

McMinn County Library Board
1289 Ingleside Avenue
Athens, Tennessee 37303

Board Meeting Minutes
MAY 28, 2024 at 6:00 PM

Present - Chairman Tyler Forrest, Vice Chairman Mickey Blevins, Treasurer Tim Womac, Secretary Tyler Boyd, EGFPL Director Rebeckah (Becky) Coleman, Assistant Regional Library Director Nikki Branam Snyder, and MCLB members Everett Gillespie, Jan Dingess, John Duggan, and Kay Harper. Regional Library Director Liz Schreck and MCLB member Tara Carter were absent.

I. Call to Order, Establish Quorum, and Acknowledgments

Chairman Forrest welcomed everyone and established a quorum, noting that one board member was unable to attend.

II. Public Comments

There were no comments from the public.

III. Approval of Minutes

Secretary Tyler Boyd presented the Corrected Minutes from the February 5, 2024 meeting and the Minutes from the March 25, 2024. Board member John Duggan made a motion to approve the Minutes. Board member Everett Gillespie seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Recognition of Outgoing Trustee

Chairman Tyler Forrest presented a plaque to outgoing MCLB member Everett Gillespie. Forrest thanked Gillespie for his six years of service on the board. The board members and everyone else in attendance applauded Gillespie for his service.

V. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Tim Womac reported that the checks from the McMinn County Commission were picked up and deposited in March. Womac reported that the check from the City of Athens had been picked up and deposited in April. He compared the revenue, donations, grants, and expenditures for March/April 2023 and March/April 2024.

Chairman Tyler Forrest asked why the library's TCRS contributions noticeably declined from last year. EGFPL Director Becky Coleman said she would look into this and noted that her contributions may not be included until she has been employed by the MCLB for six months.

Treasurer Womac delivered an update on the audits for 2021 and thanked Director Coleman for her work on the audit, praising her for taking the initiative and "keeping the auditors on their toes." Womac also praised Coleman's communication and organizational skills, and also thanked former Interim Director Beth Jackson for help with the audit. The auditors recently informed Director Coleman that the auditors have everything they need, and Coleman said the process might be completed by June. Chairman Forrest and Coleman discussed the board's search for a new auditing firm, noting that Mauldin and Jenkins might make a proposal soon.

Treasurer Womac gave an update on MOE, including an increase in MOE from the McMinn County Commission, raising their contribution by approx. \$4,000. Womac reported that the MOE money from the county commission for all four county libraries have been picked up and deposited.

VI. Wetlands Agreement Explanation

Athens City Public Works Director Ben Burchfield addressed the board, hoping to open the conversation about how to take care of the Wetlands on the EGFPL grounds. He noted that the original Wetlands agreement was in 2010 and explained the boundaries of the Wetlands area. He said that the City of Athens is tasked with maintaining the Wetlands, but noted that the agreement is ambiguous on "to what extent" the city is required to maintain it. He discussed its original purpose in controlling stormwater and prevent flooding downtown, but also pointed out that it has an ecological purpose as well. He noted that the city usually works on the Wetlands twice per year. He would like to discuss what expectations that MCLB has from the city for maintaining the Wetlands and possible regular maintenance cycles. He discussed the potential of working the Wetlands into the city's Master Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan. He hopes to talk with EGFPL Director Becky Coleman about the "next steps" to take to develop a clearer maintenance plan for the Wetlands.

Director Coleman asked about improving handicap access to the Wetlands. Board member John Duggan joined the discussion, asking about how overgrowth has affected accessibility for everyone. Duggan also asked about the possibility of trimming some trees to help increase visibility of the library for southbound drivers on Ingleside Avenue as they approach the library grounds. Duggan observed that more people walk through the Wetlands in the time period immediately after maintenance, including heightening the canopy and trimming the grass and weeds. Chairman Tyler Forrest also commented on the low canopy on the sidewalk along

Ingleside Avenue. Burchfield also discussed the possibility of replacing the informational signs along the Wetlands Trail.

