

Augusta Richmond County Public Library System

Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

Headquarters Library Branch

Monday, January 27, 2025

5:30 pm

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Augusta Richmond County Public Library System (ARCPLS) Board of Trustees was called to order at 5:30 pm by Board President, Morris Porter.

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Morris Porter (President), Brenda Garman (Vice President), Tonia Gibbons (Treasurer), Anna Reeves, Anita Rookard, Christine Rhodes. Members Absent: Kigwana Cherry (excused), Cher Best (excused), Kimberly Brown (excused). Ex-officio members present: Emanuel Mitchell, Leadra Collins, Commissioner Scott. Ex-officio member absent: Dennis Garman (Friends of the Augusta Library) (excused).

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Brenda Garman moved to approve the agenda with 1 change, removing C under New Business. Tonia Gibbons seconded. All voted in favor, and the motion carried.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Gibbons moved to approve the November 2024 board minutes as written. Mrs. Garman seconded. All voted in favor. The motion carried.

V. Library Board Education- Liz Mason (Assistant Director)

Mrs. Mason shared a presentation that provided knowledge of the Outreach Department, including the Book Mobile. She stated that the purpose is to make the connection between the library and the community to share resources. Among many things, the bookmobile also has a 3d printer. Mrs. Mason included the history of the bookmobile in her presentation. It was purchased in December of 2022. Shortly after purchasing, shelves, a lift, and a canopy were added. The bookmobile has traveled 1,821 miles in the last 10 months. Since March of 2024, 1,567 books have been circulated to grant participants, which does not include the Summer Reading Program. School visits were also listed in the presentation. If these schools were a part of the Community Foundation grant, each student received a book that included a book kit to support early literacy. The book kits also contained flyers that educated parents on how to help their children with literacy. An October New Moon event hosted by the Book Mobile offered children a kit that included a mobile which tied into the book "Moon Cakes Mean Family". In addition to visiting children, the bookmobile visited senior centers 64 times. These visits occur twice a month. Seniors are allowed to check out books & movies. In addition, computer literacy

sessions are offered to seniors at Halpowell. Mrs. Mason mentioned that these classes were not as successful as expected because of the varying group sizes. Mrs. Mason shared positive feedback from her interactions with Richmond Summit, highlighting the group's strong engagement and consistent attendance. She noted that the group is diverse, consisting of individuals at various life stages—not just seniors—including some who are actively working toward earning their GEDs. She visits them on the first and third Tuesday of each month. There has been a total of 74 visits to schools, 40 visits to community centers (summer camps included), 25 community events, and 1,401 checkouts from the bookmobile. Patron sites were shared in the presentation, including Heritage Academy, Westabou Montessori School, and the Family Y. Some schools that were not included in the grant were still visited such as Lagos Classical Academy & Ebenezer Christian Academy.

VI. TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Mitchell informed the board that the treasurer's report includes both November & December. The Board reviewed the following expenses. November: Line 31- \$167,384.00 (Full-time Salaries), expenses totaled \$413,174.24. This amount is higher than average since November was a three-pay period month. Line 41- \$12,727.73 (Part-time). Line 44- \$2,654.01 (Fines, Receipts, and Meeting rooms). Mr. Mitchell added that this goes towards the goal of \$50,000 for the year, placing the library \$29,000 short. December: Line 31- \$113,919.95 (Full-time Salaries), expenses totaled to \$251,743.75 with full-time staff as the highest expense. Line 41- \$8,379.75 (Part-time Salaries). Line 44- \$1,957.62 (Fines, receipts, and meeting rooms). Mr. Mitchell highlighted that the total amount brought in for meeting rooms is slightly lower than normal due to recent inclement weather.

VII. REPORTS

- A. President's Report: No report- Mr. Porter opened the floor for new board members to introduce themselves. Leadra Collins (representing Commissioner Stacy Pulliam District 2), Commissioner Scott (Super District 9)
- B. Director's Report:
 - Appleby Library Blueprint & Scopes: The Library has received the blueprints & statistics along with the Strategy Book for Appleby. The documents were submitted to the State before the end of the year as required. The ARCPLS currently has \$900,000 available. Mr. Mitchell submitted the necessary documents to Central Services and is currently waiting for the bid to be completed. He informed the board that the grant is a state grant and is reimbursable up to \$900,000. Augusta Richmond County acts as a bank, everything that is spent is invoiced to the library and the library sends an invoice to the state. The amount invoiced is then reimbursed to Augusta Richmond County. The Library has a goal of \$1,000,001 and is \$50,000 away. If \$900,000 is spent, the library will be in a position to be reimbursed. Mr. Mitchell also added that there is an upcoming Legislation session to meet with Legislators in an effort to retrieve funds for the Library which will be used to assist the county.
 - The Flooring Project (HQ- Children's Department): The bid for Headquarters has been approved by the Commission. The vendor is Merrit Flooring. Headquarters is currently waiting for the start date which is based upon a purchase order number. Once that is finalized, a start date will then be given.

