

Augusta-Richmond County Public Library System
Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
Monday, April 18, 2022

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Augusta-Richmond County Public Library System (ARCPLS) Board of Trustees (BoT) was called to order at 4:37 pm by Board President, Mr. Christopher Mulliens.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Christopher Mulliens, President; Roy Jones, Vice President; Brenda Garman; Beatrice F. Green; Kigwana Cherry; Anna Reeves; Lillie Hamilton. Members absent: Kimberly Brown (excused); Morris T. Porter (excused); Beverly M. Tarver (excused); Kenneth L. Johnson; Cher Best. Ex-Officio members present: Mashell Fashion, Library Director; Leon Maben, Friends of the Augusta Library (FOAL) 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 the Monday, March 21, 2022 BoT regular meeting.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Mr. Abraham Kenmore – Georgia statewide reporter for Gannett Newspapers (*Athens Banner Herald, Savannah Morning News, and the Augusta Chronicle*):

Mr. Kenmore proposes, on behalf of the *Augusta Chronicle*, to set up a public newsroom at Headquarters Library. The goal is to address a history of ignoring marginalized communities in the newspaper's reportage. The *Chronicle* hopes that giving reporters a public space where anyone can stop by to ask questions about the journalist's work, and share ideas for stories, as well as give feedback, will be a step towards righting the newspaper's past of biased reporting.

Mr. Kenmore would like to set up a public newsroom once a week at Headquarters in one of the second-floor study rooms, preferably in the afternoon. He will provide a sign for the door that indicates the space is a public newsroom for the *Augusta Chronicle* and invite people in. The details of the arrangement are in a letter Mr. Kenmore wrote to the BoT that was included in the Board packet.

Ms. Garman asked how the public newsroom would be advertised. Mr. Kenmore stated the *Augusta Chronicle* would inform the public through the newspaper, and on social media. Mr. Kenmore clarified his schedule is flexible and would work with library staff to determine the best time to open the newsroom. He was hoping once a week for four (4) hours.

Ms. Shell Berry – President/CEO of the Community Foundation for the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA):

Ms. Berry provided the BoT with Augusta Library Fund statements for 1/1/2021 through 12/31/2021, and 1/1/2022 through 3/31/2022; as well as Time Weighted Performance Summaries (bar charts) as of December 31, 2021, and March 31, 2022.

Ms. Berry was present to update and answers any questions the BoT might have on the two (2) funds (Augusta Library Fund and Augusta Library Capital Fund) ARCPLS holds with the Community Foundation.

Ms. Berry explained the purpose of the Community Foundation and described ARCPLS as a trusted partner working together for fourteen (14) plus years. She focused on the Foundation's literacy initiative with Lamar Milledge Elementary, and supporting ARCPLS from a grant making and partnership standpoint.

The Community Foundation is a large community endowment, raising funds which are invested and grown on behalf of the community at large and includes about \$158 million in total assets. Approximately \$40 million of the assets are organizational funds of which is ARCPLS participates. This includes the Augusta Library Fund (\$175,745.18) which is invested in the Community Foundation balance pool.

Ms. Berry referenced the two (2) Bar Charts (December 31, 2021 and March 31, 2022) which are indicative of the entire balance pool. According to the December 31, 2021 report, the net of investment management fees returned 13.4% and annually over the last three (3) years have returned on average 14%, and annually over the last five (5) years have returned an average of 10%.

As of March 31, Community Foundation funds have been negative quarter to date due to a first quarter market downturn, but over the last (3) three years the Community Foundation is still averaging 9% Net of Fees and over the last five (5) years 8.1% Net of Fees. Ms. Berry assured the BoT the Community Foundation is still meeting a very aggressive bar in terms of returns of the portfolio, and expects the negative to reverse itself sometime before the end of 2022. According to Ms. Berry, the Community Foundation is well balanced and protected against market fluctuations. They have adjusted some of their assets in anticipation of inflation. The Community Foundation charges an administration fee based on our Library Fund, and at \$175,745.18 the fee is 1%. That fee goes down the more money the library has invested in the Foundation.

