

Meeting of the Muscogee County Library Board
February 13, 2024 – 11:00 am
Columbus Public Library – Meredith Jarrell Conference Room

Members in Attendance:

Todd Robinson, Secretary
Judy Barnett
Susan Berry
Denise Eckley
Donovan Granville

Dahmon H. King
Reggie Lewis
Beth Schwartz
Mary Angela Stone McMurphy

Also, in Attendance:

Alan Harkness, Director, CVL (Chattahoochee Valley Libraries)
Gabriel Lundeen, Deputy Director, CVL Tracie Price, Finance/HR, CVL
Gabbi Harp, Operations Coordinator
Katie Burnett, CPL Branch Manager
Amber Brookins, Materials/Statistics Coordinator
Laura Ann Mann, Exe, Director of MCLF
Lizette Cruz, Administrative Specialist

- I. Call to Order – Secretary Robinson called the meeting to order at 11:05 am.
- II. **Approval of the December 5th, 2023, minutes.**
Secretary Robinson asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the December 5th, 2023, meeting. Berry moved to approve the minutes. Motion was seconded by Eckley. Motion was approved unanimously by Robinson, Barnett, Berry, Eckley, Granville, King, Lewis, Schwartz, and Stone McMurphy.
- III. Public Comment - There was no public comment.
- IV. Muscogee County Library Foundation
Laura Ann Mann gave the Muscogee County Library Foundation update. The MCLF had their annual Gala on January 31st. There was a free public event prior to the Gala with invited author Nina Simon. There were 40 people in attendance for the free public event and 105 attendees to the Gala. As part of the MCLB's new public author appearance program, *Novel Notions*, author DéLana R.A. Dameron will be speaking about her debut novel *Redwood Court* on February 22nd. The MCLF budget is on track and the CVL will be receiving their allotment from the MCLF for FY 25.
- V. Treasurer's Report
Tracie Price covered the FY24 Period 6 financials which ended on December 31st, 2023. Revenue is on track and expenditures are trending a little low. There were no questions.
- VI. Director's Report
Director Harkness has been named the Library Director of the Year for the State Georgia. In the Grand Reading Room today at noon there will be a local celebration for the public. The Assistant State Librarian, several news outlets and the MCSD (Muscogee County School District) Superintendent, Dr. David Lewis, will be present. Director Harkness will be given a plaque, and the MLCF will serve a light lunch. On Monday, March 11th there will be a presentation by the Governor at the Capital. Director Harkness invited anyone who wishes to go to the capitol to let him know as the library will be taking several vehicles to drive guests up to the event.

Director Harkness advised the board that the proposed State Senate Bill 390 oversight committee review was bumped up to today. He encouraged everyone to reach out to their local representatives and state senators about this bill. He handed out some information on the bill.

Director Harkness informed the board that the request made by the board to the MCSD for 8 million

in the E-SPLOST for the construction of a new North Columbus Branch was denied. They might only be giving the CVL 1.5 million. If this is all the CVL receives then this will put any possibility of construction on hold for at least 10 years. Director Harkness will discuss this with Superintendent Lewis and see if they can raise the amount.

On February 15th, there will be a special documentary screening in collaboration with the Columbus Museum, “All Me; The Life and Times of Winfred Rembert”, at the Columbus Public Library. The Columbus Children’s Book Festival will be held on Saturday, May 11th. The featured authors and illustrators are Vashti Harrison, Matt de la Pena, and Alyssa Satin Capucitti. Vashti Harrison is the first black woman to be awarded the 2024 Caldecott Medal for her book BIG. She has also won the 2024 Coretta Scott King Author and the CSK Illustrator Awards.

The completion of the South Columbus Public Library renovation has been moved to the end of August or beginning of September. Director Harkness invited the board to a hard hat tour of the SCPL construction site in April.

VII. Branch Report

Deputy Director Gabriel Lundeen shared some patron comments highlighting the libraries as the third place for the community to go after home and work or school. On February 19th, the library system closes for an all-day staff enrichment and training day. The featured guest will be Angela Stanley from the Georgia State Library. She will be training staff on 1st amendment audits. Interviews should be happening soon for Branch Manager of the Mildred L. Terry Public Library. Deputy Director Lundeen has been filling in for that role until a new branch manager is found.

VIII. Unfinished Business – None

IX. New Business

i. Vote on a candidate to fill the last vacant position on the board.

After some significant discussion, Judy Barnett made a motion to elect Asante Hilts to the Muscogee County Library after being presented to the Muscogee County School Board at the next MCSD meeting. Beth Schwartz seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously by Robinson, Barnett, Berry, Eckley, Granville, King, Lewis, Schwartz, and Stone McMurphy.

ii. Vote for approval of updated job descriptions:

Denise Eckley made a motion to approve the changes to the following updated job descriptions; Branch Services Assistant, Library Assistant I, Library Associate, and Materials Associate. Reggie Lewis seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously by Robinson, Barnett, Berry, Eckley, Granville, King, Lewis, Schwartz, and Stone McMurphy.

iii. Vote on longevity retention supplement

After some discussion Denis Eckley made a motion to accept the longevity retention supplement for FY24 with the stipulation that the employee handbook is amended to include that if an employee has an NI in their yearly evaluation, they will not be eligible to receive the longevity retention supplement. Beth Schwartz seconded the motion. Motion was passed with Robinson, Berry, Eckley, Granville, King, Lewis, Schwartz, and Stone McMurphy voting yea. Barnett did not agree with the added stipulation and voted nay.

Next meeting is set for March 11, 2024, at 11 AM. Location: Columbus Public Library
Meeting was adjourned at 11:58 PM

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