

Meeting of the Muscogee County Library Board
October 20, 2025 – 11:00 am
Columbus Public Library, Synovus Rooms A & B

Members in Attendance: Mary Angela Stone McMurphy

Darcy Brito, Chair

Judy Barnett

Susan Berry

David Fox

Sharon Childs Jamison

SirMichael Jones

Dahmon King

Jennifer St, John

Mary Angela Stone McMurphy

Also, in Attendance:

Alan Harkness, Director, CVL (Chattahoochee Valley Libraries)

Katie Burnett, Assist. Director of Public Services, CVL

Tracie Price, Assist. Director of Business Services, CVL

Amber Brookins, Materials & Statistics Coordinator, CVL

Laura Ann Mann, Executive of the Muscogee County Library Foundation

Lizette Cruz, Administrative Specialist, CVL

I. Call to Order – Chair Brito called the meeting to order at 11:00 am.

II. Approval of 11, 2025, minutes.

Chair Brito asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 9, 2025, meeting. Fox made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Motion was seconded by Jones. The motion was approved unanimously by Brito, Barnett, Berry, Fox, Jamison, Jones, King, St. John, and Stone McMurphy.

III. Public Comment – There was none.

IV. Treasurer's Report

Assist. Director Price covered the FY26 Period 2 financials which ended August 31, 2025. As of August, 16.7% of the budget has been expended. Budget trends are as planned. All parameters as expected for that time of year.

V. Muscogee County Library Foundation

Executive Director Mann invited board members to attend the MCLF's annual fundraiser, Cocktails & Comedy, on November 13, 2025, at 6PM. This year's comedian is Karen Morgan. She also provided flyers and posters for board members to hand out or display at their place of work or community.

The MCLF has booked Mary K. Andrews for a free entrance author event on Dec. 9th, 2025. She will be signing books at 5PM and will speak at 6PM. The MCLF will have books for pre-sale which will also allow for reservations of seats so they can gauge the possible attendance numbers. MCLF will be sending their year of appeal letters this week, asking for continued support from the MCLF. The MCLF supports the CVL with about one million dollars a year or more.

VI. Director's Report - Director Harkness presented the Director's report. Director Harkness went over the CVL Dashboard Report. Cardholders are nearing 29,000 with a retention rate of 44% and a market share holding steady at 20%. While physical circulation is down 3% e-materials, circulation has risen by 23%. In person visits are down by 6% however website visitors have increased by

11%. Computer use is still climbing but not yet reaching pre-COVID levels.

Summer Reading was a great success. The CVL Library system reached a goal of 2.1 million minutes to read, surpassing the goal of 2,025,000 minutes. This year CVL decided to recognize the schools in MCSD that participated in Summer Reading. The top three schools awarded for the highest percentage of their student bodies participating were Britt David Magnet Academy, Lonnie Jackson Academy, and Middle Academy. The Read More Award was awarded to the top three schools with the most year-to-year growth in Summer Reading participation, Brewer Early Innovation Academy, Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary, and Forrest Road Elementary. The principals were invited to receive the award plaque for their schools at the MCSD Board meeting in a small ceremony. It made local, state, and national library news. The Early Childhood Department and Children's Department Outreach efforts were vital to the success of Summer Reading.

The CVL Libraries will be sending six staff members and two library board members, Judy Barnett, and Asante Hilts to the Public Library Association Conference 2026 in Minneapolis, Minnesota in April. The CVL Libraries also sent several staff members to the Georgia Libraries Association Conference that was held last week here in Columbus.

The Columbus Public Library will be hosting several Authors this month. Author and Poet Padraig Rooney on Tuesday, October 21st and authors Karen Spears Zacharias and E.J. Wade on October 28th.

Director Harkness listed the authors and illustrators that the CVL is looking to have at next year's Columbus Children's Book Festival in April. CVL has applied for a federal grant to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States with a program honoring US culture through food. The *Food and the Soul of America* program will be running through all the CVL branches with featured cookbook authors, and speakers, including cookbook authors and TV show host Vera Stewart. If the CVL is not awarded the grant, the MCLF will cover the cost of this event.

Last Tuesday Director Harkness and several other administrative staff went to view the former Georgia Military College Campus site on 7300 Blackmon Road as a possibility for the new North Columbus Public Library. It is in the right location, and the right size is needed. Next week Director Harkness will be touring the facility with the architect and contractor who worked on South along with the head of plant services for the MCSD to explore reasons to pursue this property further or not. Director Harkness will keep the board updated

- VII. Branch Report – Assist. Director Burnett gave the Branch Report. She presented a photo slide of several events, including a system-wide Cake & Cards Event for library card sign up month. More than 100 people participated, signed up for a library card, and received a piece of cake. CPL held a K-Pop Demon Hunters pop-up event. Over 500 people participated and it was a huge success. MLTLP had their annual Hispanic Heritage Month event. Over 40 participants attended. NCPL had a Mascot Storytime event. The different Mascots of all Columbus' major sports teams came for a story time. These Mascot sponsored story times have been very well attended. NCPL also held their annual Story Time Camp-Out and Stuffed Animal Sleepover. The kids come in for an afternoon library camp-out story time then "tuck" in their stuffed animals to stay in the library overnight. The librarians then take pictures of the "adventures" the stuffed animals have in the library "overnight" and the next day when the kids come to pick up their stuffed animals they get a printed-out book of their stuffies' night adventures in the library.

VIII. New Business

A. Review and vote on listed policies

i. Ethics Policy – Chattahoochee Valley Library Board Members

After some discussion, Jones then made a motion to approve the policy with no changes. Stone McMurphy seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously by Brito, Barnett, Berry, Fox, Jamison, Jones, King, St. John, and Stone McMurphy.

ii. PER10: Staff Use of Library Collection Materials and Equipment

After some discussion St. John then made a motion to approve the policy with no changes. Jones seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously by Brito, Barnett, Berry, Fox, Jamison, Jones, King, St. John, and Stone McMurphy.

iii. PER14: Nepotism / Employee Relationships

After some discussion King then made a motion to approve the policy with suggested changes. Jones seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously by Brito, Barnett, Berry, Fox, Jamison, Jones, King, St. John, and Stone McMurphy.

iv. PER17

After some discussion, Jones then made a motion to approve the policy with no changes. Stone McMurphy seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously by Brito, Barnett, Berry, Fox, Jamison, Jones, King, St. John, and Stone McMurphy.

B. Discuss and vote on candidates to fill the three vacant positions coming up at the end of the year.

i. Sara Rumph

ii. Sarah S. Horton

iii. LeOnte Michelle Wilson

After some discussion Jones made a motion to accept all three nominees to fill the three vacancies in January. Stone McMurphy seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously by Brito, Barnett, Berry, Fox, Jamison, Jones, King, St. John, and Stone McMurphy.

IX. Chair's Report

Chair Brito encouraged everyone to attend the Cocktails & Comedy Fundraiser.

X. Next meeting is set for December 8th, 2025, at 11 AM. Location: Columbus Public Library. The meeting was adjourned at 12PM.

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