The Augusta Library Capital Fund of \$118,098.37 was raised during the construction of the Headquarters Library, and is invested in a short-term bond fund, which functions a little bit better than a money market. Normally, they would not recommend this fund unless ARCPLS needed access to the money within 90 days. Ms. Berry recommended moving the \$118,098.37 to the balance pool so there can be a return on those dollars, as the bond market has remained flat. The bond fund is less expensive but relative to the return of the balance pool, the bond fund is losing money. Both funds can be kept separate or combined to lower the administration fee.

The BoT asked for clarification regarding administrative fees if the \$118,098.37 is moved to the balance pool. Ms. Berry stated the short-term bond fee is a half of a percent, and the balance pool is one (1) percent so there would be fifty (50) basis points increase in fee annually. Right now, the Library is getting next to no return with the short-term bond and we're averaging 9% to 10% in the balance pool. We'll more than pay for that half percent increase in fees.

Ms. Reeves asked what grants ARCPLS has access to through the Community Foundation. Ms. Berry explained that ARCPLS can apply to any grant that the Foundation hosts. Other local funding organizations (Women in Philanthropy, St. Joseph's Foundation, etc.) offer grant opportunities through the Community Foundation as well. Donors can also donate to the ARCPLS fund through the Community Foundation.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The State and Local Treasurer's Reports and the following March 2022 banking statements were provided to the Trustees: Wells Fargo, South State Bank, and the Community Foundation funds.

Ms. Fashion referred the BoT to the Local and State Treasurer's Reports. She reiterated the state funds must be spent in total by June 2022. On the Local Report, March 2022 expenditures were \$233,378.08. Under the General Fund Revenue item #45 Library Receipts, ARCPLS collected \$9,088.50. Under the BALANCE column, ARCPLS has \$509,169.93 to last through April, May, and June 2022. Under Federal Grants on the second page, item #48 (Association of Science Technology Centers); item #49 (APRA Tech/ARPA Relief Grant); item #50 (Digital Inclusion Grant Bookmobile), Ms. Fashion stated all of these items must be paid for and then ARCPLS is reimbursed. The \$90,392.50 is the first installment of the bookmobile, and in September another \$90,000 will have to be paid. Once the bookmobile is delivered, the money will be reimbursed.

Ms. Fashion discussed the Bankers Life brokerage account, both the Community Foundation Library Fund and Library Capital Fund, and how to best manage these accounts in terms of return on investments. She discussed the Young Men's Library Association (YMLA) brokerage account. Moving forward, she said the BoT will have to decide how to best manage these accounts in terms of return on investments.

Ms. Fashion recommends all donations with no stipulations be put in the YMLA brokerage account, as it consistently makes money. Currently, donations with any stipulations are deposited in the ARCPLS savings account. These donations can be moved to the YMLA brokerage account. The BoT discussed closing the Community Foundation Library Fund account and moving it to the brokerage account. Ms. Fashion and Mr. Mulliens suggested forming a financial team or hiring financial consultants to guide the BoT with future financial decisions.

REPORTS

President's Report

Mr. Mulliens thanked the BoT for supporting him during his tenure as Board President, and offered his support for new BoT President Ms. Anna Reeves.

Mr. Mulliens discussed the Library's possible partnership with the Richmond County Board of Education. A meeting has been arranged with Dr. Bradshaw and Dr. Hillman, Ms. Fashion, Ms. Erin Prentiss, Ms. Reeves, and Mr. Mulliens to discuss the partnership. Ms. Prentiss is drafting a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be signed by both parties.

Director's Report

Ms. Fashion reported the following:

ARCPLS owes Augusta-Richmond County \$1,200,000 plus for salaries. The next payment will be made Tuesday, April 19th in the amount of \$61,122.27.

The BoT received an updated list of the Augusta-Richmond County Public Library System Board of Trustees which will change, as four BoT members' terms are expiring, including Ms. Cher Best, Ms. Beatrice Greene, Mr. Roy Jones, and Ms. Lillie Hamilton. They will remain on the Board until their respective commissioners appoint replacements.

The BoT received a copy of the ARCPLS quarterly publication, *Pages* for April, May, and June 2022.

ARCPLS completed the Community Foundation Grant for \$6,500. If awarded, the grant will fund the continued partnership with the Harrisburg community and Lamar Milledge Elementary.

Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS) awarded ARCPLS \$24,939.16 to be spent by June 30, 2022. The Library will purchase four (4) Dell PowerEdge servers, two (2) HP LaserJet printers, and nine (9) desk top computers.

Ms. Fashion received notification from Matthews Specialty Vehicles on April 4, 2022 they are waiting for the complete set of engineer drawings for the bookmobile. They will create a bill of materials for the parts and pieces needed to perform the upfit/conversion. The library is expecting to receive updates every 28 to 30 days.

ARCPLS circulation, computer and Wi-Fi usage continue to gradually increase.

Staff members are working on the following ARCPLS policy and procedure manuals: Flood Plan, Technology Plan, and Fiscal Officer Procedures Manual. The Blue Book should be completed in May, and will be made available to the BoT.

Currently, there are 54 library employees (35 full-time and 19 part-time). Ms. Fashion received one part-time staff resignation. The following positions have been advertised: Library Assistant II-Technology; Public Relations Assistant, and Library Director. Student positions need to be filled at Diamond Lakes, Maxwell and Wallace Branches.

The Administration Department will begin gathering documents to shred in the next few weeks.

ARCPLS will receive \$45,000 in Capital Outlay for building renovations in 2022 from Richmond County Government.

Parker Extermination increased its monthly fees from \$85 to \$95.

ARCPLS received a MOU from GPLS for \$150,000 for FY2023.

The Appleby Library Concert Series will begin in June 2022. The event will be in-person this year, with a total of four (4) concerts scheduled.

The Director's meeting will be in Athens, Georgia on May 4 – 6, 2022. The meeting is both in-person and virtual. Ms. Fashion will attend virtual. This will be her last Director's meeting.

Committee Reports

A. Personnel Committee

Mr. Mulliens stated the Committee met on Wednesday, April 13th and will meet again on Tuesday, April 19th at 6:30 pm. Eight (8) candidates were referred for the ARCPLS Director's position. The Committee will choose four (4) to interview. The interview dates TBA. The meeting will go into closed session following Public Comment to discuss the Interim Director position. The Personnel Committee will repost the position if they do not find a qualified candidate among the first pool of applicants.

Mr. Maben asked if Ms. Fashion will have time to train the new Library Director before she retires. Ms. Fashion said given the time frame of her retirement on June 30th, it's unlikely the new Library Director will be hired in time. She stated she would have to return to assist the new Library Director. According to GPLS, Ms. Fashion will have to wait thirty (30) days before being reinstated as a consultant/advisor. She is willing to return if the BoT chooses. Ms. Fashion said the new Library Director will have access to the Director's and Assistant Director's manuals, as well as other library policies and procedures to guide him/her until Ms. Fashion is eligible to return after thirty (30) days. Ms. Fashion believes it will take two (2) years for the new Library Director to learn the position, and become comfortable with county and state procedures.

Mr. Mulliens reminded the BoT of the virtual meeting on Wednesday, April 27th at 10:30 am with Ms. Tanikia Jackson, Deputy Administrator with Augusta-Richmond County Finance Department.

Friends of the Augusta Library (FOAL) Report

Mr. Leon Maben, FOAL President reported the following:

The Friends book sale is scheduled for April 22 (9:00 am – 5:00 pm) and 23, 2022 (10:00 am – 3:00 pm) in the HQ's auditorium. Mr. Maben thanked Dennis and Brenda Garman for all the work they're doing to accomplish the book sale. The FOAL book store is currently open Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, and sometimes on Tuesday depending on volunteers' schedules. Mr. Maben thanked the BoT for their support.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Incident Reports from Mid-March 2022 – Early April 2022

The incident reports involved theft of library materials, a staff member who fell at the book return, burglar alarm went off at Diamond Lakes Community Center, inappropriate behavior of library patron towards a minor on the grounds of Immaculate Conception. The person responsible for stealing library materials was banned for six (6) months and served a letter informing him of the ban.

B. Update on the Appleby Branch Renovations

Ms. Fashion invited the BoT to participate in the Pre-Bid Conference on Monday, April 25, 2022 at 10:00 am via Zoom. Sealed bids are due Monday, May 16, 2022 at 3:00 pm. Total estimate for renovations is \$376,625.00.

