McMinn County Library Board

1289 Ingleside Avenue

Athens, Tennessee 37303

Board Meeting Minutes

SEPTEMBER 23, 2024 at 6:00 PM

Present - Chairman Tyler Forrest, Vice Chairman Mickey Blevins, Treasurer Tim Womac, Secretary Tyler Boyd, EGFPL Director Rebeckah (Becky) Coleman, Regional Library Director Liz Schreck, and MCLB members Jan Dingess, Kay Harper, and Ashley Smith. MCLB board members Tara Carter and John Duggan were absent.

1. Call to Order, Establish Quorum, and Acknowledgments

Chairman Forrest welcomed everyone and established a quorum, noting that Treasurer Tim Womac and board member Kay Harper would be active participants but were still unable to vote until they are approved for another term by the McMinn County Commission, hopefully at their October meeting.

1. Public Comments

EGFPL staff member Richelle Brinkley discussed cost of living increases and merit performance. She showed a few PowerPoint slides detailing all of the work the staff members do at the library and how their work goes beyond their job description and rate of pay. She said the staff supports Director Coleman’s request for increases for staff pay.

EGFPL staff member Jerri Hill requested the board approve the Notary Service policy that she developed. Chairman Forrest said he was almost certain the board had approved Notary Services for the library at a previous meeting and asked to check previous Minutes to confirm.

1. Approval of Minutes

Secretary Tyler Boyd presented the Minutes from the July 22, 2024 meeting. Liz Schreck offered two corrections: On page 1, changing “Assistant Regional Library Director Liz Schreck” to “Regional Library Director Liz Schreck” in the roll call section. On page 2, changing “Tim Woman” to “Tim Womac” in the section for the Calhoun Library report.

Board member Ashley Smith made a motion to approve the Minutes. Board member Jan Dingess seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

1. Treasurer’s Report

Treasurer Tim Womac compared July 2023 and July 2024, noting increased revenue in 2024 due to more fines and fees and slightly increased expenses due to health insurance payments. He compared income for August 2023 to August 2024, noting delays in checks from the city council and county commission in 2023 which required moving funds from the Long-Term Investment Account. He urged the Calhoun, Englewood, and Etowah libraries to spend all of their money by the end of June. However, he urged the EGFPL not to spend all of its money by June due to its cash flow planning and status as a non-municipal library. He discussed the summertime drought or “summertime blues” in reference to the time between July and the delivery of checks from the city council and county commission. He noted increases in expenses for August 2024 due to the audit. He reported that Director Coleman had picked up the 1st quarter checks for the EGFPL and that he had delivered the 1st quarter checks to the Calhoun, Englewood, and Etowah libraries. He said he sent emails about the 2nd quarter checks and that they will be ready soon. He also reported that the MOE (Maintenance of Effort) document is making its way around the various city halls in the county.

Chairman Forrest introduced Bri McKinney from Warren-Jackson and asked her about financial statements from Simmons Bank (Long-Term Investment Account) and they discussed giving her access those statements.

Following up on Jerri Hill’s comments, Chairman Forrest checked previous Minutes from September 22, 2021 and confirmed that the board had voted to authorize the library to offer Notary Services.

