

WATAUGA COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD

Minutes

Thursday, January 5, 2023

1:30 pm

Present: Cheryl Angel, Carol Deal, Braxton Eggers, Roberta Jackson (via Zoom), Margaret Love, Patty Swartzbaugh, Melony Winkelmann

Present for the library: Monica Caruso (Watauga County Librarian), Jane Blackburn (Appalachian Regional Library Director), Tammy Holston (Appalachian Regional Finance Director & Interim Library Director)

Absent: Sandi Basel (Chair), Dr. Scott Elliott, Natalie Harkey, Laura Johnson, Max Ruthless

1. Call to Order & Welcome

In Sandi Basel's absence, Patty Swartzbaugh acted as Chair and called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes – Meeting from November 3, 2022

Margaret Love made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 3, 2022 meeting. Carol Deal seconded. The minutes were approved.

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 reviewed highlights from the Annual Report, which will be presented to the Watauga County Commissioners in February. Door counts are up; 101 new cards were issued in November; and as of November 6, 32,511 people had library cards. Circulation as of November also increased by about 1,000, to 14,438. Eight-seven damaged books were repaired in November. 78 patrons used the study rooms as well. During Food for Fines Week (November 29), 150 food items were presented in lieu of fines (or about \$127 in forgiven fines – slightly lower than in previous years).

In upcoming events: Nova Mann, author of the novel *Hope Knocking*, will speak on January 14 at 10:00 a.m.

Monica then addressed progress with the Library Expansion Project. Jane and Monica are waiting for a quote from Bill Dixon; they met with Larry Turnbow, County Commissioner Chair, and Edie Tugman, Town Council Member, before Christmas. Larry encouraged the library to seek grant funding; Edie Tugman (Mayor Pro Tem) offered the potential resource of a grant writer to help. The Watauga County Commissioners will hold their annual budget retreat in early to mid-February. Monica recommends starting a building committee to meet before the budget retreat (*see Building Committee Goals*, attached); she requests 3-5 volunteers to start.

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

Jane Blackburn reported that an Adult Services Specialist position is open. Two interviews have been scheduled.

Jane's last day is officially January 6 (the day after this meeting). She continues work on the LSTA grant for a new van for the Western Watauga branch, as well as outreach activities. The Ashe County Library received a grant to install book lockers, and Wilkes County Library received a similar grant for a "book vending machine" model.

Budgets & Finance: Jane reported that all county libraries are on track or slightly better than budgeted. Revenue is slightly up in fines and fees.

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

The Friends of the Library hosted an after-Holiday-Parade event, with 80 dozen cookies. After receiving a donation of a trove of military history books, the Friends has made good work of selling them online from Thrift Books (based in Atlanta). They have received about \$150 in sales so far from the online retailer. In other book sale news, there will be two held in 2023, rather than three. The December 2022 book sale raised about \$2,500 (on par with previous years).

The Friends have opened an account dedicated to the expansion project at Truist Bank. They are taking donations of stock through Allan Wealth management.

In-house book sales continue to be successful, averaging approximately \$1,000 per month. Melony reported that the Friends hold an approximate balance of \$18,000 in the Lifestore Bank account.

Melony mentioned that Doris Isaacs has been working hard to receive and process book donations.

7. Report of Western Watauga Branch – Cheryl Angel

Cheryl reported that the basket raffle held during early voting was very successful, raising over \$2,300. A drive-through holiday celebration was held on December 21, with great success. Work continues on the grant to purchase a new van (see Regional Director's report). The Western Watauga branch is working with the Watauga County Arts Council to reach underserved kids in schools, with a possibility of dulcimer workshops.

The awning for the patio area has been installed, and interior painting and new carpets for the library are being planned. The branch may have to close for a day or so to accommodate these renovations.

The book club, early morning story times, and the dementia support group continue to successfully meet. The Dementia Support group has an improved web presence and has utilized volunteers to sit with persons with dementia during bi-monthly support meetings.

8. Old Business

Monica reported that the Endowment Fund committee still needs two representatives from the WCL board.

9. New Business

Patty was appointed as a new member to the Appalachian Regional Library board.

10. Adjournment –

Patty Swartzbaugh adjourned the meeting at 2:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret L. Love