

Augusta-Richmond County Public Library System
Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
Monday, May 16, 2022

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Augusta-Richmond County Public Library System (ARCPLS) Board of Trustees (BoT) was called to order at 4:36 pm by Board President, Ms. Anna Reeves.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Anna Reeves, Board President; Morris T. Porter, Vice President; Brenda Garman, Treasurer; Beatrice F. Green; Kigwana Cherry; Lillie Hamilton; Kimberly Brown; Cher Best; Christopher Mulliens; Roy Jones. Members absent: Beverly M. Tarver (excused); Kenneth L. Johnson. Ex-Officio members present: Commissioner Catherine S. McKnight; Mashell Fashion, Library Director. Ex-Officio members absent: Leon Maben, Friends of the Augusta Library (FOAL), (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, April 18, 2022 BoT regular meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Ms. Fashion discussed the Local and State Treasurer's Reports. State funds have to be spent by the end of June 2022. She pointed out line item #7 (MMR GRANT Renovations) on the State Report and said most renovations have to be paid upfront, and then ARCPLS is reimbursed. The state budget was amended. The ending balances on the State Report must be zeroed out by the end of June 2022.

Ms. Fashion referred to the Local Treasurer's Report and pointed out line item #31 (Salary); line item #37 (TRS); line item #41 (Utilities); and line item #43 (Wages part-time). Ms. Fashion indicated these to be the highest library expenditures. Library spending was down during the month of April (\$187,537.19). ARCPLS has \$321,632.72 remaining until the end of the fiscal year. Ms. Fashion has curtailed spending. She referred to page 2 of the Local Treasurer's Report, indicating monies received. Banking statements (South State, Wells Fargo, and Community Foundation) were reviewed. ARCPLS currently owes Richmond County \$1,125,741.03.

Ms. Fashion included the Community Foundation Annual Report in the BoT packet for review.

REPORTS

President's Report

Ms. Reeves reported the following:

Toured the FOAL bookstore and promoted the April 22nd and 23rd book sale on social media as well as on other community outlets.

Requested a meeting with immediate past BoT President Mr. Christopher Mulliens to review his year and gain some understanding of projects and other initiatives the BoT can continue to build on. A date has not been set for that meeting.

On April 27th, met with Mr. Scott to begin the transfer of YMLA funds to the BoT. Mr. Scott hopes the funds are used to set up an endowment. Ms. Reeves continued the signatory process with Ms. Fashion, Mr. Porter, and Ms. Garman at Wells Fargo, and signed the documents for Wells Fargo.

Attended the meeting on April 27th at the Richmond County Finance Department.

On April 27th, spoke with Commissioner McKnight about meeting with a small group of Richmond County commissioners (Jordan Johnson, Brandon Garrett, and Dennis Williams) to prepare for a meeting before the full commission to request ARCPLS debt forgiveness as well as a percentage fund increase for operations or any other items the BoT deems necessary.

Ms. Tarver agreed to chair a committee to investigate further actions on the YMLA funds and Community Foundation funds, then present recommendations to the BoT. Mr. Cherry also agreed to a part of the committee.

Emailed Mr. Mulliens to ask if he would chair a committee focused on a partnership between ARCPLS and the Richmond County Board of Education. He declined.

Mr. Porter was asked to co-chair the committee to work on Initiative 1 of the ARCPLS Strategic Plan. He has agreed.

Committees will be asked to submit a written report at the beginning of the month so it can be included in the BoT packet to be reviewed prior to the board meeting.

Spoke to Mr. Maben and asked him to submit a written monthly report on the FOAL, to include membership tallies as well as anything the Friends are currently working on, and plan to work on in the future. The BoT will assist in promoting and supporting as soon as possible and if the BoT has any questions they will be addressed at the board meeting.

On April 29th, visited the Wallace Library for the first time and had a nice experience.

Continued to work on the personnel committee under the direction of Mr. Mulliens for the employment of the new library director.

Plans to further promote ARCPLS activities and solicit sponsorship and community support for ARCPLS planned activities.

Requested all BoT members be aware of activities and thoroughly review board packets prior to meetings so BoT can have meaningful and productive meetings.

Asked all board members who have a social media presence to consider sharing library related items and events.

Rescinded appointment to YMLA, as she is now BoT President, and asks another board member to take her place.

Asked the board members to please be on time for the board meetings, but if anyone is going to be late or absent to please notify Ms. Fashion as soon as possible. She would like the meetings to begin, and end in a timely manner. She reminded the board members that they must have at least seven (7) members present to have a quorum. She urged board members to be active in promoting the library to the local community, and participating in library programs and events.