1. Library Reports
2. Calhoun – Treasurer Tim Womac shared City Manager Joe Bryan’s report that the reading program has been continued in the Calhoun Elementary School. Womac shared library director Sally Rollins’ report that Pre-K Reading is held on the 2nd Thursday of each month. He said he expects the library will be “looking very spooky” in October and noted that they will be handing out books at its Christmas at the Park event on November 29.
3. E.G. Fisher – EGFPL Director Becky Coleman reported on the upcoming system upgrade and its cost-saving effects. She mentioned ongoing weeding and adding material from/to the library. She shared quotes for LED lights in the office ($1,200) and a new sign in the front yard ($2,500). She stated her support for a 3% pay increase in for library staff, her support to promote Cyndi Scott to a full-time administrative assistant, and her support for adding two more full-time support staff. She remarked that the staff “really deserves a raise” and proposed budget changes to cover the raises. Chairman Forrest asked to move the discussion the budget until the period of Old Business.
4. E.G. Fisher Friends of the Library – in the absence of a Friends board member, EGFPL Director Becky Coleman reported that the Friends is using the front of the library for a Used Book Sale to be held throughout the year. She also reported that the Friends would be partnering with the Community Artists League to have a Fiction Book Sale.
5. Englewood – Board member Jan Dingess reported that the library had 128 patrons in July, (75 computer users), and 116 patrons in August (72 computer users). She also reported that the library had ordered new books.
6. Etowah – Board member Kay Harper reported that the Summer Reading Program concluded with a crafts and pizza party. She also reported on art displays, the Used Book Sale on September 14, and the Storytime event on September 18.
7. Regional Library – Regional Director Liz Schreck discussed her various handouts, including the READS stats. She reported on the kickoff for the many trainings for the next year. She noted that the Annual Public Library Surveys are currently being completed and emphasized the importance of the data collected from the surveys. She reminded everyone of the upcoming workshop in Crossville on September 25 and noted that Treasurer Womac, Board member Duggan, and Director Coleman would be attending.

VI. Old Business

1. MCLB Nominating Committee – Chairman Forrest reiterated his certainty that the County Commission will reappoint Treasurer Tim Womac and board member Kay Harper to the MCLB at their October meeting.
2. MCLB Book Order/Disposition Reports – Chairman Forrest noted the reports for the EGFPL and Englewood Library are ready and available and that he feels confident that we are in compliance. Director Coleman commented that the reports for the EGFPL will not always be so lengthy (93 pages this time for the disposition report).
3. EGFPL FY 23-24 Retro Budget Approval and EGFPL FY 24-25 Budget Approval – Chairman Forrest said he is confident that the Athens City Council and County Commission has been and will continue to be supportive of increased pay for library employees. He recommended moving forward with compensation increases for library staff. However, he said he is not comfortable with moving forward with the budget approval because “the numbers are not in balance.” He asked Bri McKinney to help change the format of the budget for presentation.

Secretary Boyd made a motion to move forward and approve the 3% compensation increase for library staff retroactive back to July 1, 2024. Vice Chairman Blevins seconded. Bri McKinney and Chairman Forrest discussed and came to an agreement to pay the auditors with funds from the Long-Term Investment Account in order to help the budget. The motion passed unanimously. Director Coleman and Bri McKinney said they would have the budget ready for the November meeting.

VII. New Business

1. MCLB Auditor Selection – Treasurer Womac listed the three bids for Auditing Services: HHM made a bid of $15,000 for each year; Mauldin and Jenkins made a bid of $14,000 for 2022 and $14,500 for 2023 and no bid for 2024; Johnson, Murphey and Wright made a bid of $13,000 for each year. Mauldin and Jenkins only offered to perform the audit online. Johnson, Murphey, and Wright offered to do the audit in person, begin in November, and have the reports for all three years prepared by January for approval. Treasurer Womac said he would “bring them the turkey” upon hearing Johnson, Murphey and Wright’s offer to begin work on Thanksgiving week if their bid is accepted. Chairman Forrest stated that Johnson, Murphey and Wright is the lowest bidder and noted that they were the library’s auditor before Mauldin and Jenkins.

Vice Chairman Blevins made a motion to accept the bid from Johnson, Murphey and Wright to audit the years 2022, 2023, and 2024. Board member Jan Dingess seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Forrest asked Director Coleman to include the quotes for the LED office lights and the new yard sign in the budget for the next meeting. Director Coleman agreed and commented that the LED lights could be paid for out of Capital Improvements.

Regional Director Liz Schreck distributed training completion certificates from the Regional Library to several library staff members. She also noted that TSLA has streamlined the printing process for Trusteeship Training Certificates and that they should be ready soon.

Chairman Forrest reminded the board members to complete their Trusteeship Training, and that the next board meeting will be on Monday November 25, 2024 at 6:00 PM.

Director Coleman reminded everyone about the library’s upcoming Open House and that the library will be closed for a staff development day on November (Election Day).

Chairman Forrest adjourned the meeting at 6:49 PM.