

McMinn County Library Board

MARCH 22, 2021 at 6:00 PM

Conducted electronically via Zoom

Present – Chairman Tyler Forrest, Treasurer Tim Womac, E.G. Fisher Director Peyton Eastman, Ocoee Regional Library Board Director Liz Schreck, and MCLB Board members, Mickey Blevins, Patricia Ekiss, Maggie Hoffman, and Lynn Perkinson.

I. Call to Order and Establish Quorum

Chairman Tyler Forrest called the meeting to order and established that there a quorum.

II. Minutes from January 25, 2021 Meeting

Secretary Robin Arms was unable to be at this meeting. Therefore, Chairman Tyler Forrest postponed the reading and approval of the meetings. Treasurer Tim Womac offered to record the minutes.

III. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Tim Womac referred to the financials that were emailed ahead of the meeting. He noted that the overall expenses for January and February 2021 were lower than the January and February 2020 expenses. He also thanked for Director Peyton Eastman for her fundraising efforts as there is an increase in contributions, and that library has received several grants including the Tech Grant and the VEC Grant. He also noted that fines and fees are still down from last year, but they are increasing. Treasurer Womac reported that the library audit is progressing, and thanked Director Peyton Eastman for keeping tabs on it. He also reported that the 4th Quarter Checks will be available in April. On a last note, he reminded the board that just as he encouraged everyone in 2020 to fill out the Census form, he wants to encourage everyone in 2021 to be vaccinated. The more people who are vaccinated, the sooner our libraries can go back to fully serving the public as possible.

IV. Library Reports

i. Calhoun

There was no formal report for Calhoun. Tim Womac reported that he had been to the Calhoun Public Library several times, and they are doing well.

ii. E.G. Fisher

Director Peyton Eastman shared a power point.

General Operations: The library's operating hours are now Mon, Tues, Thurs 9:30 AM to 7PM, and Weds and Fri 9:30 AM to 4:30PM. Fisher is in a partnership with "Love, Period" to provide hygiene products to the public. Director Eastman has a new email address, peytoneastman@fisherlibraryorg, thanks to G-Suites for Non-Profits. Fisher Library will shift to Phase 4 of the Phased Reopening Plan in April.

Financials: Fisher was ineligible for the second round of Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), due to the steady financial support from both McMinn County and the City of Athens. Director Eastman has applied and received two grants, VEC Customer Sharegrant (\$2,250) and the East Tennessee Foundation Neighbor to Neighbor grant (\$3,780). She has also applied for the TOP Grant, First Horizon Foundation, Dollar General Summer Reading Grant, CNS Y-12 Community Investment Fund, and the Dollar General Youth Literacy Grant.

Circulation: Director Eastman reported that all front desk staff have received standardized training. Hotspots are currently circulating and both the Boating Safety Handbooks and Driver's Safety Handbooks.

Programming: Director Eastman reported on a variety of programming; Online Storytimes twice per week, Women's History book discussion, the Professor W.E. Nash and Principal E. Harper Johnson Lectures, and the Community Leaders Interview project. Upcoming programming includes the National Poetry Month Poetry Reading.

Community Relations: Director Eastman reported that she has met with Athens City Manager, Seth Sumner, and that she and Chairman Tyler Forrest presented financial and funding goals before City of Athens Budget Meeting. Upcoming community relations will include Fifth Friday on April 30th.

iii. E.G. Fisher Friends of the Library

Lynn Perkinson conveyed the thanks and gratitude of the Friends of the Library to the McMinn County Library Board for agreeing to receive the donation of a new trailer for the storage of donated books for the annual summer book sale. The new trailer is an ice cream truck that has newer tires and is aesthetically pleasing.

iv. Englewood

Maggie Hoffman reported that the entire Englewood Library Board has either resigned or rotated off. In the meantime, all the staff problems have been resolved.

v. Etowah

Chairman Tyler Forrest referred the Board to the report that Etowah Director Lara Crockett had emailed the board earlier. In the report, Director Crockett had noted several news items: Completed 3rd Round of spending allocations from State Funds through Regional Library (materials includes adult fiction, non-fiction, young adult, children's, audiobooks, large print); All LSTA 2021 Tech Grant materials have been purchased; Provided TEL Training via Zoom; Created STEAM Kits for checkout; March Adult Self Care Month: Random Acts of Kindness; Weekly Facebook Programs will continue through April; Submitted employee performance reviews; Submitted FY 2021-2022 Budget; and New fax number: (423) 264-2677.

vi. Regional Library

Ocoee Regional Library Director Liz Schreck referred the Board to the materials that she had emailed earlier. She reported on a variety of training opportunities: VERSO: The Inventory Process on March 23rd; Empathetic Leadership and Compassionate Customer Service Regional by Corinne Freeman, Executive Director of The Caring Place (Cleveland, TN) on March 25th; and a continuing series on Disaster

Preparedness on March 4th, March 18th, and April 1st. Director Schreck also reminded the Board that Trustee Training was always available. Director Schreck reported that Governor Lee's Executive Order 78, allowed for electronic meetings to be extended until April 28th, 2021. She also reported that the Governor's Early Literacy Foundation (GELF) was offering a Storybook Trail Grant to provides community partners with a funding opportunity to create an enriching outdoor reading experience for families to enjoy together. She encouraged all our library boards to use their annual standards analysis reports when looking towards the future of their public libraries and for budget requests. She also encouraged to boards to think about those future trustees they would like to see join their board and advocate for their library. She also reported that Tennessee public libraries are invited to attend bi-monthly onboarding sessions for using READSquared, a Reading Program and Readers Advisory service that is available to all public libraries within the Regional System for free. She ended her report with some very exciting news: The grand public opening for the new Tennessee State Library & Archives building is set for Tuesday, April 13th! Chairman Forrest echoed Director Schreck's encouragement for all board members to complete the Trustee Training.

