

McMinn County Library Board  
1289 Ingleside Avenue  
Athens, Tennessee 37303

BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 24, 2022 at 6:00 PM

I. Call to Order, Establish Quorum, and Acknowledgements

Present – Chairman Tyler Forrest, Treasurer Tim Womac, Secretary Patricia Ekiss, E.G. Fisher Director Peyton Eastman, Ocoee Regional Library Board Director Liz Schreck – via Zoom, and MCLB members Robin Arms, Everett Gillespie, Maggie Hoffman and Lynn Perkinson. Vice Chairman Mickey Blevins was absent. Chairman Tyler Forrest called the meeting to order and established that there was a quorum.

II. Minutes from November 22, 2021 Meeting

Patricia Ekiss presented the minutes. Robin moved to approve and Everett seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

III. Treasurer's Report

The following is Tim Womac's report which was read by Patricia Ekiss.

**October 2021**

Overall expenses are nearly the same from October 2021 to October 2020, though the different expenses categories are different, depending on when the bills got paid.

There's a noticeable uptick of over \$1,000 in fines. Congrats to Director Eastman for the \$2,500 grant.

**November 2021**

The big expense in November 2021 compared to November 2020 was that the insurance came in. I have noticed that the formatting with the November report was a little different, and I am working to find out what happened.

**December 2021**

Income was down compared to December 2020, but that is due to an early check from the City of Athens and a \$12,000 grant that arrived in December 2020. Biggest difference in expenses for this month was the difference in payroll. We have more people working December 2021 than December 2020.

**In other news:**

The **Quarterly checks** have been picked up. Thank you, Director Eastman for doing that for me. I will be making my usual rounds, checking in with library directors, very soon. I will probably go ahead and drop these checks off in the various night deposits at the City Halls, so they can be deposited before the end of the month.

The **Audit** is almost finished. Thank you, Director Eastman for keeping after that.

**Investment Policy Thoughts** – Just as a reminder for later discussion. This time last year, I held up a piggy bank and gave an elevator speech about how it is important to grow money faster than inflation. And at the time, I said, we've been blessed that inflation hasn't been an issue. Since then, please note that the Dollar Tree is now the Dollar and Quarter Tree, and that the \$5 hot and ready pizza from Little Caesar's is now \$6. I personally think that inflation will eventually calm down. As a nation we suffered from inflation during the Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter presidencies with the inflation that followed the ending of the Vietnam War. We're experiencing something similar with the inflation following the arrival of COVID19. I just want to remind the board that inflation is always there.

IV. Library Reports

i. Calhoun

The following is Tim Womac's report which was read by Patricia Ekiss.

*Calhoun Public Library bid farewell to our library director Ms. Mary Tickel on Tuesday, January 18<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Tickel is moving out to Texas.....and joining a convent. She will spend her first three months as a visitor, before she is officially enrolled. And yes, I did ask*

*her if she would babysit for a widowed sea captain if the opportunity arose. She quickly replied, "Yes, if he's as good looking as Christopher Plummer." We wish Ms. Tickel all the best in her spiritual journey, and thank her for years of service at the Calhoun Public Library. The Calhoun Public Library is exploring options with the two remaining library staff about the next steps to take.*

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Womac

P.S. She was told not to bring any books, because they have their own library, and be prepared to stay in the convent for 3 months straight. I told Mickey Blevins if that I couldn't get out to see the mountains and river, couldn't have my collection of books, or see a pretty face, I would be in a most unholy mood! ☹️

Added by Tyler - Joe Brian, Calhoun City Manager, contacted Tyler and discussed Sally Rollins and getting certified. He understands MCLB has a say in this. Liz said that MCLB is the library board of Calhoun. Liz encouraged the MCLB to work with the Calhoun City Manager. The board needs to have some official participation in the hiring process. Tyler will get the ball rolling. Tyler commended Mary Tickel's work for the library.

ii. E.G. Fisher

Peyton reported that there are two new AWE children's pc stations purchased through the ARPA grant. Catalog access now available on a computer that does not allow access to other web sites – easier and more convenient for patrons. New substitute front desk clerk. New re-employability volunteer beginning Thursday (Jan. 27) which makes 2 total.

