

Augusta Richmond County Public Library System

Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

Friedman Branch Library

Monday, March 24, 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 5:37 pm by Board Vice President, Brenda Garman.

**II. ROLL CALL**

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

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Tonia Gibbons moved to approve the agenda with changes (Branch education happening after minutes approval, and executive session is moved after branch education etc.). Leadra Collins seconded. All voted in favor. The motion carried.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Tonia Gibbons moved to approve the February 2025 board meeting minutes with corrections. All voted in favor, the motion carried.

**V. TREASURER REPORT**

As of March 24, 2025, the Augusta Richmond County Public Library System continues to net payroll and other bills from the Augusta Richmond County budget. This proactive action is expected to stop the library from going into debt regarding payroll. The board was informed that the utilities amount is higher than normal, as it is a part of the Diamond Lakes library's quarterly bill. Mr. Mitchell continued to point out the following: Line 31 full-time salary (Library's largest expense)- \$113,919.95. \$113,101.90 is reflected on the treasurer's report, updates will be made. Approximately \$545,890.16 will be left over for the year. Assuming that full-time salaries remain the same, calculating our salary at a rate of \$113,919.95, Mr. Mitchell estimated that the yearly budget will end at \$407,305.70. He also estimated a surplus of \$139,584.46 for full-time salaries by the end of the year, noting this as a good thing. Line 41 part-time salary - \$11,404.60. Line 44 Library receipts - \$6,327.61

**VI. REPORTS**

- A. President's Report: No report
- B. Director's Report:

- Children's Department Flooring: The bid for the Headquarters' flooring project is now closed. Merit Flooring is the vendor for this project. The vendor has received a purchase order number and is in the process of acquiring needed materials. After this, Headquarters will receive a start date.
- ARCPLS New Software: New software set to go live on April 1, 2025.
- Jani King: Mr. Mitchell stated that the Jani-King Cleaning Service staff is performing exceptionally well. Additionally, a designated staff member arrives at night to ensure the staircases are cleaned properly.
- Mr. Mitchell reported that his trip to Washington, D.C., from March 4th to March 6th went very well. He met with Senators Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff, as well as Representative Rick Allen, to discuss maintaining level funding for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). The LSTA grant, distributed through the Institute of Museum and Library Services, provides federal funding to libraries across the United States. These funds support various library initiatives, including the summer reading program, Chromebook and hotspot distribution, circulation system improvements, and access to Galileo resources. Mr. Mitchell noted that every congressional representative and senator spoken to by U.S. libraries expressed support for continued LSTA funding. However, before the funding proposal could be voted on, an executive order was issued that may impact the process. Mr. Mitchell remains confident in a positive outcome.
- Mr. Mitchell announced that he will be returning to the Capitol on March 25, 2025, to attend a committee hearing on Senate Bill 74 (SB74). This bill, authored and sponsored by Senator Max Burns, has successfully passed through the Senate and is now under review in the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. During discussions on SB74, Mr. Mitchell questioned the definition of "harmful material" as it pertains to the bill. The response he received was that harmful material could not be specifically defined in advance but would be determined upon review. Mr. Mitchell interpreted this as evidence that the classification of harmful material is subjective and based on individual perception. He reaffirmed his stance that it is a parent's responsibility to monitor and censor the information their children access. The library has taken proactive steps in this regard by implementing policies such as age restrictions to ensure appropriate content access for young patrons.
- Beautification Project: The second floor at the Headquarters branch has been fully repaired and painted.
- Hires, Retirement, Resignation: After 30 years of service to ARCPLS, Paulette Scurry will retire from her position as Library Branch Manager at Maxwell Library on March 31, 2025. A candidate has been selected for the Branch Manager position at Diamond Lakes Library. The Outreach Manager position has been filled, the candidate will begin on March 31, 2025. The Outreach Library Assistant will begin on March 31, 2025. A candidate for the Library Assistant 3 position at the Maxwell Library has been selected. A candidate for the Library Assistant 2(substitute) position has been selected, HR is waiting for the candidate to accept the offer. Maxwell Branch Manager has been selected. Wallace Branch Manager has been selected and will begin March 31, 2025.
- Upcoming Events: **Kappa Reading Program** – Hosted at Maxwell Library, a Night with Haines, which hosted over 50 children. The board continues to encourage engagement with children and partnerships with local schools. **Wallace Branch Partnership with Lucy C. Laney High School**

– The Wallace Branch Library Manager, Sara Jessup, is working with a media specialist from Lucy C. Laney High School to connect high school students with the branch. The specialist has also offered to provide presentations on information literacy. **Partnership with the Hub** – The library has partnered with The Hub to host a “May the Fourth Be With You” event. **Augusta Greene Jackets (Friends of the Library Day)** – Event will be held on April 5, 2025. **Summer Reading Proclamation** – Event is tentatively set for June 3, 2025. Ms. Liz Mason (Assistant Director) is working to bring 20 children to participate. **Augusta on Display** – Event will be held on June 7, 2025. **Appleby Concert Series** – The event will take place each Tuesday in June from 8:00 to 9:00 pm.

