

Augusta-Richmond County Public Library System
Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
Monday, February 21, 2022

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Augusta-Richmond County Public Library System (ARCPLS) Board of Trustees (BoT) was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by the Board Vice President, Mr. Roy Jones.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Christopher Mulliens, President; Roy Jones, Vice President; Morris T. Porter; Brenda Garman; Beatrice F. Green; Kimberly Brown; Kigwana Cherry; Anna Reeves; Beverly Tarver. Members absent: Lillie Hamilton (excused); Kenneth L. Johnson; Cher Best. Ex-Officio members present: Mashell Fashion, Library Director; Leon Maben, Friends of the Augusta Library President. Ex-Officio members absent: Commissioner Catherine S. McKnight (excused).

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve the minutes from January 24, 2022.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The State and Local Treasurer's Reports for January 2022 were included in the Board of Trustees' packets. Ms. Fashion highlighted Line 14 (Georgia Health Insurance); Line 31 (Full-Time Salary); Line 37 (Teachers Retirement System); Line 41 (Utilities); Line 43 (Part-Time Wages.) Ms. Fashion pointed out money received locally including \$19.00 from the Friends Activity Account; \$285.00 (Gifts-Materials-Children); \$2,000.00 (Headquarters Donation-Summer Reading); \$215.00 (Meeting Rooms.)

Ms. Fashion discussed the banking statements for January 2022 including Well Fargo State/Local Government Checking; South State Business Choice; Community Foundation Augusta Library Capital Fund; Community Foundation Augusta Library Fund. She also provided a balance sheet detailing the amount ARCPLS currently owes Richmond County (\$1,197,523.34) as well as the ARCPLS Income and Balance Statements for FY2022.

REPORTS

A. President's Report:

Mr. Mulliens discussed the Personnel Committee for the Library Director's position, and those serving on it, including Mr. Kigwana Cherry, Ms. Brenda Garman, Ms. Anna Reeves; Ms. Emily Dicks (FOAL); Ms. Cathy Joseph (staff from Diamond Lakes); Ms. Marion Brown (community representative.); and Ms. Christopher Mulliens (BoT President.)

Mr. Mulliens requested the BoT go into closed session following the regular meeting to discuss a Personnel Committee.

Mr. Mulliens discussed the nominating committee for electing BoT officers in the coming month. The committee will include Mr. Roy Jones, Ms. Beatrice Green and Ms. Lillian Hamilton. Mr. Jones will chair the committee, and Ms. Green and Ms. Hamilton will assist. They will select President, Vice President, and Treasurer.

B. Director's Report:

Ms. Fashion reported the following:

