

**GREENVILLE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Minutes of the Regular Meeting**

March 25, 2024

**Present:** Mr. Brian Aufmuth, Mr. Kenneth Baxter, Dr. Gene Beckner, Mrs. Elizabeth Collins, Mrs. Stephanie Cunningham, Mr. James Hoard, Mr. Tommy Hughes, Mrs. Marcia Moston, Mrs. Kristen Odom, Mr. Joe Poore, and Mr. S. Allan Hill, presiding.

**Administrative Managers Present:** Don Allen, Accounting Manager; Karen Allen, Youth Services Manager; Jerry Osteen, Information Technology Manager; Brian Morrison, Access and Discovery Director; Beverly James, Executive Director; and Jill Cornwell, Administrative Projects Manager, acting as Recording Secretary.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Hill called the meeting to order at 12:02p.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Hill called for the approval of the minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting, February 26, 2024. Mr. Poore so moved and Mr. Hoard seconded. The motion carried.

**LIBRARY FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Baxter announced three action items being proposed by the Library Finance Committee: The Proposed FY25 Operating Budget; Requests for Use of Contingency Funds; and a proposed revision to the *Compensation Plan*.

He called on Don Allen to answer questions about the proposed budget, provided to trustees in advance of the meeting as part of their meeting materials. Following discussion, Mr. Hill asked for those in favor of the proposed budget to indicate in the affirmative. All were in favor and the Proposed FY25 Operating Budget passed unanimously.

Mr. Baxter provided an overview of two requests for use of contingency funds:

- 1) \$50,000 to cover the difference between the budgeted amount and actual cost of the Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) and generator project for the Greer Branch
- 2) \$27,000 to cover the cost of purchasing a centralized password manager and Yubikeys for staff to enhance the security of the Library System's technology.

In response to a question about the 50K difference in pricing for the Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) generator project at the Greer Branch, Mr. Osteen stated that the prices were acquired three years prior, and the difference was related to the increased cost of the UPS. With no further questions, Mr. Hill asked those in favor of approving the two requests for use of contingency funds to indicate in the affirmative. All were in favor and the requests were approved as presented.

Mr. Baxter referenced two changes being proposed for the Employment Cost Index section of the *Compensation Plan* and referenced the excerpt provided to trustees in their meeting materials. There being no discussion, Mr. Hill asked for those in favor of the changes as presented to indicate in the affirmative. All were in favor and the proposed revisions to the *Compensation Plan* were approved.

**LIBRARY MATERIALS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Request for Reconsideration of Library Material Appeal

Mrs. Moston reported that the Library Materials Committee had considered four appeals for library materials. She highlighted the process for submitting a Request for Reconsideration, including that any appeals of the Library's decisions were referred to the Library Materials Committee. She provided the committee's recommendations pertaining to the four appeals received:

- 1) *Closer to Nowhere* by Ellen Hopkins: Mrs. Moston stated that the committee's recommendation was to retain the book in the Juvenile Collection. In response to questions, Mrs. Moston stated the targeted age level for Juvenile materials was 0-12 years old and that the committee felt that the book did not violate the *Collection Development Policy* by mentioning drug abuse. Mr. Poore asked if there were specific passages in the materials submitted by the requestor that violated the policy. Mrs. Moston confirmed that there were none. Mr. Hill called for those in favor of the committee recommendation to retain the book in the Juvenile Collection to indicate in the affirmative. All were in favor and the motion carried.
- 2) *Rick* by Alex Gino: Mrs. Moston noted that the appeal of the Library's decision for this particular request had come in before the latest changes to the *Collection Development Policy* had been approved by the Board of Trustees. Mrs. Moston read objections to the materials provided by the requestor who was appealing the Library's decision to retain the book in the Juvenile Collection. She added that the requestor asked that it be relocated to either the Parenting and Early Childhood (PEC) Collection or the Young Adult (YA) Collection. Mrs. Moston read from the *Collection Development Policy* and noted that due to the Question and Answer section in the back of the book, the committee felt that the material should be relocated to PEC with other bibliotherapy-type materials. Mr. Aufmuth stated that because the book had no characters in it under 12 years old, he felt it was targeted to ages 12 and up and for that reason, should be moved to the YA section. In response to a question, Mrs. Moston stated that the grade level range for the book was 3<sup>rd</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> according to the publisher. Mr. Poore inquired if the reason for the policy violation was that the book affirms gender transitioning. He stated his preference to tie any decision directly to a policy statement. Mrs. Moston confirmed that the book affirmed gender transitioning and included resources in the back of the book where children could get information on changing their biological sex. Mr. Hill stated that the overriding principle of the policy was that parents should be in charge of bringing up and discussing these issues with their children and with regards to bibliotherapy, the resources in the book inform people how to get in touch with someone to discuss gender transitioning. He asked Ms. James to provide a description of bibliotherapy. She stated that books in the PEC Collection were designed to give parents an opportunity to read and introduce the book with the child. Mr. Hill called for a vote on the committee's recommendation to relocate the book to the PEC Collection. With seven in favor and three opposed, the motion carried.
- 3) *Flamer* by Mike Curato: Mrs. Moston stated that the book was a graphic novel currently located in the Young Adult Collection and that the request was to move the book to the Adult Collection. The individual making the request cited graphic language and pictures. Mrs. Moston stated that the scenes in the book were explicit, and sexually crude and vulgar. She added that the requestor stated that tax payer dollars should not be spent on the book, and was appealing the Library's decision to retain the book in the Young Adult Collection. Mrs. Moston read from the individual's letter of appeal describing some of the book's content, and from the *Collection Development Policy* to cite the relevant portions of the policy. Mr. Aufmuth stated that the book contained significant vulgarities with innuendos and alludes to sex, but no graphic sex. Mr. Poore asked if the descriptions in the book were considered graphic sexual depictions or descriptions as specified in the *Collection Development Policy*. Mr. Beckner shared information provided in the appeal, citing specific examples of the book's language, disparaging remarks by characters, and a scene where an older adult was with a minor in a shower. Mr. Poore stated that he felt the information shared aligned with the policy's description of material that is considered graphic, and material that is considered gratuitous sex. Mr. Hill called for a vote on the committee's recommendation. With all in favor, the committee's recommendation to relocate the book to the Adult Collection was approved unanimously.
- 4) *We Are the Ants* by Shaun David Hutchinson: Mrs. Moston stated that attachments listing some of the book's content were included with the appeal of the Library's decision to retain the book in the Young Adult Collection. She stated that the committee's recommendation was to move the book to the Adult Collection. Mr. Aufmuth stated that many of the attachments citing the book's content were not in conflict with the *Collection Development Policy*. Mr. Hill called for a vote on the committee's recommendation to relocate *We Are the Ants* to the Adult Collection. All were in favor and the motion carried.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. James called on Mr. Morrison who reported great attendance at several recent library events for