- Website Audit: The Department of Education/ The Office of Civil Rights has approved the website. The Library is currently waiting for the stamp of approval. Until then, no additional changes are to be made to the website.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A) Incident Reports

- Wallace Branch: On January 19, 2025, a disruptive patron disturbed the environment, prompting staff to contact the police. Mr. Mitchell added that he is collaborating with local marshals to ensure policy enforcement.
- Headquarters: A loud verbal exchange occurred between a staff member and patron on December 10, 2024. The patron insulted a staff member, which led to the patron's suspension for 1 week. The staff member involved has been relocated to the Children's Department.
- Jani King: A misunderstanding occurred at Headquarters regarding custodial services, as staff suspected the custodian had not cleaned due to her absence during business hours and substandard restroom conditions. Upon reviewing surveillance footage, it was confirmed that she arrived after hours resulting in limited access to necessary supplies. The issue has been resolved, and on January 27, 2025, Mr. Mitchell met with the Jani-King representative to ensure the continuation of proper services.

B) Donation

A Patron (who wished to remain anonymous) donated \$9,262.80 for the purchase of more books.

C) Job Advertising & Promotions

Cathy Joseph (Library Branch Manager- Diamond Lakes) retired on December 31, 2024. Her former position is now posted. Library assistant (Diamond Lakes Library Branch) resigned to pursue a career at Augusta University. Since then, Library Substitute DeShun Hayes has been promoted to library assistant. Mr. Mitchell added that DeShun is a perfect fit for the position and the Diamond Lakes Library Branch seems to be progressing.; Georgina Lewis (Friedman Branch) has been promoted to Library Branch Manager following her extensive library history which began at Friedman.; Mrs. Mason has been promoted from Outreach Manager to Assistant Director, her former position has been posted.

D) Upcoming Events:

Kappa League's partnership with ARCPLS (past event) took place on January 11, 2025. Their second event attracted 49 children and 18 adults. Mr. Mitchell shared that the purpose of this partnership is to act as a reading and mentorship program purposed to raise the reading level of third-grade African-American boys; The Martin Luther King Parade will take place on February 1, 2025; The Know Your Rights Speech Competition will take place on February 15, 2025.; Mr. Mitchell announced that he has been selected as part of the Georgia Delegation to represent the Children's Library Department. The event will take place in Washington DC from March 3rd to March 6, 2025. Mr. Mitchell also informed the board that this event can pave the way for funding requests for fiscal year 2026

- ### **E) ARCPLS Partnership with Georgia Justice Project (Richmond & Burke County District Attorney's Office):**

A total of 187 patrons attended, resulting in 126 record expungements at Headquarters without requiring referral to the District Attorney's office. Additionally, Georgia Justice provides free attorneys to assist with the process.

F) Circulation

In FY24, ARCPLS circulated 292,000 items and recorded 293,500 patron visits, this does not include the Bookmobile. This resulted in an increase of nearly 100,000 in both categories compared to FY23.

G) Approval of Amended Budget 2025

The 2025 budget will remain the same as the 2024 budget. Anna Reeves moved to approve the amended budget for 2025. Brenda Garman seconded. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A) Vote to select an Audit Firm

Mr. Mitchell recommended that the library continue using Bates and Carter as auditors, citing their cost efficiency, experience, and current engagement with the library. Tonia Gibbons moved to select the audit firm. Anna Reeves seconded. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

B) Select Nomination Committee

Anna Reeves and Anita Rookard were selected for the Nominee Committee. This selection was made but not voted on. Nominations will be made to fulfill the President, Vice president, and Treasurer positions.

C) Approval of Re-painting at Headquarters

Mr. Mitchell directed the Board's attention to pages 78-79 which displays the quote for the repainting at Headquarters. It will cost \$7,200 to paint the Board room, Outreach Area, and the remainder of the 2nd floor. The funds that are needed will come from the Library's budget.

X. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Porter informed the board that Kigwana Cherry's term will come to an end on March 31, 2025. Mr. Morris also encouraged the board to wish Mr. Cherry well and thank him for his service to the ARCPLS board. Before concluding, Mrs. Garman reminded the Board of the Friends of the Library's event and encouraged everyone to join them and their guest author, Dante Stewart, artist of Shouting in the Fire- An American Epistle.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The ARCPLC Board of Trustees regular meeting adjourned at 6:07 pm