

WATAUGA COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD

Minutes

Thursday, September 7, 2023

1:30 pm

Present: Cheryl Angel, Western Watauga Friends; Sandra Basel, Chair; Carol Deal; Natalie Harkey; Margaret Love; Claire Olander, Watauga Friends; Max Ruthless; Patricia Swartzbaugh; Candice Trexler

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

Absent: Braxton Eggers, County Commissioner; Roberta Jackson; Laura Johnson

1. Call to Order & Welcome

Chair Sandra Basel called the meeting to order at 1:29 p.m. She welcomed and introduced the new Appalachian Regional Library Director, Jacob Starks.

2. Approval of Minutes – July 13, 2023

Patti Swartzbaugh made a motion to approve the July 2023 minutes; Natalie Harkey 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 provided statistics showing that library activity has returned to 80-90% of pre-COVID levels. She shared that a “Tea Party Friendsraiser” will be held on September 23. It will be targeted to book club members and held at the Appalachian Theater. Thus far more than 65 guests have registered at \$10/person. It will be a good opportunity to talk about the need for expansion.

There will be a volunteer drop-in reception on November 10 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

A Building Sciences Senior class from Appalachian State University (ASU) toured the library and heard about expansion needs on September 6. Students will give presentations on December 15.

In partnership with the Library, the [Immigrant Justice Coalition](#) will be showing the film *Coco* at 11:30 a.m. on October 7.

The ASU Common Read book for 2023-2024 is [Be Different: My Adventures with Asperger's and My Advice for Fellow Aspergians, Misfits, Families, and Teachers](#) by [John Elder Robinson](#). There will be an author talk on Tuesday, September 19, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at the Schaefer Center for the Performing Arts.

Expansion news: Former Buncombe County Library Director and Library Consultant Ed Sheary met with the Expansion Fundraising Committee on August 8 to review the 2017 facilities assessment report that he had prepared and discuss news and changes since then. The biggest takeaway from that report was the need for expansion. The recommendation is to build a 1-story extension of the current library. The meeting was met with good feelings by the fundraising committee, who will regroup to redesign the project until more can be done. Monica will put notes from the meeting on the ARL document page.

5. Report of the Interim Regional Director – Tammy Holston ([See attached for details](#))

A position has opened at Watauga County Library for a part-time Circulation Assistant.

Tammy reported that finances are on track for the year, with revenue and expenses balanced. Budgets are located on the ARL board page for more information.

The yearly audit will take place in November. The state of NC has not passed a budget at the time of this meeting.

Technology news: the website refresh has been completed. The MyLibro app has been slower to launch, but the company is good to work with. Tammy also reported that Ashe County has purchased 10 new staff PCs. The High Country Council of Governments, with funds from the State Employees Credit Union, has awarded the Watauga and Ashe Libraries funds to cover monthly service costs for their lendable hotspots.

The old van for Western Watauga Reading & Rolling has been sold for \$500 (slightly more than predicted). The revenue will be used for supplies for the new vehicle, which has already been purchased.

5. Report of the Friends of the Library – Claire Olander, President

Claire Olander reiterated the news of the “Friendsraiser Tea Party” and the meeting with Ed Sheary. She also reported that Donna Breitenstein is working to perfect an online fundraising donation button on the expansion web page

7. Report of Western Watauga Branch – Cheryl Angel

Cheryl Angel shared the graphics for the van, which are quite snazzy. She provided a wrap-up of the dulcimer project funded through the Watauga County Arts Council and mentioned that it was reported favorably by the Watauga Democrat.

269 students participated in 6 events as part of the Summer Reading program. The book club’s next meeting will be at 2:30 p.m. on September 20.

And finally, the Dementia Project continues to experience growth beyond its capacity to meet growing needs. A new meeting time may be provided in the near future, and a 20 hour/week coordinator position is open. Their next meeting is at 2:00 p.m. on September 28.

8. Old Business – Monica Caruso

None to report

9. New Business

The Appalachian Regional Library Code of Conduct and Ethics Statement for local board members was presented to be signed.

10. Adjournment –

Cheryl Angel moved to adjourn the meeting; Patti Swartzbaugh seconded. Sandi Basel adjourned the meeting at 2:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret L. Love