- On January 25, 2022, Clean Cut Landscaping was approved by Richmond County Administrator, Mr. Odie Donald as the new lawn service for Headquarters, Appleby, Friedman, and Maxwell Branches.
- Included in the BoT packet was the Lift Program galibtech eBooks Grant Quarter 1 Progress Report detailing the expenditure of the grant funds.
- ARCPLS completed a marketing grant through Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS). The funds will be used to develop a marketing campaign to hopefully increase library patronage, and encourage PINES library cardholders to explore all the benefits their cards offer.
- Matthews Specialty Vehicle has agreed to have the bookmobile completed by August 2022, and delivered and in-service by September 1, 2022. Any delay conflicts with the Digital Inclusion Grant deadline of September 30, 2022.
- The Writer in Residence report was included in the BoT packet for January 2022.
- Another vaccination clinic will be held at Friedman Branch in accordance with the Community for Immunity Grant. The date and time are to be announced.
- An invoice from the Augusta Parks & Recreation Department for Diamond Lakes Branch was included in the BoT packet. The invoice covers July-December 2021.
- The BoT was provided with a handout detailing technology funding through the FY2021 Libraries Without Walls Grants provided by GPLS and IMLS.
- ARCPLS circulation increased in January 2022, including computer and Wi-Fi usage as well. Evening and Sunday hours continue to lag behind. ARCPLS website views decreased in November 2021, but increased in December 2021.
- The BoT received the Georgia Libraries FY23 MRR Grant List highlighting the state contribution of funds for Georgia library systems. ARCPLS will receive \$300,000 – 50/50 split. \$150,000 from Richmond County, and \$150,000 from the state.
- ARCPLS committees continue to work on the following manuals: Flood Plan, Blue Book, Technology Plan, and Fiscal Officer Procedures Manual.
- Currently, there are 54 staff including 35 full time and 19 part time. Two (2) full time library assistants and one (1) student assistant have been hired. ARCPLS has three (3) temporary employees and two (2) Legacy Link employees.
- ARCPLS is nearing completion of the full FY 2021 financial audit. Ms. Fashion will notify Ms. Marknya the audit must be completed no later than February 25, 2022. The report must be submitted to GPLS Director of Finance in mid-March 2022.
- ARCPLS continues to work on the Strategic Plan Initiative for 2022-2027. Committees have met to plan for initiatives 2, 3, and 4; and meetings for initiatives 5-8 are in the coming weeks. Initiative 1 concerns the ARCPLS Board of Trustees.
- ARCPLS received two (2) certificates of recognition for participating in the monthly facility safety inspections and the annual safety training.

C. Friends of the Library Report:

Mr. Leon Maben (President) reported the following:

- FOAL continues to conduct its monthly meetings in-person.
- The bookstore is open every Wednesday, and other days when a volunteer is available.
- FOAL donated \$4000.00 to the ARCPLS Summer Reading Program.
- FOAL donated \$5000.00 towards to technology portion of the bookmobile.
- A book sale is planned for Spring 2022.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Incident Reports for Mid-January 2022-Early February – Ms. Fashion discussed the incident reports of the dates listed.
- B. Update on Appleby Branch Renovations – Mr. Kigwana Cherry and Ms. Fashion had a meeting with Central Services on Thursday, February 3rd. Moving forward, Mr. Cherry will be involved in all ARCPLS renovation projects. Mr. Cherry stated that ARCPLS should stay on track regarding upcoming library renovation. Central Services is working on a new bid packet for Appleby Branch Library. No real deadline has been set to complete the Request for Proposal (RFP.) Moving forward ARCPLS will focus on completing the ADA compliant items: elevator, restrooms, and relocating the public service desk. A new RFP will have to be written. Total MMR balance is \$413,770.38 but includes Friedman Branch and Wallace Branch.
- C. Update on Friedman Branch Library Renovations – Ms. Fashion spoke with Friedman Manager Paulette Scurry, and the punch list has not been completed. Ms. Fashion will send an email to Central Services to have workers come out and finish. The staff lounge is not complete, still waiting on quotes from Central Services for cabinets. The circulation and workstation will ship February 24, 2022. While Ms. Fashion was at Friedman (12:30 pm – 2:00 pm.), she noticed there was only one patron in the library, and when she left it was the same. Ms. Fashion is concerned that patrons are not aware of Friedman’s reopening. Staff is working on putting out more signs, posting reopening information on all social media platforms.
- D. Update on Wallace Branch Repairs – Quitech Solutions from Lithonia, Georgia completed the LVT flooring in both the atrium and meeting room. The project took three (3) days to complete.
- E. Reopening Committee Recommendations for Operational Hours – The reopening committee requests the branches (Friedman, Diamond Lakes, and Maxwell) close one hour earlier on the nights they are currently open to 7:00 pm. Due to low patronage from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm, the committee requests the BoT allow the branches to close at 6:00 pm. The committee also requests Headquarters Saturday hours change to 11:00 – 3:00 for the same reason. Ms. Reeves asked if the low numbers began during the pandemic, and Ms. Fashion replied yes, and went on to say that patronage has not returned to our pre-COVID numbers. Ms. Reeves suggested that library number may increase as we move into summer, with school letting out and daylight savings time. Mr. Porter asked if the BoT could get an analysis of pre-COVID numbers for past summers. Ms. Fashion agreed to send him the circulation reports for each branch location back to 2020.

