

**Wilkes County Library Advisory Board  
Minutes of the September 6, 2022 Meeting**

**Members present:** Jane Blackburn, Appalachian Regional Library Director; Jennifer Chatham; Bill Davis; Casey Joe Johnson, Wilkes County Commissioner; Arnold Lakey; Gwen Minton, Chairman; Suzanne Moore, Wilkes County Librarian; Ola Norman, Traphill Friends of the Library President; and Beth Foster Tharrington

**Members absent:** Glenda Adams, Wilkes Friends of the Library President and Brenda Dobbins

Chairman Gwen Minton **called the meeting to order** at 3:30 pm in the Friends of the Library room.

**Approval of the agenda** was accomplished by motion of Bill Davis with a second by Arnold Lakey. The approval was unanimous.

**Correspondence and Communication** included the resignation of board member Sharon Underwood. who sent hand painted bookmarks for the board members.

**Wilkes Friends of the Library** is developing its annual programs in support of the Wilkes Library's 5-year plan. Book sales continue to be successful.

Ola Norman reported on **Traphill Friends'** progress: library book club attendance was down the last two months. They are currently reading The Unfortunate Traveler by Thomas Nash. This book is available online.

**Old Business** was reported by Wilkes Librarian Suzanne Moore. She is gathering information for library renovations. Architect Alex Poorman from ASU has been busy and his plans are still pending. When a meeting with him is scheduled, invitations will be sent to the Wilkes Advisory Board. Preservation work to the library façade is complete and, after adjusted invoices are received, it is hoped that a grant from the Town of North Wilkesboro will cover all costs. There is other funding available for improvements to the parking lot and sidewalks surrounding the library. No target date has been set. The library's Facebook page includes before, during, and after pictures of the building.

Board candidates were discussed. The board is pleased to welcome new board member Jennifer Chatham at this, her first meeting. Gwen Shaffer was suggested but, though interested, she wants to wait one year. The Endowment Committee chairman, George Shaffer, suggested Martha Townes and Camilla Lovette Day is willing to become a board member. The decision to request the three candidates was made: Jennifer Chatham, Martha Townes, and Camilla Lovette Day. Bill Davis suggested that we arrange staggered terms so there will not be too many positions open in one year. He suggested: Arnold Lakey, 4 year term; Gwen Minton continue a year; and Jennifer Chatham a 3 or 4 year term. There was extended discussion of term limits. Suzanne was asked to submit the names of Camilla Day and Martha Townes to the county commissioners for approval. Arnold Lakey inquired of Gwen Minton if she was willing to continue to serve. After saying that new blood would benefit the board, she agreed to remain on board until new members are appointed. Bill Davis phrased it according to the bylaws as "her replacement is not available." He made a motion that a request be sent to the county commissioners to appoint Martha Townes and Camilla Lovette Day. This motion was seconded by Arnold Lakey. The motion carried.

The nominating committee presented the slate of officers for next year. They are: Arnold Lakey, chairman; Brenda Dobbins, vice chairman; and Beth Foster Tharrington, secretary. New officers take charge at the end of this meeting.

**New Business**, presented by Suzanne Moore, included the announcement of the Patriot Pen Essay contest sponsored by the VFW. Auxiliary member, Heather Dean, presents the contest to junior high students. It consists of the awarding of scholarships to winning individuals.

Discussion of whether or not the board could move into closed session ensued. For clarification of the guidelines of closed session meetings, members were referred to the board's bylaws and the NC general statutes for libraries. After determination that this meeting did not meet the guidelines for a closed session, Bill Davis led a discussion of the process of acquiring a new regional librarian. Jane Blackburn retires on December 31, 2022. He reviewed the sites whereon the position was advertised and the costs thereof. He expressed disappointment that thus far there have been few qualified applicants. Experience of applicants and salary are contributing factors. He noted that there is still information for which the committee does not have answers. Accolades to Doug Butler, regional board chairman, were expressed. It is the opinion of the search committee that the new Appalachian Regional Library Board members need to be involved. A recommendation as to how to proceed will be made at the next regional board meeting by Doug Butler. One option which was discussed was the possibility of financial officer, Tammy Holston, assuming the director's role as an interim. She is now working 36 hours and the new duties will require that she work 40 or more hours per week. Salary should be commensurate with responsibility. Annual salary is open to the public. Jane Blackburn commented that a training period of November and December was necessary to prepare Tammy Holston for the added responsibilities. A suggestion of additional money for this time period was suggested. Arnold Lakey suggested that there should not be an annualized salary for the interim but it should be termed as a bonus in December.

Bill Davis also expressed the opinion that the regional board membership should be aware of all the information pertinent to a discussion of this matter. The factor of staff morale should also be considered. A quick decision is to be avoided by considering all options.

**Wilkes County Librarian's report** was delivered by Suzanne Moore. She noted that the five-year strategic plan is being put to use. The grant which was applied for to bring in a cooking program through Wilkes Community College was not awarded. She also asked board members to calendar upcoming events such as the appearance of Alice Gerard, October 25; the Marathon Jam to support Fisher House for veterans and active duty soldiers kick off a week of programming for veterans beginning November 5 at the VFW Post 1142. Other complimentary programming occurs Nov. 6-10; the new story walk in the windows of downtown merchants (The Poppy Lady); a new book vending machine at the end of the story walk here in the library, and partnering with the VFW to have special programming during veteran's week. Other events and programs are listed on the board documents page of the Wilkes/ARL library site.

The local library budget received approval by the county commissioners last month. There is also a copy on the board documents page.

**Regional Librarian Jane Blackburn** reported on the regional library happenings. Her report was also on the board documents page. She highlighted the following: we will receive ARPA money in December or January. It will be a lump sum, \$216,982, and will be distributed among the three libraries and we hope

to spend all of it this fiscal year; staffing at Watauga will cover the retirement of Judith Winecoff and the internal shifting for the AS Specialist; the budget numbers for July and August are not yet available; ARL spent the entire \$15,000 LSA Bright Ideas grant. Wilkes will use their portion of the money to offset the cost of the new Veterans History Program magazine coming out later this year.

The Regional board will meet September 29, 1 pm. Committees will meet at 12:30 pm. Casey Johnson and Bill Davis cannot attend because the meeting date was changed. Suzanne requested two volunteers to attend to represent Wilkes. Gwen Minton and Ola Norman agreed to attend.

The meeting adjourned by acclamation after a motion by Bill Davis and second by Beth Foster Tharrington.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Foster Tharrington  
Secretary