VII. Library Reports

- i. Calhoun – Treasurer Tim Womac reported that the library received a \$500 grant from Volunteer Electric. He gave a preview for the library’s “Keep It Cool” event coming up on June 14.
- ii. E.G. Fisher – Director Rebeckah Coleman reported on the start of the Summer Reading Program. She reported that the library would be switching Verso to Atrium for its computer system, noting Atrium’s increased quality and similar price compared to Verso. She discussed the idea of a McMinn County Library Card to enable patrons to be able to seamlessly use all four county libraries. Assistant Regional Library Director Nikki Branam Snyder noted that, since the county libraries are not a system of branches, that the READS program cannot be included on the county library card system. Coleman also discussed plans for a county-wide library newsletter to be delivered via email. She reported that WYXI would be doing a live remote on the second day of the Friends of the Library Book Sale on June 21. She said she plans to have the library’s budget ready for the July board meeting and noted that she would like to make Cyndi Scott the Administrative Assistant. The budget will include Scott’s salary and benefits and raises for the hourly employees. Coleman reported that more passes for children to visit various places, including museums and zoos will be passed out. She also reported that she will be submitting the library’s application for the TOP Grant and that she is working on the tech grant, both for 2025.

Treasurer Tim Womac praised the idea of a county-wide library newsletter and noted that it might help show the county commission how the MCLB works with all county libraries, not just EGFPL. Board member John Duggan asked about a printable calendar of events for all county libraries.

- iii. E.G. Fisher Friends of the Library – Board member Everett Gillespie reported they are in the final stages for the Used Book Sale scheduled for June 20-23 at the McMinn County High School Cafeteria. Gillespie said that the Friends hope to exceed their approx. \$9,000 in revenue from 2023. He also reported on a planned quarterly newsletter for the Friends members and a monthly book discussion as well.

Chairman Tyler Forrest thanked the Friends, including Bo Perkinson and Tammy Andrews, for helping trim the bushes in front of the EGFPL sign.

- iv. Englewood – Board member Jan Dingess reported that the library had 133 patrons in April, discussed a list of new books, plans for a Summer Reading Program on June 27, the new program for checking out books to help ensure patrons return books, and the policy for computer use.
- v. Etowah – Board member Kay Harper expressed how much she enjoys working with Director Briana Pagdon. Harper reported that the City of Etowah has approved the instillation of new shades for the library. She noted that \$700 from the Regional Library will be spent on purchases of digital materials on Overdrive. She reported that the library's Summer Reading program will run from June 4 to July 11.

Chairman Tyler Forrest thanked Etowah Library director Briana Pagdon for her attendance at the meeting.

- vi. Regional Library – Assistant Regional Director Nikki Branam Snyder noted that EGFPL Director Becky Coleman distributed the Regional reports to the board members before the meeting. Assistant Director Snyder reported that most of the training opportunities for the year are complete. She reminded MCLB members to complete their Trusteeship Training if they have yet to do so.

VI. Old Business

- i. MCLB Public Etiquette Policy Meeting Proposal – Chairman Tyler Forrest reminded everyone that Items #1-6 have been approved by the board and that we have been waiting for advice from attorney Bridgette Wilhite with regard to Item #7. Chairman Forrest reported that Wilhite recently contacted him after speaking with another attorney who specializes in this field. Based on what this attorney told her, Wilhite advised Chairman Forrest that the board can adopt Item #7, but that we should expect it to be challenged.

Board member John Duggan discussed this with Chairman Forrest and they agreed that the board not adopt Item #7.

- ii. MCLB Nominating Committee – Vice Chairman Mickey Blevins, who chairs the committee, reported that all four MCLB officers (Chairman Tyler Forrest, Vice Chairman Mickey Blevins, Treasurer Tim Womac, and Secretary Tyler Boyd) have agreed to serve another term in their respective positions. Vice Chairman Blevins also reported on the recent Athens City Council appointment of Ashley Smith to succeed Everett

Gillespie as a City of Athens representative on the MCLB, as well as Chairman Tyler Forrest's reappointment by the Athens City Council.