Ms. Tarver moved to accept the committee’s recommendation to adjust hours through May 2022, then reassess. She commented during her time on the Board, she’s seen the library landscape change because of the pandemic, and given increased access to digital resources. She’s not sure if libraries will ever return to pre-Covid status. The motion to accept the reopening committee’s recommendation to close Friedman, Diamond Lakes, and Maxwell an hour early as well as change all branches Saturday hours to 11:00 am-3:00 pm was seconded and carried.

The BoT further discussed how Covid-19 has changed the landscape not only for ARCPLS, but for library systems throughout Georgia. Covid-19 has prompted more patrons to explore electronic resources, and to take advantage of curbside service. Mr. Mulliens commented on our increased circulation numbers, and suggested the Library Director and BoT speak with local news media on getting the word out about coming to the library. Ms. Fashion stated that the GPLS Marketing Grant ARCPLS recently received will be used to promote the library,

and our resources to hopefully increase usage. This is included in our strategic plan. Ms. Fashion also stated it's up to library staff to inform patrons about library resources, programs, and events. Ms. Reeves is concerned that being solely dependent on electronic resources will have a negative effect on patrons coming back into the library. Ms. Fashion stated there will always be those who choose to use the library, especially the "older generation." The hours will be reevaluated in May 2022 at the board meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Approval of the Library Assistant Director Operation and Procedure Manual – It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve the Library Assistant Director Operation and Procedure Manual.
- B. Approval of the Public Relations Manual – It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve the Public Relations Manual.
- C. Approval of the ARCPLS ADPe Time Library Time Keeping Standard Operating Policy – Ms. Fashion revised the ADPeTime Policy to prohibit library staff from clocking in and/or out on any computer or device not within Headquarters or one of the branches Virtual Private Network (VPN). It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve the ARCPLS ADPe Library Time Keeping Standard Operating Policy.
- D. Old ARCPLS Invoices and Other Documents 2005 and Earlier – Ms. Fashion will begin evaluating ARCPLS invoices and documents prior to 2005, back to the 1960s for disposal. She will work with Tina Monaco, Historian of the Georgia Heritage Room on retaining materials for the library archives pertinent to the institutional history of the library system. Ms. Fashion will schedule a shedding company to come and dispose of the materials. Ms. Tarver moved to grant permission for ARCPLS to appropriately dispose of documents from 2005 and earlier at the discretion of library staff. The motion was seconded, and carried.
- E. Inclement Weather for Library Closure – Essential vs. Non-Essential – Mr. Mulliens discussed an incident that occurred over the winter when hazardous weather impacted the CSRA, prompting the Library Director to request the board's approval to close the library and send staff home. Mr. Mulliens was concerned that any delay in response from the BoT could put staff in jeopardy thereby creating a potential liability for ARCPLS. Ms. Tarver recommended that when Richmond County closes due to inclement weather, ARCPLS should follow suit. She does not want ARCPLS to become the de-facto drop off point for parents whose children are sent home from school, which would put additional strain on library staff.

It was moved, seconded, and carried to leave it to the discretion of the Library Director when to close the library due to inclement weather. Ms. Fashion will base her decision on what Richmond County does, and then inform the BoT of her decision. It was also stated that library staff are not essential workers.

It was moved, seconded, and carried to move the BoT meeting into closed session at 5:44 pm to discuss a personnel matter. The closed session ended at 5:59 pm. It was moved, seconded and carried to reopen the board meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Staff members and the BoT discussed the integral role programming plays in increasing library usage; the need for better communication between library departments to promote library resources, programming and events; and reaching beyond social media to advertise and promote library programs and events.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.