

# WATAUGA COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD

## Minutes

Thursday, July 13, 2023

1:30 pm

**Present:** Cheryl Angel (via Zoom), Sandra Basel, Carol Deal, Braxton Eggers, Laura Johnson, Margaret Love, Max Ruthless, Patricia Swartzbaugh

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

**Absent:** Natalie Harkey, Roberta Jackson, Melony Winkelmann

### 1. Call to Order & Welcome

In the absence of Sandra Basel at the beginning of the meeting, Max Ruthless called the meeting to order at 1:36 p.m.

### 2. Approval of Minutes – May 4, 2023

Patti Swartzbaugh made a motion to approve the May 2023 minutes; Carol Deal seconded. Motion passed.

### 3. Correspondence and Communication

Tammy Holston reported that an offer letter had been sent to incoming Regional Director Jacob Starks, who has accepted and will begin work on September 1.

Tammy also reported that the grant request from the LSTA has been accepted for a new van.

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

Monica reported that an exhibit on climate change is being organized, co-sponsored by the National Center for Atmospheric Research and the Math and Science Education Center at Appalachian State University. There will be scavenger hunts for kids, exhibits, and other events. A talk with local meteorologist Ray Russell will also be scheduled.

Summer has brought several field trips to the library from area camps, including ASU Science Ventures and Ashe County GEARUP middle school camps.

Reading & Rolling began its 20th year with volunteers delivering books to rural children throughout the county. The Summer Reading Program has approximately 550 children registered. The Library will host a blood drive on August 4 in the meeting room.

*Expansion update:* The fundraising committee is in need of retail and design volunteers. Former Buncombe County library director Ed Sheary is also being consulted. The plan is now to look at how improved interior design efficiency could be used to maximize space, since new construction is no longer on the immediate horizon.

The library has been very busy this summer, with the June door count exceeding 10,000 patrons. Over 160 new library cards were issued.

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

Tammy Holston expressed excitement that the new Regional Library Director Jacob Starks will begin work on September 1. There is an open Circulation Assistant position at the Wilkes County Library.

The 2023 fiscal year has been closed. Tammy reminded the Board that revenue is always under budget because the fund balance is incorporated within the counties. The budget for 2023-2024 is set up, with allocations from the Friends of the Library and the Library Endowment to match grant funding for the new van.

The yearly audit will be conducted at the end of July.

All three counties received requested LSTA grant awards.

The North Carolina State budget has not been approved yet.

Additional grants expected include a \$1,000 mini-grant to extend food literacy. The goal will be to have a Mediterranean Diet-themed event and/or exhibit.

Technology: The website refresh is expected to be live within the month. Technology staff are working to develop an app as well.

Letters for e-rate funding have been sent, which will recoup approximately 80% of Internet connectivity costs.

The Watauga County Commissioners fully funded salaries for WCL employees. The library expansion stakeholders need to meet with the Commissioners to determine the next course of action for funding requests, and for the \$50,000 pledged from the County.

#### **5. Report of the Friends of the Library –** Monica Caruso on behalf of Melony Winkelmann

Monica reported that new Youth Services Manager Jennifer Earp Johnson attended the Friends of the Library meeting on July 5 on Monica's behalf. In-house book sales are going very well, with \$1,300 raised in June. The prices for books have been raised slightly, which covers sales tax.

The next Friends of the Library Book Sale will be the first week of December.

The summer reading kick-off helped with book sale results. The Friends will be coordinating further with library programming to increase book sale traffic.

There are too many books and not enough manpower for more than two sales per year. 65% of the books sold were paperbacks.

The Friends have an arrangement with online book reseller McKay's to sell specialty items and books of particular interest, but the company will only take 40 boxes at a time.

The Friends is still in search of cheaper, climate-controlled storage solutions.

Ala Sue Moretz is volunteering now as a sorter.

A skills questionnaire for volunteers and a volunteer wish list has been organized in order to match volunteers with needed tasks.

Hospitality House needs books for start-up housing boxes.

There will be a tea party for book clubs on September 23, as a "Friendraiser." The event will be held at the Appalachian Theater's community room.

The Friends will be supplying cocoa again after the Christmas parade.

The Common Read selection for this year was [John Elder Robison's](#) title "Be Different".

Sales tax on book sales will be paid quarterly.

The Friends has applied for a solicitation exemption and the application has been approved.

The Watauga County Library liability insurance contains errors and omissions insurance, protection for the Reading & Rolling program, and stocking Little Free Libraries. The Friends have been approved to pursue officers and directors policy separately.

Friends volunteer Doris Isaacs is researching scanner and database subscriptions, which may also help with online sales.

### **7. Report of Western Watauga Branch – Cheryl Angel**

Cheryl Angel provided information on the new van procurement; the van should be in-hand by the end of July. A \$10,000 anonymous donation assisted with “feathering the van nest” with supplies, shelving, etc.

The dulcimer project funded by a Watauga Arts Council grant was deemed a success. There is hope to turn the success of this series into an annual event.

New officers and members were elected/appointed, with Mark Palkovic and Tom Shessler as new members.

Summer programs are under way. The most popular thus far has been Farmer Minor with Daisy the Pig.

Book Club continues to meet the third Wednesday of the month.

Dementia support groups continue to be well-attended, to the point where participation has had to be limited, with a waiting list. The memory kits are well-used, with 10 more kits added in Boone.

The Western Watauga Friends have decided to hold a quilt raffle in the late fall as a fundraising effort.

The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 28<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm. (Note time change.)

### **8. Old Business – Monica Caruso**

A replacement Board member is needed for Dr. Scott Elliott. [Candice Trexler](#) has completed a new Board member application and is expected to be approved by the Watauga County Commissioners.

Sandi Basel moved to approve the nomination; Laura Johnson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

### **9. New Business -**

Patti Swartzbaugh brought up that students in Watauga County who are homeschooled do not have access to the same services because they are not issued the same student ID numbers, and are thus liable for late book fees in ways that children enrolled in the Watauga County Schools are not. She volunteered to check with the NC Department of Education about how numbers are assigned to students, and if that process could be extended to homeschooled students. Melony Winkelmann made a motion to ask Patti, on behalf of the Board, to research the question. Patti Swartzbaugh seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Monica Caruso mentioned that officers need to be appointed for the September meeting. Margaret Love volunteered to continue as secretary. Max Ruthless volunteered to continue as vice president, and Sandi Basel as president. Patti Swartzbaugh motioned to approve the slate of officers; Max Ruthless seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Tammy Holston presented revisions to the WCLB by-laws. Section 11.9 changes the language slightly to allow a member who plans to be absent to notify the Board chair to appoint a substitute to attend in their place. Section V.1 simply changed the standing meeting time to the first Thursday of every other month.

The Board agreed that the changes were seen and accepted.

### **10. Adjournment –**

Sandi Basel adjourned the meeting at 2:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret L. Love