There were a few late openings or early closings in January due to weather.

Financial – The draft report was received from the auditors. Already preparing materials for next audit.

'Love your Library' donation campaign is running through February. \$4810 collected through end of year donations. Placing a donor recognition display by the front door.

Facility – Walkway lights are now LED photocells and are no longer just motion activated. As existing indoor lights go out, they are being switched to LED also. New and larger television was donated in Community room. The Community room television was relocated to the area that will become the teen space. New ADA signs in parking lot.

Circulation – Adult non-fiction weeding project is complete. New books from state order are hitting the shelves. Hotspot circulation: 23 checkouts in October/November, Chromebook circulation: 31 checkouts in October/November. Braille Literacy Month display promoting LABM. Local History and Reference light weeding and material repair underway.

Programming – Welcomed Meleena Livesay as the Program Director. Christmas and New Year programs attendance: 130+. Martin Luther King Jr. Scavenger Hunt. Weekly programs increasing - Three weekly storytimes, Monthly bilingual storytimes, Adult and Teen sessions of Dungeons and Dragons.

Community Outreach – Leadership McMinn library visit, Ministerial Association Meeting at hospital, AACA Black History Month Community Conversation, WYXI on-air visit. Upcoming - City of Athens Budget Summit and Partnering with the museum for the Athens Bicentennial Event.

Sending out thank you notes and tax letters for donations.

iii. E.G. Fisher Friends of the Library

Lynn starting to collect again soon. She will store items in their basement right now. May start sales again in March.

iv. Englewood

Maggie – The director recovered from illness. Working on summer programs.

v. Etowah

Robin Arms reported – Trish Mobley new director. December – Ugly sweater day and a Christmas Cheer activity. Not much response on either one. She plans on doing some training with Peyton. A

second person has been hired – now fully staffed. The Board is meeting in February to discuss additional hours. Director went to West Polk library today for some training.

Robin questioned – Does the library need a food license if serving refreshments? Peyton said they serve lunch at E.G. Fisher and no license is needed.

vi. Regional Library

Liz reported via zoom due to COVID in her house, but she tested negative. Liz discussed the Ocoee River Regional Library training opportunities – see handout for full listing. On February 28 there will be a Roundtable for the newly hired library directors in our area – 6 or 7 in the past 6 months.

All libraries have received their ARPA grants and are encouraged to make their purchases as quickly as they can and changes may be necessary due to global shortages.

Annual Standards Survey analysis report have been distributed to all libraries. Directors and boards are encouraged to select 2 or 3 unmet standards and focus efforts on meeting those standards this year.

V. Old Business

i. EGFPL Transition to City Department Update

Tyler Forrest updated on the transition to a City Department and the library board seats – Conversations with Seth Sumner & John Gentry – City still has interest in further exploring the library becoming a City department, but unsure of timing. It's still in the queue. Tyler shared info with Seth Sumner from other municipalities with similar agreements. Stay tuned and see how it evolves. Not as pressing now that our financial situation is improved.

ii. Regional Library Board Seats Update

Tyler Forrest emailed County Mayor John Gentry and Seth Sumner directly – John Gentry replied he could favor what MCLB suggested – retain 2 regional seats as County Commission appointed seats - Keep 9 members. Seth Sumner wanted a phone call during which he said he thought it would work well for the city, but wanted to see how John Gentry replied. John is sick right now and Tyler has not heard back yet. Needs an answer soon to be effective July 1, 2022. Tyler also asked if they want a joint resolution or just have the MCLB change their bylaws? No answer on that yet either.