Discussed the upcoming BoT retreat in September and provided a survey for BoT with questions concerning time and place of board retreat.

Director's Report

Ms. Fashion reported the following:

Per Ms. Anna Reeves' request, Ms. Fashion included in the board packet a page listing the duties and responsibilities of a library board vs. library director taken from Virginia F. Young, *The Library Trustee: A Practical Guide, 5th ed.* American Library Association, 1995. Board manuals are available for any BoT members who need one.

ARCPLS completed the Community Foundation Grant for \$6,500. The grant will continue the library partnership with the Harrisburg community and Lamar Milledge Elementary for 2022-2023. ARCPLS was awarded \$6,000.

The board was provided with a report detailing the activities of the ARCPLS poet-in-residence, James Aaron Snow.

ARCPLS circulation has increased (3529) from last year, as well as computer usage (1099), Wi-Fi (401), and Website hits (1967). Overall year to date total is 45,066.

The library completed a spreadsheet with proposed budget for the Communities for Immunity Grant. ARCPLS was awarded \$55,569.38, and spent \$48,976.01. The library received 60% of the total and will receive the balance soon.

Staff continues to work on the following library policy and procedures manuals: Technology Plan, Patron Behavior Policy, Blue Book Part II, and Fiscal Officer Procedures Manual. The Blue Book, Part I and Flood Plan (FERP) manuals for Headquarters are complete.

There are fifty-two (52) staff members (33 full-time and 19 part-time). Ms. Fashion received one (1) full-time resignation. She has interviewed for the Public Relations Assistant position and for four (4) student positions. Interviews are scheduled for the Library Assistant II – Technology position on May 18th.

Ms. Fashion is shredding documents prior to 2005, and has scheduled a shred truck for Friday, June 3, 2022.

The Director's meeting was held in Athens, Georgia. Ms. Fashion attended virtually. Topics covered: Cybersecurity, Internal Controls, E-Rates, LSTA Funding, and GALILEO update.

Ms. Fashion will attend a Department Head meeting with Richmond County on June 8, 2022 from 3:00 – 4:00 pm at the Municipal Building.

The Appleby Concert Series will be in-person beginning in June 2022. The dates are: June 7 – Matthew Whittington, Guitarist; June 14 – Andy Reid, Pianist; June 21 – Doug Flowers Band; June 28 – JaVonne Jones, Electric Guitar.

Ms. Fashion is training the Interim Director, Fiscal Officer, and Data Assistant on administrative duties and responsibilities in the hope of a smooth transition for the new Library Director.

Friends of the Augusta Library Report

Due to Mr. Leon Maben's absence, Mr. Garman reported the following:

FOAL made \$660.50 during its April book sale. There are two (2) more book sales scheduled for 2022, one the weekend of August 5th and 6th, then November 4th and 5th.

The FOAL book store is open Tuesday – Friday, and additional days when volunteers are available.

Ms. Reeves asked the time of the FOAL monthly meeting. Ms. Garman stated they are the fourth Monday of the month at 5:00 pm. Ms. Reeves encouraged the board members to please join the Friends, and attend meeting if they can, as they are a funding organization of the library.

Ms. Best asked if there was a board campaign to encourage the public to join the Friends. Ms. Reeves hoped this would become a board priority. Ms. Garman said the Friends are working to find a computer savvy member who will take control of the membership drive by reaching out to the public through social media and the ARCPLS website.

Other than the book sales, Ms. Best asked, how does FOAL support the library. Ms. Garman responded that FOAL provides financial support for library programming (Summer Reading Program, Appleby Concert Series, etc.) Book sales, as well as membership fees generate money. Any sponsorship money paid to the library goes through the Friends. Ms. Best asked if there was a sponsorship package for the Appleby Concert Series, and Ms. Fashion said she would send her the information.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Incident Reports from Mid-April – May

Ms. Fashion discussed the incident reports for this month including accounts of theft of library materials, staff injury, patron illness, and library power outage. Ms. Fashion discussed updated the ARCPLS patron banning policy to prevent any liability of the library's part.

B. Update on Appleby Branch Library Renovations

The deadline for sealed bids was extended to Monday, May 23, 2022 at 3:00 pm. Only one company has applied. Total estimate for renovations is \$376,625.00.

C. Update on Friedman Branch Library Renovations

The cabinets were installed on Friday, May 13th. Damaged furniture will have to be replaced by the manufacturer for a second time. Augusta Office Solution is waiting on legs for tables in the children's department.

D. Update on Wallace Branch Library Renovations

Ms. Fashion is working with the branch manager to complete a punch list for repairs to submit to Central Services. Approximately \$13,000 remaining for upgrades. Ms. Fashion requested an extension of MMR funds from GPLS for Friedman, Appleby and Wallace.