Vice Chairman Blevins presented all of the nominations to the board for approval. Board member Everett Gillespie made a motion to approve. Board member Jan Dingess seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- iii. MCLB Book Order/Disposition Reports - Chairman Forrest said he would like to do one report for the year and possibly do a meeting-by-meeting report in the future. EGFPL Director Becky Coleman and Assistant Regional Director Nikki Branam Snyder discussed methods for preparing these reports. Chairman Forrest and Etowah Library Director Briana Pagdon joined the discussion. Chairman Forrest said that quarterly reports may be the best routine moving forward. Chairman Forrest asked if these reports require board approval. Assistant Regional Director Snyder said that the board is only required to review the new titles (which includes purchases and donations) on the reports and do not have to vote to approve anything. Board member John Duggan asked about some of the acronyms at the end of each book title and EGFPL Director Becky Coleman answered him.

VII. New Business

- i. EGFPL Money Market Account – EGFPL Director Becky Coleman reported on discussions with Jordan Curtis of Simmons Bank about 3, 6, 9, and 18 month CDs and the rates for a possible deposit of \$25,000. Coleman has yet to hear back from Truist Bank. Vice Chairman Mickey Blevins asked Coleman to reach out to Bowater Employee Credit Union. Chairman Tyler Forrest noted that we need to find out if BECU can hold 501C3 funds. Chairman Forrest remarked that he would not recommend CDs, citing a desire for more liquidity. Director Coleman said she would continue exploring other options for the Money Market Account.
- ii. EGFPL Budget Initial Discuss – EGFPL Director Becky Coleman discussed a proposed “Food for Fines” program for the month of June to encourage reticent patrons who have outstanding fees to return to the library. Under this proposal, patrons will have \$1.00 of their fines waived per one donation of a can or box of (non-perishable and shelf-stable) food for the library to distribute to area charities. Several people joined the discussion, including board members and library staff members.

Board member John Duggan made a motion to approve the “Food for Fines” proposal. Vice Chairman Mickey Blevins seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Tyler Forrest requested that the board postpone voting on a budget until the Athens City and McMinn County governments have both approved their budgets, which include funding for the library.

Board member Jan Dingess asked Director Coleman about the plans for replacing the carpet in the Community Room. Director Coleman reported that she had received a quote from Lowe's (\$11,500) and will be requesting quotes from other stores, including Madison Carpet Outlet. Director Coleman also reported that the Community Artist League offered to help replace the carpet. Chairman Forrest recommended requesting a quote from Miller's Flooring, as did Vice Chairman Blevins.

Chairman Forrest noted that Director Coleman's 6-month probationary period expires on June 15 and that the board will be taking a vote to hire her on a permanent basis at the July meeting.

Vice Chairman Blevins asked for clarification about the proposal to switch from Verso to Atrium. Director Coleman specified that the proposal is for the EGFPL only, not every county in the library. Director Coleman, Etowah Library Director Briana Pagdon, and Assistant Regional Library Director Nikki Branam Snyder all discussed the proposal, including plans to ensure a smooth transition from one system to another. Board member Duggan asked about the security for Atrium, which is a cloud system. Assistant Regional Director Snyder assured him that the security, including firewalls, are "spectacular" and that it is great for patron privacy.

Board member Duggan discussed his recent trusteeship training in Crossville, and noted that some libraries shut off the Wi-Fi 15 minutes before closing time. Duggan said he would like to discuss implementing a similar policy for the EGFPL and that it would be consistent with the existing "No Loitering" Policy. Director Coleman said she would have more info on this proposal at the July meeting. Coleman stated she would like for some library services to remain accessible after closing, but noted that such services are not intended for people to "live here." Secretary Tyler Boyd asked about the possibility of using rotating passwords that could be given to patrons who need to access the Wi-Fi after hours for "educational and work purposes." Board member Duggan concurred about the need for rotating passwords, citing security concerns.

Director Coleman noted that she would like to amend the library's library card application by removing the References question. She said she believes patron information should remain private and noted that very

few libraries still use this method. Chairman Forrest asked Coleman to bring the policy forward at the July meeting for the board to consider.

Chairman Forrest reminded the board members to complete their Trusteeship Training, and noted that the next board meeting will be on Monday July 22, 2024 at 6:00 PM.

Chairman Forrest adjourned the meeting at 7:33 PM.