V. Old Business

i. EGFPL Capital Request

Chairman Tyler Forrest reported there had been several bids on the painting of the exterior of the E.G. Fisher Public Library. The lowest bid was \$18,000. Therefore, Director Eastman will move forward with the lowest bid, and reach out to McMinn County and the City of Athens to see if each governing body would provide 1/3 of the funding with the McMinn County Library Board providing a 1/3.

ii. EGFPL FY22 Budget Request

Chairman Tyler Forrest reported that both Director Eastman and he both spoke at the Athens City Council's annual Strategic Summit about increasing both the operating funding and the capital funding. Their presentation was well received by the Athens City Council. Chairman Forrest specifically mentioned the need to incrementally increase those wages to \$10 per hour for front desk staff and \$15 an hour for professional staff by 2023. Director Eastman reported she had already turned in the proposal to the City of Athens for formal consideration, and she was working on the paper packet for the McMinn County Commission.

iii. EGFPL Retirement Plan Update

Chairman Tyler Forrest reminded the Board that the library was contributing up to 60% of the TCRS expenses. The TCRS contribution rate will drop to 40% effective July 1st. Chairman Forrest recommended that the Board should seriously consider paying down the additional TCRS to see how will affect the finances. Director Eastman explained that by paying down the obligations earlier, it could lead to lower rates earlier, saving money in the long run.

iv. Board Attorney Conversation

Chairman Tyler Forrest reported that Ms. Bridget Willhite of Carter, Harrod, and Willhite, PLLC and also board attorney for the Athens City Schools has agreed to advise both Director Eastman and he concerning employment issues, specifically concerning the COVID situation. Those questions include the following: How long can an employee request isolation from the general public and a public

environment? And what is the difference between an employee who medically cannot be vaccinated compared to an employee who refuses to be vaccinated?

v. Nominating Committee Report & Board Composition

Chairman Tyler Forrest explained to the Board that the Tennessee Assembly has been considering legislation that will abolish the nine Regional Library Boards. This legislation will effect the two board members who are appointed to the Ocoee Regional Library Board by the McMinn County Commission. Mickey Blevins, the Chairman of Nominating Committee, suggested that the Board's bylaws be updated to state that two regional or two county-wide members will be appointed by the McMinn County Commission to the McMinn County Library Board. Ocoee Regional Library Director Liz Schreck clarified that the State Library is looking at a new model of regional communication along the lines of an annual or perhaps quarterly meeting of local library board Chairs (or representatives), which would offer a cohort of support among the Chairs/boards. However, this law would not go into effect until July 1, 2022 for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. With this clarification about the timing, Mickey Blevins recommended delaying the discussion for a few months to see if and when the legislation passes and then respond accordingly.

VI. New Business

i. EGFPL Transition to City Department Discussion Tyler Forrest

Chairman Tyler Forest reported that during the presentation at the Athens City Council's annual Strategic Summit, Council Member Jordan Curtis asked about the benefits if the library transitioned to a city-run facility. Chairman Forest replied that such a change could have great benefits, but it would require cooperation and communication with the McMinn County Commission. Athens City Manager Seth Sumner suggested that he and Chairman Forrest discuss the idea and present their ideas to both the Athens City Council and the McMinn County Commission. Before speaking with the city manager, Chairman Forrest asked the Board to give him approval to explore the possibilities with the understanding that no decision would be made. The Board agreed and Treasurer Tim Womac quipped, "You can date, Tyler, but don't get married!"

ii. EGFPL Storybook Trail Grant

Director Eastman expressed her desire to apply for the Storybook Trail Grant that Director Schreck had mentioned earlier. She asked the Board to grant her approval to pursue the grant for a Storybook Trail to give the Wetlands both a literary and ecology learning opportunities with the cooperation of the Public Works Department.

Patricia Ekiss made the motion; Maggie Hoffman seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

iii. EGFPL Bank Account Authorization

Director Eastman explained that the authorization on the BB&T Account needed to be updated. She asked for a motion that going forward the Chairperson, the Treasurer, and the Library Director will be on the resolution for the bank as having authority over the funds.

Mickey Blevins made the motion; Patricia Ekiss seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

Director Eastman then asked for the authorization that the names of the signers be updated to reflect the current office holders.

Mickey Blevins made the motion; Patricia Ekiss seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

Lynn Perkinson suggested that if necessary, an Executive meeting could be held to confirm this Board decision and the minutes be given to the bank to expediate the process.

iv. May Board Meeting

Chairman Tyler Forrest asked that the Board would consider moving the date of the next board meeting from May 24th to May 17th.

Patricia Ekiss made the motion; Maggie Hoffman seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

VII. Public Comments

There were no public comments. Chairman Tyler Forrest reminded the board about Trusteeship Training and to mark their calendars for the next meeting – Monday, May 17, 2021.

The meeting was adjourned.