbaugh, Melony Winkelmann

Present for the library: Monica Caruso (Watauga County Librarian), Jane Blackburn (Appalachian Regional Library Director)

Absent: Carol Deal, Scott Elliott, Billy Kennedy

1. Call to Order & Welcome

President Sandi Basel called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes – Meeting from November 4, 2021

Patty Swartzbaugh made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 4, 2021 meeting. Cheryl Angel seconded. The minutes were approved.

3. Correspondence and Communication

Cheryl Angel mentioned the [article](#) in the *Mountain Times* (Dec. 23, 2021) describing the Drive-Through Christmas Celebration at the Western Watauga Branch.

4. Report of Watauga County Public Library – Monica Caruso (*See attached for details*)

Monica mentioned a new Digital Watauga intern, Ellie McCorkle, who will start work in January. She mentioned the Reading Challenge Bingo for 2022, wherein readers can submit Bingo cards for prizes after reading titles in different categories and getting BINGO.

In staff and volunteer news, Danelle Pollock will be coordinating the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program on Fridays from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and Saturdays, 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. from February 4 to April 9. Monica handed out a strategic plan brochure and said that she is preparing the Annual Report for Watauga County Commissioners and the Boone Town Council for a February and March presentation. The WCPL is co-hosting the April Boone Area Chamber After Hours event in partnership with La Quinta Inn on April 7.

Monica was also pleased to report two grant acquisitions. Youth Services Manager, Judith Winecoff expects to receive grants for science programming and decoding books. WCPL, in partnership with NAMI High Country, is promoting Monday evening programs that are grant-supported under the theme of “Gender Fluidity, LGBTQIA+, Story Time, and Mental Health”. The next program will be January 24 and will feature Linda Quinlan, a New England poet.

5. Report of the Regional Director – Jane Blackburn (*See attached for details*)

Jane Blackburn reported that there is an open position in the Ashe County Library for a Youth Services Manager. The Ashe County Board of Commissioners has signed the interlocal agreement. After small changes, the Watauga County Board of Commissioners is expected to sign, and Wilkes County will follow suit.

Jane mentioned that the state budget has lined a \$10 million appropriation of ARC funds.

Budgets & Finance: Jane reported that all county libraries are on track or slightly better than budgeted. Watauga County is at 50% revenue and approximately 47% of expenses. Fines and Fees revenue is running ahead of budget. The Watauga County building funds have been moved out of a CD and into a money market account to

provide easier access for a feasibility study. There is approximately \$80,000 in the fund, which is more than enough to fund a study and possibly to hire a development position.

A \$40,000 Adapting Technology grant has been received and will be used for purchasing computer equipment for Digital Watauga, as well as staff computers and a new scanner at the Wilkes County Public Library.

In a COVID update, Jane mentioned that the current Omicron strain of the virus is milder but far more contagious. No changes to safety protocols are recommended at this time.

Sandi Basel asked if the Endowment Board has been asked to have a role in the expansion efforts. Jane answered that we certainly want to draw in partners.

6. Report of the Friends of the Library – Melony Winkelmann

The Friends of the Library membership has expanded from 215 to 277.

Holiday book sales in the Watauga County Library meeting room were very successful and netted over \$8,000. Estimated attendance was 300 patrons. The November holiday sales were especially successful. The staff appreciated the gift cards that were provided for the holidays.

Book donations have been suspended until January 24.

Martha Gray has volunteered to assist with social media. Current Facebook following is nearly 300.

Melony mentioned that hardback fiction supplies are low, and asked for donations. Certain categories such as cookbooks tend to not sell as well.

A cheaper, climate-controlled storage solution is still needed for Friends book sale products.

Melony mentioned the following new volunteers: Maggie Christenbury and Kasha Sanderson have joined Doris Isaacs.

7. Report of Western Watauga Branch – Cheryl Angel

A drive-through holiday event at the Community Center saw over 70 attendees. The Sheriff's Department provided goodie bags, and Revolution Boone helped assemble the gifts. The Watauga Democrat was on hand at the event and conducted interviews (see article mention above).

The WWB received a small endowment check in December, as well as a donation for programming. Two new lifetime members have joined.

Books for the book sale cart are needed.

The Dementia Caregiver Support Group, a peer group hosting people with dementia and their caregivers - continues meeting on Fridays once a month.

8. Old Business – None to report.

9. New Business –

Max Ruthless offered to provide a Foggy Pine Books gift card (a re-donation to their business) as a promotional item for the Reading Challenge.

10. Adjournment –

Cheryl Angel moved to adjourn the meeting. Margaret Love seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret L. Love