C. Update on the Friedman Branch Renovations

Three quotes have been received for the replacement of the cabinet of which the lowest bid was from Carter Home Improvement. The prices received ranged from the highest (\$13,000) to lowest (\$3800) for the same work. The public computers are up and running. Ongoing issues with the furniture continues.

D. Update of the Wallace Branch Repairs

Painting both inside and outside is complete. Ms. Fashion requested LED lighting both inside and out. Staff restroom needs updating including new ceiling tile.

E. Strategic Plan 2022-2027 Update

Moving forward, committees continue to meet. Ms. Fashion included the various committees' minutes in the BoT packet. The only committee that has not met is Strategic Initiative #1 which involves the BoT.

F. ARCPLS Constitution and Bylaw

The BoT and Ms. Fashion discussed the possibility of placing former library employees on the Augusta-Richmond County Public Library System Board of Trustees after two years of separation from the library system. Ms. Fashion stated that a former Library Director who served on the BoT in 2012-2013 was removed, but the minutes from the BoT meeting addressing his removal cannot be located. Neither the By-Laws nor the Constitution for the Augusta-Richmond County Public Library System stipulate whether a former library employee can serve on the BoT.

The BoT discussed in what capacity a former library employee would serve on the BoT, whether the position would be ad-hoc, ex-officio, appointment by the Richmond County Commission, etc. They also discussed the service term. It was moved, seconded, and carried to add the following statement to the Constitution of Augusta-Richmond County Public Library System, ARTICLE III GOVERNING BODY, Section 2 Membership and Appointment: "After being separated from ARCPLS for a minimum of two (2) years, former ARCPLS employees are eligible to serve on the Augusta-Richmond County Public Library System Board of Trustees." No decision was made on the voting status of the former library employee who served on the board.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Approval of Fiscal Year Budget for 2023
This is a proposed budget for 2023. ARCPLS is asking for an additional \$300,000 from Richmond County. The BoT moved, seconded, and carried to approve the Fiscal Year Budget for 2023.
- B. Approval of Library Director's FY 2022 Salary-Amended Budget
Amended to reflect the raises to state paid employees. The BoT moved, seconded, and carried to approve the FY Salary-Amended Budget. Mr. Mulliens discussed the Library Director's salary and the BoT's authority to determine up to 5% changes in that salary.
- C. Appleby Garden Contracts for Performers
The BoT moved, seconded, and carried to approve the Appleby Gardens Contracts for Performers.
- D. Carver Audio Quote for Sound System for Appleby Concert Series
The BoT moved, seconded, and carried to approve Carver Audio as sound engineers for the Appleby Concert Series.
- E. Appleby Public Library Gardens Rental Policies and Procedures (2011-2012)
This was provided to the BoT as information. It prohibits the public from renting Appleby Library for private events.
- F. Approval of Abraham Kenmore as "Reporter in Residence"
Ms. Garman asked if Mr. Kenmore's presence in the second-floor study rooms would conflict with patron usage. Ms. Fashion replied that it would not but if it became an issue, Mr. Kenmore could be moved to another area of the library. It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve Mr. Abraham Kenmore as "Reporter in Residence" from 1:00 – 5:00 once a week.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Library employee, Alison Cawley asked Mr. Mulliens to discuss the PINES e-card with the Richmond County Board of Education. Ms. Cawley explained the advantages of the e-card to public school students which include having access to the library's digital resources such as eRead Kids, Mango Languages, Learning Express, and much more. The e-card is available to all Georgia residents regardless of whether they owe library fines.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Mulliens requested a closed session to discuss a personnel matter. It was moved by Ms. Garman and seconded by Mr. Jones to enter into the executive session at 6:30pm. The motion passed. All visitors left the room. Mr. Mulliens asked the Library Director to remain in the room. The session was held and then it ended. It was moved by Ms. Garman and seconded by Mr. Jones to close out the executive session. The motion passed. The executive session ended at 6:47pm

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved, seconded, and carried to adjourn at 6:48pm.

Recorded by Kristina Monaco.