

Augusta-Richmond County Public Library System
Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
Monday, May 15, 2023
4:30 pm

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Augusta-Richmond County Public Library System (ARCPLS) Board of Trustees was called to order at 4:30 pm by Board President, Anna Reeves.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Anna Reeves (President); Morris Porter (Vice President); Brenda Garman (Treasurer); Kimberly Brown (by phone); Kigwana Cherry; Tonia Gibbons; Christine Rhodes. Members absent: Lillie Hamilton (excused); Cher Best (excused); Thomas Gardiner. Ex-officio members present: Leon Maben, Friends of the Augusta Library President; Emanuel Mitchell, Library Director; Tracey Goldman-Busbee, Assistant Director; Tina Monaco, recorder. Ex-officio members absent: Commissioner Bobby Williams.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Two items were added to the agenda: changing board of trustees regular meeting time to 5:30 (item H under New Business) and Notary (item I under New Business)

Ms. Garman moved to approve the agenda with additions to New Business. Mr. Cherry seconded. All voted in favor. The motion carried.

MINUTES

Ms. Garman moved to approve the minutes as written. Mr. Cherry seconded. All voted in favor. The motion carried.

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

New board members Tonia Gibbons and Christine Rhodes introduced themselves. Ms. Gibbons was appointed by Commissioner Francine Scott, representing District 9. Ms. Rhodes was appointed by Commissioner Wayne Guilfoyle, representing District 10.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Alicia R. Markyna of Beddingfield, McCutcheon and Perry presented the FY2022 auditors' report. Ms. Markyna reviewed key points of the audit including a comparison of FY2021 in which total revenue was up. She also pointed out that for FY2023 expenses were down compared to FY2022. Ms. Markyna reviewed Total Assets (cash) compared to Accounts Payable and recommended bringing down the payables so ARCPLS is in a better financial position.

Ms. Markyna stated that salaries and expenses associated with salaries as well as materials spending were the Library's largest expenses, but stressed that FY2023 was a better financial year than 2022. She recommended increasing revenue through events, donations through estates, endowments, and fundraising.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Mitchell reported the following:

As of May 12, 2023, the ARCPLS balance with Richmond County is \$1,335,816.22. A payment of \$90,000 was made on Friday, May 12th as scheduled.

Line 31 on the Local Treasurer's Report shows ARCPLS biggest expense, salaries. Salary payments usually run \$60,000 per pay period but March included two (2) pay periods for a total of \$122,297.04. In April we paid \$90,589.80 in payroll.

Line 43 on the Local Treasurer's Report shows part-time wages, ARCPLS paid \$12,784.20 in April. Dropped because of shortage of custodial staff.

Line 45 Library Receipts (meeting rooms, lost books, fines) budgeted \$20,000 but we've made YTD \$70,182.31. Our receipts for April are \$6,740.08 with two (2) months to go.

REPORTS

A. President's Report: Ms. Reeves announced she is looking forward to the Summer Reading Program kickoff at Brookfield Park and the Appleby Concert Series. She encouraged board members to participate.

B. Director's Report:

- Georgia Department of Human Services benefits kiosk has arrived and is active. ARCPLS is one of ten (10) libraries in the state chosen for the pilot program.
- Mr. Mitchell is having the wrap on the bookmobile addressed.
- Wallace Branch hosted a community health fair the weekend of May 13th.
- Mr. Mitchell is working with Central Services on Maxwell's leaking roof.
- The Richmond County Mayor's Office will issue a Proclamation for the Summer Reading Program during the May 30th commission meeting.

C. Committees

- I. **Accounts:** No updates.
- II. **Personnel Committee (Board Statements):** No updates.

D. Friends of the Augusta Library Report:

- FOAL meetings are every fourth Monday of the month at 5:00 pm.
- The May 5th and 6th book sale raised \$890.00.
- FOAL donated books to the prison library in Milledgeville, Georgia.
- FOAL invites the board to volunteer at the Appleby Concert Series.
- FOAL will help with the SRP kickoff at Brookfield Park on June 3rd.
- There are 38 regular members of FOAL and 106 life members
- The book store is open Monday-Sunday. Check social media for times.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a) **Incident Reports:** Mr. Mitchell reviewed the two (2) incident reports from April 2023, one occurring at Friedman Branch and the other occurred with the book mobile canopy. Both reports were included in the board packet.
- b) **Bookmobile Update:** see above.
- c) **FY2024 Proposed Library Budget:** adjustments have been made. Mr. Mitchell proposed increases in salaries for full time staff, and for library materials. Wallace and Appleby are underfunded in terms of materials. He increased

the utilities budget as well as travel, training budget and membership. Total budget requested, minus state budget increase is 3,278,093.40. The board will have to vote on the budget. Mr. Porter moved to accept the proposed budget for FY 2024. Ms. Gibbons seconded. All voted in favor. The motion carried. The board also voted to accept the increase in state funding to compensate the three ARCPLS state paid positions; Director (\$2500), Assistant Director (\$2500), Senior Librarian/Technical Services (\$2500). Ms. Garman moved to accept the state increase. Mr. Porter seconded. All voted in favor. The motion carried.

