

**Wilkes Library Advisory Board  
Minutes of the January 11, 2023 Meeting**

**Members present:** Jennifer Chatham; Bill Davis; Camilla Day; Brenda Dobbins; Tammy Holston, Regional Finance Officer and interim Appalachian Regional Library Director; Arnold Lakey; Suzanne Moore, Wilkes County Librarian; Ola Norman, Traphill Branch Friends of the Library president; Beth Foster Tharrington; and Martha Townes

**Members absent:** Glenda Adams, Wilkes Friends of the Library president; and Casey Joe Johnson, Wilkes County Commissioner

The meeting was **called to order** by Chairman Arnold Lakey at 10:08 am, January 11, 2023 in the conference room.

The **agenda** was approved, by acclimation after a motion by Bill Davis and a second by Brenda Dobbins.

The November 1, 2023 **meeting minutes** were approved, following clarification of the acronym MOU as Memorandum of Understanding, after a motion by Bill Davis and second by Martha Townsend.

There was neither **correspondence** nor **communication** reported.

**Old Business** reports began with notice from the Wilkes Friends of the Library, reporting from Glenda Adams to Suzanne Moore in their regular every other month meeting. The information included a consideration of an annual meeting in the fall, the addition of four new board members, and the need for three additional board members.

Suzanne Moore reported on the recent Endowment Board meeting. This board meets every quarter and consists of two local board members, two Friends of the Library Board members, and four at large members. Since Gwen was an endowment committee member, we need a local board member to serve on the endowment committee. The board is currently discussing the annual distribution of funds, some of which will go toward library renovation.

A library renovation committee was formed, consisting of Suzanne Moore, Arnold Lakey and Beth Tharrington. Suzanne is waiting for cost estimates and renovation plans. Local interior designer, Jim Lyle, is producing the plans. Lee Herring will be called into the process when plans and costs are submitted and considered by the committee. Much of the funding will come from monies donated in memory of Rose Herring.

The **New Business** report was begun by Chairman Arnold Lakey, noting a conflict in meeting time for board member Wilkes County Commissioner Casey Joe Johnson. Arnold related that when he attended the Wilkes County commissioners meeting in December, Casey Joe Johnson was reappointed to the Wilkes County Library Board, but the 10 am time does not work for Casey. He is listed as an ex officio member but is actually a board member. Bill Davis clarified that Casey Johnson is listed as ex officio because he is appointed by the county commissioners but is included as a regular board member. He can vote but cannot be counted as a quorum. When questioning as to another commissioner being appointed, Arnold learned that the commissioners do not want to replace Casey Johnson. It was noted that it is a good idea to have someone to speak for us on the county commissioners. Arnold reviewed the scheduled meeting time and place: the second Wednesday at 10 am in the library meeting room,

and discussion ensued. Consideration of meeting in the genealogical room was presented, but the lack of privacy was mentioned. Ending the discussion, it was decided that our board would change the meeting time to Wednesday at 4 pm, in the Friends room, to accommodate Casey. It was determined that Brenda Dobbins would go this month as a representative to the Regional board which meets the third Thursday of odd numbered months. Approval by the county commissioners is required for regional board appointment.

Eight members currently constitute the Wilkes Advisory Board. According to Arnold Lakey, it is possible to include an additional three members. The board will have two new members in August when two current members rotate off the board. He would like to get the OK to extend the terms of Bill Davis and Beth Tharrington to extend their membership to July of 2024. At that time, the board membership would be 9, by adding three and dropping two. This would create a reasonable rotation of terms, a three-year cycle and be more efficient. Tammy Holston inquired if this will require a change in the county board by laws. Arnold committed to inform the county commissioners know what we intend. He also referred to the county advisory board by laws by quoting, "members serve until there is someone to replace them." This will result in eleven board members. Suzanne Moore mentioned that Gwen Schaeffer was interested but wanted to wait until next year, but she will approach Gwen to apply. Last month, Zachery Miller of Millers Creek also applied as well as Thomas Johnson of Hays.

The Report of the County Librarian was available before the meeting on the Appalachian Regional Board documents page. The following were highlighted by Suzanne Moore:

Outreach: VFW and Marathon Jam's gathering raised \$1,040 for Fisher Houses, Elizabeth Lee hosted a tent at the North Wilkesboro Light Up Downtown, Laurel and Suzanne with teen volunteers participated in the chamber's holiday parade, Story Walk pages were set up for downtown North Wilkesboro Read-Around with Wilkes Partnership for Children, new Traphill librarian, Deb Beckel, hosted an open house for students, a holiday open house took place on December 13 welcoming all to the library and was a farewell to regional librarian, Jane Blackburn.

Programs: a concert with Wilkes History Museum featured old-time/traditional music of the Blue Ridge; a week of programming to honor military and veterans was offered; Native American history and resources for educational scholarships was presented by Tim Wilkie; a quick crochet Christmas gift was taught for all ages by Suzanne; a Christmas Carol concert for all library patrons was offered December 13 by the Wilkes Acoustic Society; and Mara Lynn Tugman appeared as Mrs. Claus for a special Saturday afternoon storytime. Within the Veterans' History Project, 50 additional pages are needed which were not included in the budget. Funds were requested from the town of North Wilkesboro and the Wilkes Genealogical Society, so publication has been delayed.

Finances and Resources: a LSTA grant of \$17,000 was received for Heritage cooking classes and a community refrigerator to be located in the breezeway in the spring; a Subaru Ambassador grant gave a collection of new science and nature books to the children's collection; an end-of-year fundraising letter was mailed by the Endowment Committee.

Facilities: new, automatic doors and sliding door, on the lower level, were installed and are working well; a hand dryer was installed in the men's room.

Staff/Volunteers: Bethany Ritch was hired as a part-time circulation assistant; Suzanne met in DC with librarians from ARSL and ULC to work on a research grant geared toward creating a tool kit for food programming in libraries; staff attended regional training in Ashe County

Looking Ahead: Wilkes County Wellness, beginning with NC Cooperative Extension Service hosting programs on Fitness and Nutrition classes; free films presented in partnership with Twin Rivers Cinema; Stem Saturdays will begin in January. Environmental wellness includes the library's use of a community garden plot at Cub Creek Park

*For more details see the ARL Board Documents page, Wilkes County.*

Tammy Holston presented the Regional Director's Report. February 1 is Jane Blackburn's official retirement date but she is now on vacation. Staff training has been held to accommodate new programs and changes. All staff evaluations will be completed by the end of January. LSTA funds will change and actual budgets are posted to the web page. As for Grant activities, Suzanne Moore and Laure McPherson submitted requests for smart lockers. In answer to a question from Martha Townes, it was explained that the lockers consist of 20 compartments, wifi screen, and the opportunity to put books on hold, pickup and return books. The lockers in Wilkes will likely be placed at Cub Creek Park or downtown Wilkesboro. Tech upgrades in Evergreen were successful.

The search for a new regional director continues.

**Adjournment** was by acclimation.

Dates to remember

Regional meeting, Thursday, January 19, 1 pm, with committee meetings at 12:30 pm

Wilkes Library Advisory Board meeting, Wednesday, March 8, 4 pm.

March Regional Board meeting, Wilkes, Thursday, March 16.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Foster Tharrington, secretary