

Meeting of the Muscogee County Library Board
December 8, 2025 – 11:00 am
Columbus Public Library, Synovus Rooms A & B

Members in Attendance: Mary Angela Stone McMurphy
Darcy Brito, Chair
Denise Eckley, Treasurer
Judy Barnett
Susan Berry
David Fox
Sharon Childs Jamison
Reggie Lewis
SirMichael Jones
Jennifer St. John

Also, in Attendance:

Alan Harkness, Director, CVL (Chattahoochee Valley Libraries)
Katie Burnett, Assist. Director of Public Services, CVL
Amber Brookins, Materials & Statistics Coordinator, CVL

- I. Call to Order – Chair Brito called the meeting to order at 11:02 am.
- II. **Approval of October 20, 2025.**
Chair Brito asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the October 20, 2025 meeting. Jones made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Motion was seconded by St. John. The motion was approved unanimously by Brito, Eckley, Barnett, Berry, Fox, Jamison, Lewis, Jones, and St. John.
- III. Public Comment – There was none.
- IV. Muscogee County Library Foundation - Executive Director Mann gave the MCLF Report. The MCLF Board recently met and is currently running its annual end-of-year letter writing campaign. The November Cocktails & Comedy Fundraiser raised \$38,000, less than previous years due to the absence of peer-to-peer fundraising, which was a conscious decision by the Board. In 2026, the MCLF plans to implement strategies to recover lost revenue and attract new donors.

Tomorrow, MCLF will host a free public event with bestselling author Mary K. Andrews, who will sign books at 5 PM and speak at 6 PM, expecting high attendance. Next month, the annual Founder’s Society Gala will thank major donors and will feature culinary historian Adrian Miller, the star author, on January 22, 2026. A free public event with Miller, including a barbecue tasting, will follow on January 23, 2026.
- V. Treasurer’s Report – Director Harkness presented the treasurer’s report. He went over the FY26 Period 4 Financial Report which ended on October 31, 2025. The budget presently has a surplus of \$340,00. The CVL IT department developed a cost-effective in-house system for credit/debit card payments, generating an additional \$7,000 in revenue, so far this year. The state Lib-Tech grant decreased from \$40,000 to \$20,000 this year. Expenditures in the travel line will soon rise due to six staff and two board members attending the Public Libraries Association National Conference in the spring. Overall, expenses and revenue are on track.
- VI. Director’s Report - Director Harkness presented the Director’s report. CPL has been featured in the GPLS News Magazine. In early fall, the head of communication from Georgia Public Library Service visited CPL to take photos, particularly in the children's department, capturing various patrons and board members present that day.

Director Harkness handed out the new Winter Guide Food and the Soul of America to board.

Although the CVL's grant application was unsuccessful, the MCLF will fund the program. Programming & Media Content Coordinator Henry McCoy has organized a selection of culinary authors and speakers for this library-system wide event. The Columbus Children's Book Festival will be featuring guest authors like Louis Sachar and Sandra Markle. Additional programs include ongoing collaboration with the Pastoral Institute and Winter Reading activities.

Director Harkness informed the board about a patron challenging some library policies and contacting the MCSD. He will provide updates as the situation develops. He reminded the board of the System Wide Library Board Training on January 31, 2026, and requested RSVPs. Harkness also hosted a Leadership Retreat, where staff completed the Myers-Briggs Inventory, and plans to cover the Thin Book of Trust in the Spring to foster workplace trust.

Director Harkness met with the MCSD real estate agent and Head of Plant Services to discuss the former Georgia Military College Campus on 7300 Blackmon Road as a potential site for the new North Columbus Public Library. They requested a scope of work from architects to estimate renovation costs before bidding. After obtaining estimates, Harkness will present them to the board and MCSD for approval, including demolition and new construction costs.

Henry McCoy, CVL Programming & Media Content Coordinator, returns as Santa Claus, visiting library branches to delight children, including a sensory-friendly session for kids with special needs at North Columbus Public Library. The CVL is also starting its strategic planning and FY27 budget process, anticipating an increase in the employer's retirement contribution to 22%, which will affect next year's budget.

- VII. Branch Report – Assist. Director Burnett gave the Branch Report. She presented a photo slide show of several events. She showed pictures on all the Halloween events across the branches in October, the Friendsgiving event at MTPL, A-dough-able craft event at SCPL, and Family Fun night at CPL featuring Family Trees activity. NCPL is offering a book bundle to accompany the children's theatre play at the Springer, *The Leaves Are Falling*. She also showed pictures on the 1000 Books before Kindergarten Program offered at all the branches. Resource of the month for December is Libby.

VIII. New Business

A. Review and vote on listed policies

i. INF6 Social Media Policy

After some discussion, Eckley made a motion to approve the policy with suggested edits as discussed. Jamison seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously by Brito, Eckley, Barnett, Berry, Fox, Jamison, Lewis, Jones, and St. John.

B. Approve closure of the Columbus Public Library on Thursday, January 22, 2026 at 5PM for the Founder's Society Gala.

Eckley made a motion to approval the closure of the Columbus Public Library at 5PM on Thursday, January 22, 2026 for the Founder's Society Gala. Jones seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously by Brito, Eckley, Barnett, Berry, Fox, Jamison, Lewis, Jones, and St. John.

C. Elect a new Board Chair

Chair Brito is rolling off the board at the end of this month for 2025. Chair Brito nominated Jennifer St. John to fill the vacant Board Chair position for 2026. St. John accepted the nomination. Lewis made a motion to elect Jennifer St. Chair as the Muscogee County Library Board Chair with term to begin in January 1, 2026. Berry seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously by Brito, Eckley, Barnett, Berry, Fox, Jamison, Lewis, Jones, and St. John.

D. Elect a new Board Treasurer

Treasurer Eckley is rolling off the board at the end of this month for 2025. Treasurer Eckley nominated Mary Angela Stone McMurphy to fill the vacant Treasurer position for 2026. Although Stone McMurphy is not present Eckley has already discussed this possibility with her. Lewis made a motion to elect Mary Angela Stone McMurphy as the Muscogee County Library Treasurer pending her acceptance of the nomination, with term to begin in January 1, 2026. Eckley seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously by Brito, Eckley, Barnett, Berry, Fox, Jamison, Lewis, Jones, and St. John.

IX. Chair's Report

Chair Brito thanked everyone serving on the board and stated that it has been an honor and privilege to serve. She will miss being on the board. She asked everyone to support Jennifer St. John as the new Board Chair.

- X. Next meeting is set for January 12, 2026, at 11 AM. Location: Columbus Public Library. The meeting was adjourned at 11:54 AM.

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