C. Committee

No report at this time.

D. Friends of the Library

Robyn shared a Star Wars-themed card she discovered that read, "Yoda best," and used it as an opportunity to thank the board for their support and participation in the Friends of the Library. She encouraged board members to continue spreading the word about the upcoming Green Jackets game on April 5, 2025. Additionally, she reminded the board of upcoming events – the Friends of the Library Book Sale, which will take place during the first weekend in May 2025, and the Summer Reading Program, scheduled for June 14, 2025.

## VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a) Incident Reports

- February 18<sup>th</sup> through March 25, 2025: The Headquarters Library Branch has experienced repeated incidents of restroom vandalism, primarily attributed to homeless patrons. The library is currently spending nearly \$1,000 per month replacing toilet paper dispensers due to ongoing destruction. Despite efforts to offer toilet paper directly to patrons, the vandalism has continued. To mitigate the issue, the library is implementing additional security measures, including locking restrooms and having security personnel unlock them for patron use. Additionally, staff members will inspect the restrooms after each patron and relock them. Central Services have been tasked with repairing damaged dispensers, however, damages continue to occur. Mr. Mitchell noted that the restrooms located in the Children’s area have remained clean and unaffected.

b) Website OCR Update:

- Mr. Mitchell provided an update regarding the Office of Civil Rights compliance process for the library’s website. The library has completed all necessary steps on its end, however, the process remains at a standstill as it awaits final actions from attorneys.

c) Appleby Update

- Appleby Update

Mr. Mitchell reported that the bidding process for the upcoming Appleby project is set to begin the week of March 24<sup>th</sup> or on March 31<sup>st</sup>. All necessary preparations have been completed to initiate the bid, which marks a significant step forward in advancing the library’s mission. This progress brings the library closer to becoming a hallmark institution in Georgia. Although it does not have a historical marker, the library holds the distinction of being the oldest library in the state.

d) ARC- Audit

- The audit is currently taking place, however, a shortfall in the 2024 budget was noticed. Voting will take place to make the necessary adjustments. Once approved, Mr. Mitchell will create a draft with corrections, and Board President Morris Porter will sign off.

**VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION- Closed to the Public**

The board dismissed the public and went into Executive Session at 5:40 pm. The board welcomed the public and resumed the meeting at 6:09 pm.

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

a) Headquarters Library Roofing out for Bid

b) Library Annual Report Event

c) Budget Amendment for 2024

State funds were over by \$13,306. In speaking to the auditor, Mr. Mitchell was made aware that the additional funds could be repurposed if the board is willing to vote to approve. The additional funds will go toward the Library's Summer Reading program. Tonia made a motion to approve, and Brenda Garman seconded. All voted in favor, and the motion carried.

d) Approve Recommended Meeting Room Fee Schedule

Kigwana Cherry made a motion to approve the recommended meeting room fee schedule. Cher Best seconded. All voted in favor, and the motion carried.

e) Approve quote for chair reupholstery

Tonia Gibbons made a motion to approve the quote for chair reupholstery services. Sheila Siler seconded. All voted in favor, and the motion carried.

f) Approve quote for Friedman Butterfly Garden

The board agreed to table the approval for the Friedman Butterfly Garden quote.

g) Approve quote for chair upholstery

Tonia Gibbons made a motion to approve the quote, Leadra Collins seconded. All voted in favor, and the motion carried.

**X. Public Comments**

Mr. Mitchell expressed his sadness regarding board member Kigwana Cherry's departure. He acknowledged Mr. Cherry's valuable contributions and stated that he would be missed and is welcome to return. Mr. Cherry expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to learn more about the library and its services. He shared his passion for educating others on many things, including the process of construction projects, and offered his assistance in the future. He encouraged board members to reach out if his support is needed in the future.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

The ARCPLS Board of Trustees regular meeting adjourned at 7:17 pm.