- d) **Headquarters Carpet Update:** the first floor is finished; the second floor is in progress.
- e) **Debt to Augusta-Richmond County (Proposal Letter and Commission Update):** Per Richmond County Finance, the debt will be split in half. If approved by Richmond County Commission ARCPLS will make an initial payment of \$325,000 by December 31, 2023. Once payment is made, Richmond County will increase the ARCPLS budget by \$325,000. In FY2024, ARCPLS will make a second payment of \$325,000. Once this is done, the debt will be resolved. Mr. Mitchell stated the debt occurred when ARCPLS moved its headquarters from a 30,000 sq. ft. building at 902 Greene Street to a 95,000 sq. ft. building at 823 Telfair Street. The electric bill went from \$5,000 to \$19,000+ with no budget increase from Richmond County. He will attend the commission meeting on May 23rd to see if the commission decides to forgive the whole debt or half.
- f) **Appleby Concert Series:** Ms. Garman explained the Appleby Concert Series for the new members. The concert series is free to the public and the Friends of the Augusta Library are on site to fundraise for the Library.
- g) **Summer Reading Update:** SRP kickoff is Saturday, June 3rd at Brookfield Park from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. Mr. Mitchell highlighted the upcoming festivities including food vendors, petting zoo, story times, face painting, literacy events, book mobile, water sprinkler. The mayor's office will issue a proclamation for this years SRP.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) **State Healthcare Cost Increase:** Georgia Department of Health will vote on whether to accept the increase in August 2023. Mr. Mitchell shared the increase so the board will be aware. Mr. Mitchell has informed the Richmond County Finance Department of the increase and is included in the proposed increase to the Richmond County budget. If the increase passes it will cost ARCPLS an additional \$60,000 from July 1 – December 31 for FY2023. Mr. Mitchell also detailed the increases each year through 2027 if Georgia votes to increase, including the cost for each full-time employee. He will inform the board as soon as the vote goes through. The vote happens August 17th. ARCPLS pays state health benefits each month.
- b) **State Facility Assessment Update:** Mr. Mitchell reviewed the PowerPoint concerning facility assessments at Wallace, Friedman and Appleby with focus on Appleby:
 - Appleby Branch: major renovations recommended by the state at \$3,600,000. The state would cover 90% of every million so in the case of Appleby, Richmond County would have to come up with \$360,000.00 to fully renovate based on historic preservation guidelines. Mr. Porter asked if renovations would have to follow guidelines set up by the Richmond County Historic Preservation Commission. Mr. Maben said they would. They also discussed applying for National Register of Historic Places status which would open up access to grants. Mr. Porter also asked if Appleby would be closed for renovations. Mr. Mitchell said yes but recommended placing a trailer on site to serve as a temporary library until renovations are complete.
- c) **Partnership with LifeLink (Sponsorship for Bookmobile - \$5,000.00):** Mr. Mitchell provided an update.
- d) **Board Member Resignation:** Ms. Reeves and Mr. Mitchell discussed Mr. Gardiner's possible resignation and his three unexcused board meeting absences. Mr. Mitchell reached out to Commissioner Mason regarding the unexcused absences and Mr. Gardiner's resignation. Based on three unexcused absences, Mr. Cherry moved to send Mr. Gardiner a letter informing him of his three unexcused absences. Mr. Porter seconded. All voted in favor. The motion carried.

- e) **Library Director Evaluation:** the evaluation is due the end of August 2023. The Director’s evaluation process will begin in July. Ms. Garman is in charge of gathering the evaluations from each board member.
- f) **Results from Meeting with State Librarian:** Mr. Mitchell discussed his meeting with Julie Walker, particularly the subject of Jefferson County Library becoming a part of the Augusta-Richmond County Public Library System, making ARCPLS a regional library system again. Mr. Mitchell requested the Boards decision on the matter. Mr. Porter moved that ARCPLS become a regional system. Mr. Cherry seconded. All voted in favor. The motion carried. Mr. Mitchell discussed the details of the merger. Jefferson County Library System will have a board and there will also be a regional board to include both Richmond and Jefferson counties. The regional board will implement all the policies and procedures. The Jefferson County and Richmond County boards will serve as advisory boards. A new name will be selected and new by-laws and constitution will have to be written. As a regional system, state funding will increase and an additional state-funded position. Blythe is also under consideration to become part of the regional system. ARCPLS will become a new organization, with a new name. The regional board will be comprised of Jefferson and Richmond Counties. Ms. Walker is speaking with the Jefferson County Library System board. The board discussed the details.
- g) **Library Director’s Salary:** see item C under Unfinished Business.
- h) **Meeting Time Change to 5:30 pm:** Mr. Porter moved that the ARCPLS Board of Trustee’s Regular Meetings be moved from 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm. Mr. Cherry seconded. Ms. Garman abstained. The motion carried.
- i) **Notary:** As of June 1, 2023, HQs, Diamond Lakes, Friedman, and Maxwell will have notaries on staff, free of charge.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No comment.

ADJOURNMENT

The Augusta-Richmond County Public Library Board of Trustees meeting adjourned at 6:28 pm.