E. Strategic Plan 2022 -2027 Update

The board received meeting notes for the Strategic Plan committees #3 and #8. Ms. Fashion discussed Initiative #8 (Maintain and Improve Information Technology and Cyber Security) and the "phishing" email and practice course sent out by ARCPLS IT Specialist Ben Dudley to inform and educate library staff about cyber security.

Ms. Fashion discussed the Small Business Mixer which the library hosted on Saturday, May 14, 2022 from 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm. Participants suggested the next event be scheduled during the week as Saturday is inconvenient. Mr. Mulliens and Ms. Reeves were in attendance for this event. The plan is to have similar events every four to six months. Hopefully this will lead to library partnerships. There were about 20 participants, 3 vendor tables, and staff present for the event.

Ms. Reeves urged the BoT to attend library events, but when they could not to please support and promote these events via social media and email.

F. ARCPLS Constitution and Bylaws

Ms. Reeves notified the BoT that changes made during the April 18, 2022 board meeting to the ARCPLS Constitution (ARTICLE III GOVERNING AUTHORITY Section 2. Membership and Appointment), i. e. the appointment of former library staff to the ARCPLS Board of Trustees were made in violation of ARTICLE VII AMENDMENTS of the same Constitution, which states:

“Any Board member may request an amendment to this Constitution. This Constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Board with two-thirds (2/3) majority approval, provided that the proposed amendment is made in writing to the members at least 10 days prior to the meeting, and provided that a quorum is present. All amendments to the Constitution will be filed with the Georgia Public Library Service immediately upon adoption.”

Mr. Mulliens provided a statement in writing, proposing to amend ARTICLE III GOVERNING AUTHORITY Section 2 of the ARCPLS Constitution. The board motioned, seconded, and approved the amendment to state:

“The Augusta-Richmond County Public Library System Constitution/Bylaws states: Former Augusta-Richmond County Public Library (ARCPLS) staff members will be allowed to serve as an ARCPLS board member should this staff member be appointed by a Richmond County Commissioner. The former employee may become eligible to serve on the board of trustees two (2) years after separation from the library system.”

G. ARCPLS Operational Hours

Ms. Fashion reminded the board of the changes made to Saturday hours during the February 2022 board meeting. The hours were changed to 11:00 am – 3:00 pm. During that meeting it was decided that the changed hours would be reevaluated in during the May 2022 board meeting.

Ms. Fashion discussed the recommendations made by the Re-opening Committee regarding Saturday hours. Most committee members suggest keeping the current 11:00 – 3:00. The reduced hours does not allow enough time for the public to access the library, and complaints were received from patrons about the reduced hours. Ms. Fashion recommended the BoT to make the changes to the Saturday hours permanent.

Ms. Reeves received complaints regarding library hours.

HQ and Appleby are the busiest with Maxwell and Friedman coming in second and third. Diamond Lakes and Wallace are in the last two slots. She discussed the schedules of those employees who work on a Saturday, a Sunday shift, and explaining the work schedule.

If the library continues to cut hours, then jobs will be next, or staff will be furloughed. Mr. Cherry requested the board review library usage by the hour, when the patrons are coming in, not overall statistic for the month.

Further discussion addressed visiting the branches to determine peak times, whether morning or afternoons are busier. Ms. Fashion recommendation is to extend library hours on Saturdays in the hope it increases library patronage.

Ms. Best motioned that the library hours be adjusted to 10:00 am to 4:00 pm on Saturdays. It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve to adjust the Saturday morning effective June 11, 2022.

Ms. Reeves referred to the survey she’s asked board members to complete, and discussed the necessity of board members to visit branches, get to know managers, familiarize themselves with library programming.

Ms. Best asked Ms. Fashion to have Ms. Erin Prentiss send her the new library hours and she would run copy prior to June 11th.

NEW BUSINESS

A. New Signer for the YMLA Account

The YMLA was officially turned over to the BoT from Mr. David Scott. Ms. Reeves was appointed as a signer prior to being elected BoT President, but asks the BoT to select another signer. Ms. Garman suggested they wait until Ms. Tarver has done more research into the account before they select another signer.

B. Remove Former Key Executives from the Wells Fargo Account

It was moved, seconded, and carried to remove the names of a former BoT Board President and former BoT Treasurer from the Wells Fargo Account.