adults, highlighting the Plant Swap & Seed Library Pop-Up program at Pelham Road Branch on 3/16. He informed trustees that approximately 80 people attended with seeds, plant clippings, and live plants to swap or leave for others and that seed packets for library cardholders were also available. He reminded trustees that the Seed Library at the Berea Branch was a collaborative initiative between the Library System and the Greenville County Soil & Water Conversation District. Mr. Morrison also reported that a Plant Swap & Seed Library Pop-Up program was scheduled at the Simpsonville Branch on April 6.

Ms. James called on Mrs. Allen to provide information about Youth Services programs. Mr. Hill congratulated Mrs. Allen who he noted would be receiving a certificate in recognition of 30 years of employment with the Library System. Mrs. Allen reported that the Library held 241 program with 9,443 attendees in January and 268 programs in February with over 11,000 attendees. She added that the two February Lollipop concerts drew over 300 attendees and that the two March Story Time ballet programs welcomed close to 500 attendees. Mrs. Allen stated that over 200 people attended the Barbie party recently held at Main. In response to a question from Mr. Poore, Mrs. Allen responded that the meeting room size at branches made it difficult to host some of the larger programs at those locations. Following her remarks, Mr. Hill presented Mrs. Allen her certificate to a round of applause from those present.

Ms. James called attention to the Library System's Download and Streaming services rack card.

### **APPEARANCES**

Mr. Hill announced that several individuals had signed up to speak. He reminded everyone to keep their remarks to three minutes, and informed presenters that he would be timing them and letting them know when their time was up. The following individuals spoke:

Name	Purpose of Appearance
Brent Cox	"Speaking – Books – Art"
Loren Frant	"Library good stuff"
Susana Saravia	"remove porn Books"
Greg Somers	"Express gratitude"

Prior to adjournment, Mr. Poore asked if there was a way to see how many responses to Requests for Reconsideration the Board was overturning in order to monitor the ratio of the Board's decisions. Mr. Hill noted that the Board didn't see Requests for Reconsideration that were not appealed. Ms. James acknowledged that staff are challenged in interpreting the policy when considering Requests for Reconsideration, for example when the word "rape" is used but not described as an action. She added that 14 more requests had been received this past Friday. Mr. Hill stated for the record that the Library System had not banned any books. Mrs. Collins noted that parents can obtain an unrestricted Juvenile card for their child which would allow the child to search the catalog and get any book in the Library System's collection. Mr. Poore asked for an update on how many books had been challenged, how many of those challenges came to the Board and how many decisions were reversed by the Board. Ms. James responded that she could provide an update. Mr. Hill stated that he would also like to see what titles had been submitted as Requests for Reconsideration. Mr. Poore added that there may be a third party available to audit the process in place if needed.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Hill called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Hoard so moved. Dr. Beckner seconded. Mr. Hill adjourned the meeting at 1:19p.

S. Allan Hill  
Chair, Board of Trustees

Beverly James  
Executive Director

Jill Cornwell  
Recording Secretary