Several vacancies to fill before July 1. Maggie, Patricia, Robin all “rolling off” and not continuing. Robin plans to resign June 30. Tyler hopes Mickey will again lead the Nomination Committee. Mickey is absent tonight, but Tyler will talk to Mickey about this and also talk to John Gentry and Seth Sumner. Liz commented that her copy of the Board list which was updated last September indicates that Maggie and Patricia will both be completing their first term June 30 and they do not wish to continue. Those openings may be affected by changes to the Regional Board. Robin's 1st term ended June 2021 so her 2nd term will end 2024. ~~However, Robin intends to resign June 30, 2022.~~ Robin will let us know her intentions.

iii. EGFPL Bathroom Construction Bid

Peyton Eastman stated that only one bid was submitted. Another contractor reached out asking for more time. It was decided to wait to open the one bid received and extend time for additional bids for 30 days. Motion by Patricia, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Robin. Passed.

iv. EGFPL Outdoor Safety and Security Update

Peyton Eastman reported on improved lighting– Scott, from McMinn County Maintenance discussed adding a light for patio area. Spoke with Eric Newberry from Athens Utility Board (AUB). It looks promising that AUB will donate lights and labor to change parking lot lights as an in-kind donation. Four LED lights to be installed.

She spoke to Corporal Reed at Police Dept. He will add the library parking lot as a definite spot to patrol. Fewer problems in recent years. Pergola area is also checked. No problems. He suggested that

we add exterior security cameras. There are none at this time that look into parking lot. Similar process to downtown parking at city pavilion. Police dept. process - If sleeping and no illegal activity or warrant - they are leaving them to sleep. Peyton got all police reports from 2018 to present. She will start checking for new ones every other month. The Library is on the patrol list of Athens Police Dept. Many of the past problems have shown improvement.

Lynn commented about the loitering sign – asking if it was still necessary. Peyton said it was posted due to library policy since only employees are allowed in that area. She will see about changing library policy and letting the Athens Police Department know. Robin – will insurance require us to have a sign posted. Peyton will check on that also. There needs to be differentiation between loitering in a public space or using a public space.

## VI. New Business

### i. EGFPL Investment Policy Revision

Tyler Forrest said that Jordan Curtis promptly responded with a revision to the investment policy. New investment ranges have been added to policy for fixed income limitations of 40% -60% including cash equivalents. New addition to policy – The fund shall be invested at least 0% and no more than 15% in alternative investments.

Tim moved to adopt this policy change. Everett 2<sup>nd</sup>. Passed.

### ii. EGFPL FY20 Audit Approval

Tyler said this took a very long time to get. Auditors were changed. This audit started prior to Peyton being appointed as director. Several things of concern. Six items at end of report.

Recommendation is that we adopt the report but work with Warren Jackson in the future to address items of concern. Motion to accept audit report by Lynn. Robin 2<sup>nd</sup>. Passed.

### iii. EGFPL FY23 City/County Funding Request

Peyton Eastman used 2% cost of living increase for pay increases. \$10K increase requested from each of City and County for MOE to cover pay increases. Should know by next meeting what TCRS will look like for next year. City budget meeting is end of February. County budget meeting is not set yet. Capital Improvement alternative request prepared for single project (HVAC) which will be \$25K each for City and County. Tyler received feedback from Council members from last time when the library was not included in the County budget process. We have asked to be included this year. Lynn commented that City has so much that has been left behind and they seem to be moving forward with other projects. She suggests Tyler and Peyton have a sit down with the city. Tyler commented that revenues are up across the state. We could have two options – one Aggressive and also a Minimum option of a 2% increase for staff. Lynn agrees.

On capital request – recommended that we stick with HVAC replacement only - \$75,000 with a 3-way split - and leave out the parking lot. Bathrooms and HVAC are priorities.

5 City council members are supportive of library – 3 very much so.

Motion by Robin and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Maggie for two options – Traditional 2% COL increase and aggressive plan with 2% in additional pool and capital improvement of HVAC only. Passed.

## VII. Public Comments

none

## Reminders

Trusteeship Training

Next Regular Meeting – March 28, 2022

Move to adjourn by Robin. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Everett. Passed.

Meeting Adjourned.