C. Approval of Amended Fiscal Year Budget for 2023

Ms. Fashion amended the budget for the GPLS for State Grants. She requested additional funds of \$300,000 from the Richmond County Commission for a total amount of \$2,937,100.00. The Library Director will likely have to amend the 2023 budget in November 2022 to reflect exactly what ARCPLS receives from Richmond County Commission. It was moved, seconded, and carried to amend the 2023 Fiscal Year Budget.

D. Library Organizational Chart

Ms. Fashion changed the ARCPLS Organizational Chart to reflect the current library positions. It was moved, seconded, and carried to accept the Library Organizational Chart.

E. Patron Behavior and Banning Policies

Ms. Fashion contacted library attorney, Mr. Steve Sanders regarding the ARCPLS Patron Behavior and Banning Policy. He made recommendations for changes to our current policy to avoid ARCPLS liability when banning patrons for violations of the ARCPLS Patron Behavior Policy.

F. FY2022 Lib Tech and MRR Grants Sub-grantee Agreement

This MRR Grant (\$174,939.16) will allow the library to purchase computers, and must be spend by the end of May 2023. Mr. Mulliens asked if the funds can be used toward Maxwell Branch renovations. Ms. Fashion replied that the funds will be spend on computers for HQs and other locations. This was accepted as information.

G. Approval of the ARCPLS Blue Book – Part I

Ms. Fashion recommended the board review the Blue Book once a year. Part II will include ARCPLS policies. It was moved, seconded, and carried to accept Part I of the ARCPLS Blue Book.

H. Application for State Aid

It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve the GPLS *FY 2023 Application for State Aid to Public Libraries*.

I. Signature Authority Form

It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve the GPLS *FY2023 Signatory Authority* form.

J. Federal Certifications Form

It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve the GPLS *Certifications Regarding Nondiscrimination; Debarment and Suspension; Drug-Free Workplace; Federal Debt Status; Trafficking in Persons; Lobbying; And Additional Certifications*.

K. ARCPLS Strategic Plan Core Values

It was moved, seconded, and carried to accept ARCPLS Strategic Plan Core Values

L. Letter to the Richmond County Commissioners

The board received a letter written to the Augusta-Richmond County Commission by board member Mr. Christopher Mulliens. The letter was emailed to the Commissioners and addressed problems ARCPLS is having with securing additional funding from the Richmond County. After a phone call with Deputy City Administrator, Ms. Tanikia Jackson, Ms. Reeves spoke with Commissioner Catherine McKnight who suggested the board meet with a select number of Richmond County Commissioners, broken up into two (2) meetings to address these funding concerns.

Ms. Reeves will contact the Richmond County Commissioners to set up meetings.

M. Board Member Attendance and Appointments

Mr. Mulliens addressed the problem with BoT meeting attendance, and the failure of Richmond County Commissioners to appoint new BoT members once terms expire for former board members. It is integral to the smooth functioning of the library.

Ms. Beatrice Green, Ms. Cher Best, and Mr. Roy Jones terms expired in March 2022. Ms. Fashion asked the BoT to please contact her or the board president if they are not able to attend a board meeting so the absence can be marked as excused.

Ms. Fashion also discussed her concerns about library staff, particularly those have not received a cost of living increase.

Mr. Kenneth Johnson Jr's repeated unexcused absences are in violation the Official Code of Georgia 20-5-42 (d): "Board members shall be removed for cause or for failure to attend three consecutive meetings pursuant to the library system's constitution and bylaws or the local constitution and bylaws."

It was motioned, seconded, and carried to remove Mr. Kenneth Johnson, Jr. from the Augusta-Richmond County Public Library Board of Trustees.

Ms. Donna Williams, Director of Richmond County Finance informed Mr. Mulliens that ARCPLS is an outside agency and should handle its own payroll and as an outside agency. She stated ARCPLS does not have to follow Richmond County guidelines when it comes to pay increases and employee wages.

N. Front Landscaping for the Maxwell Branch Library:

The board received two (2) quotes for landscaping at Maxwell Branch (Lumber Jack Landscaping, \$17,726.50 and Between the Edges Lawn Care & Landscaping, Inc., \$10,770.00.) Ms. Fashion mentioned using SPLOST funds to pay for the landscaping. The BoT discussed options for maintaining the landscape at Wallace including creating a memory park, Master Gardener's Extension Program, community garden.)

It was motioned, seconded, and carried to approve the landscaping quote from Between the Edges Lawn Care & Landscaping, Inc. for \$10,770.00.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None at this time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

It was motioned, seconded, and carried to go into closed session at 6:37 pm to discuss a personnel matter. It was motioned, seconded and carried to come out of the closed session at 6:52pm.

The meeting adjourned at 6:52 pm.

Transcribed by Ms. Kristina Monaco