McMinn County Library Board

1289 Ingleside Avenue

Athens, Tennessee 37303

Board Meeting Minutes

NOVEMBER 25, 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 member Tara Carter was absent.

1. Call to Order, Establish Quorum, and Acknowledgments

Chairman Forrest welcomed everyone and established a quorum.

1. Outgoing Member Recognition – Councilman John Duggan

Chairman Forrest presented outgoing MCLB member John Duggan, who had to resign after his election to the Athens City Council, with a plaque in appreciation of his 16 months of service on the MCLB. John Duggan thanked the board for the plaque.

1. Public Comments

Lynne Perkinson requested a copy of the Fisher library’s policies for clarification on a few items. She praised EGFPL Director Becky Coleman as “wonderful” and thanked her for her hard work. Chairman Forrest told Lynn Perkinson that the board would be glad to share a copy of the policies with her.

John Duggan discussed the idea of livestreaming or videorecording the MCLB meetings to help the Secretary to have a backup audio and to provide subtitles for the hearing-impaired. He discussed the idea of shutting off the Wi-Fi after hours to prevent loitering outside the building. He also reminded the library staff to “stay ahead of it” on cybersecurity and firewalls to prevent data breaches.

1. Approval of Minutes

Secretary Tyler Boyd presented the Minutes from the September 23, 2024 meeting.

Vice Chairman Mickey Blevins made a motion to approve the Minutes. Board member Jan Dingess seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

1. Treasurer’s Report

Treasurer Tim Womac compared September 2023 and September 2024. He reported on lower operating expenses in 2024 due to unpaid bills that were paid in 2023, higher payroll in 2023 due to insurance costs, and higher income in 2024 due to a generous contribution. He noted that September 2024 was “much more normal” than September 2023. He compared October 2023 to October 2024 and noted that the 2nd quarter checks from Athens and McMinn County usually arrive during October. He reported that contributions increased in 2024. He noted that operating software expenses increased in 2024 due to the switch from Versa to Atrium. He reported that payroll was more equalized in 2024. He also reported that the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) agreements had been passed around the county and approved. He reported that he would be sending out letters about the 3rd quarter checks very soon.

Bri McKinney from Warren-Jackson briefly discussed her recent work on the 2024-2025 budget with EGFPL Director Becky Coleman.

1. Library Reports
2. Calhoun – Treasurer Tim Womac discussed the upcoming Christmas in the Park event on November 29 and noted that free books will be distributed.
3. E.G. Fisher – EGFPL Director Becky Coleman reported on the new sign in the library’s front yard and new LED lights in the back offices, noting that the total cost for both amounted to $3,700, all taken from capital funds. She reported that the Friends will be purchasing a book drop to place outside the building closer to the parking lot. She reported that the Friends will also be paying to replace the flooring in the Community Room. She reported that the library was closed on November 21-22 for successful staff training to learn the new operating system. She also reported on the progress on preparing materials for the audits and thanked everyone on the staff for their help, especially Beth Jackson. She reported on the library’s new smartphone app. She also praised Kathleen Payne who is a new volunteer at the library.
4. E.G. Fisher Friends of the Library – EGFPL Director Becky Coleman reported on the recent in-house used book sale that raised $522 and noted that the Friends have raised over $17,000 to date in 2024.
5. Englewood – Board member Jan Dingess reported that the library had 145 patrons in September, with 93 using the computers, and 98 patrons in October, with 63 using the computers. She also reported on an upcoming “Fun Day” event at the library on December 23.
6. Etowah – Board member Kay Harper shared news from Director Pagdon that the library received $1.3 million in grant funding to be used to renovate the first floor. She reported that the library recently converted to the Atrium operating system. She also reported that the Friends group is working on more grants and recently received grants for Collection Development and Summer Reading programs. She reported on the upcoming “Christmas at the Carnegie” event on December 7.
7. Regional Library – Regional Director Liz Schreck discussed recent trainings in the region as well as a vendor showcase. She reported that all annual documents have been updated and signed, including the Board Appointment List. She noted that Tech grant spending is now open. She reminded MCLB members to complete the Trusteeship Training. She discussed the Tennessee Library Association Conference and the “Mentor TN” program. She distributed handouts with READS circulation statistics and the Standards Analysis Report. She presented Trusteeship Training Certificates to Treasurer Tim Womac and Secretary Tyler Boyd.

VII. Old Business

1. EGFPL Lee Estate Settlement – Chairman Forrest reported that the Lee estate has been settled and that the cash (approx. $75,000) and Truist Bank stock (valued at approx. $60,000) from the Lee estate has increased the balance in our Long-Term Investment Account to $550,175. He noted that the Truist stock will be sold in order to comply with the policy of the account.
2. MCLB Nominating Committee – Chairman Forrest discussed the terms and expiration dates of MCLB members. He noted that Treasurer Tim Womac and board member Kay Harper were reappointed recently by the McMinn County Commission and that the Athens City Council will be discussing an appointment to succeed former board member John Duggan.
3. MCLB Book Order/Disposition Reports – Chairman Forrest reported that these reports are available.
4. EGFPL FY 23-24 Retro Budget Approval – Chairman Forrest briefly discussed the budget.

Secretary Boyd made a motion to adopt the budget. Board member Ashley Smith seconded. The budget was adopted unanimously.

1. EGFPL FY 24-25 Budget Approval – Chairman Forrest and Bri McKinney discussed the budget, including the standard draw rate and the audit expense. Treasurer Womac and EGFPL Director Coleman joined the discussion, with Womac praising the research and the spreadsheet prepared for the budget presentation.

Treasurer Womac made a motion to approve the budget. Board member Jan Dingess seconded. The budget was approved unanimously.

VIII. New Business

1. MCLB By-Laws Review Committee – Chairman Forrest asked for volunteers to serve on the committee. Treasurer Womac and Secretary Boyd volunteered to serve on the committee and review the By-Laws in advance of the January 2025 meeting.
2. CALHOUN Director Search Update – Chairman Forrest reported that the Calhoun Library is still searching for a new director to succeed the retiring director.
3. EGFPL Operating Hours – EGFPL Director Becky Coleman reported that the library had recently began opening on 9:30 AM on Saturdays instead of 10:00 AM to comply with the 55 hours/week required for a Level 5 library. Regional Director Liz Schreck noted that the MOE shows the library is open 54.5 hours/week and that a board vote would be required to make it official.

Board member Ashley Smith made a motion to approve the changes in the library’s operating hours. Board member Kay Harper seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

1. EGFPL Fundraising Ideas – Chairman Forrest reported that EGFPL Director Becky Coleman had some fundraising ideas. Director Coleman discussed her ideas, including selling donated material on eBay. Chairman Forrest did not recommend raffles or bingo nights, but did recommend an Annual Fund Appeal (ideal for the end of the year). Vice Chairman Blevins discussed some successful fundraising efforts at other libraries and on other boards he has on which he has served.
2. EGFPL Upcoming Agenda Items – Chairman Forrest reported that the Material Reconsideration Policy and Internet Safety Policy will be reviewed and discussed at upcoming meetings. He also reported that the board will be discussing EGFPL Director Becky Coleman’s vacation days accrued from her time working for the Cleveland-Bradley County Library as well as incentives for the EGFPL staff.

Chairman Forrest reminded the board members to complete their Trusteeship Training, and that the next board meeting will be on Monday January 27, 2025 at 6:00 PM.

Chairman Forrest adjourned the meeting at 7:03 PM.