

Meeting of the Muscogee County Library Board

April 29, 2024 – 11:00 am

Columbus Public Library – Meredith Jarrell Conference Room

Members in Attendance:

Darcy Brito, Chair	Jennifer St. John
Todd Robinson, Secretary	Asante Hilts
Denise Eckley, Treasurer	SirMichael Jones
Judy Barnett	Susan Berry
Beth Schwartz	Mary Angela Stone McMurphy

Also, in Attendance:

Alan Harkness, Director, CVL (Chattahoochee Valley Libraries)
David Lewis, Superintendent MCSD (Muscogee County School District)
Gabriel Lundeen, Deputy Director, CVL
Tracie Price, Finance/HR, CVL
Gabbi Harp, Operations Coordinator, CVL
Katie Burnett, CPL Branch Manager, CVL
Tiffany Wilson, Community Engagement Coordinator, CVL
Amber Brookins, Materials/Statistics Coordinator, CVL
Laura Ann Mann, Exe. Director of MCLF (Muscogee County Library Foundation)
Lizette Cruz, Administrative Specialist, CVL

I. Call to Order – Chair Brito called the meeting to order at 11:05 am.

II. Approval of the February 13, 2024, minutes.

Chair Brito asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 13, 2024, meeting. Eckley moved to approve the minutes. Motion was seconded by Schwartz. Motion was approved unanimously by Brito, Robinson, Barnett, Berry, Eckley, Hilts, St. John, Schwartz, and Stone McMurphy. (Jones arrived much later in the meeting.)

III. Public Comment - There was no public comment.

IV. Muscogee County Library Foundation

Laura Ann Mann gave the Muscogee County Library Foundation update. The Foundation is presently working on the FY25 budget. Last week was the first ticketed author event for 2024, Books & Bubbles. There were over 40 people at this event, and many were first time attendees. To answer a question posted by a board member, all donations made to the Foundation are tax deductible. Donors can go to cvlga.org/foundation to donate online, or they can call Mann at her office phone to arrange a donation. The first payment from the Bradley Turner grant of a million dollars to be paid out over 3 yrs. for the renovation and construction of the South Columbus Branch has been received by the Foundation.

V. Chair Brito asked for a motion to add an item to the agenda. She asked to add the nomination of Donovan Granville for Vice Chair to be voted on. Robinson made the motion to add this item to the agenda. St. John seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously by Brito, Robinson, Barnett, Berry, Eckley, Hilts, Jones, St. John, Schwartz, and Stone McMurphy.

VI. Treasurer's Report

Tracie Price covered the FY24 Period 9 financials which ended on March 31st, 2023. Revenue is on track. The only county yet to pay their contribution is Stewart but it is normal for Stewart County to pay later in the fiscal year. Expenditures are track. Price explained why some lines seem high or low, which usually depends on how pay outs are made during the year. Eckley asked if there were any major expenses or projects anticipated. The only major project at the time is the South Columbus Library renovation and possibly the boiler will need to be installed at the Columbus Public Library .

VII. Director's Report

Director Harkness presented a video on the Guys Read program for 2024. 15 schools participated this year. The program's goal is to have male volunteers read with 3rd and 4th grade boys to encourage literacy. This year, the libraries brought the program directly to the schools instead of at the branches to reach more boys. Dr. Lewis stated that this would be a great program to collaborate with the MCSD's program All Pro Dads to bring more male volunteers into the Guys Read Program.

Director Harkness gave a materials budget presentation to explain how funds are expended between electronic and physical materials. He compared the overall expenditures and then went over cost per use electronically compared to cost per physical item. Director Harkness also went over the statistics and metrics of the CVL dashboard included in everyone's packet. Presently the CVL has 26, 859 households with library cards across the region. The CVL holds a 20% market share and has a 44% retention rate. There was some discussion over program numbers, computer use numbers and circulation.

CVL has led the way for fines free in Georgia. Because of this there are now 11 library systems in Georgia who had some version of fines free in their libraries.

Director Harkness invited Dr. Lewis to speak on the E-SLPOST. Dr. Lewis handed out flyers explaining what the renewal of the E-SPLOST will be paying for, which includes the Enhanced Campus Safety Initiative. Due to the rise in school campus shootings across the U.S. it is necessary to update the school buildings which when built did not account for the present environment. It is also necessary to update the technology, furniture, facilities and buy new buses. This E-SPLOST request also includes one million for the future construction of a new North Columbus Public Library. Dr. Lewis encouraged everyone to get people out to vote.

Director Harkness invited Tiffany Wilson to come and do a presentation about the Community Engagement and Marketing Department of CVL. Wilson presented all the employees of the Community Engagement and Marketing Dept., describing each member's duties. She also gave an overview of what the department does throughout the year. She also went over the departmental budget and gave a breakdown of expenditures.

United Way has come alongside the CVL to help the libraries bring services to the unhoused population that come to use the library. They have staff coming in twice a week who specialize in assisting this population to help the CVL provide better services for this specific group of patrons. The CVL has also signed a letter of commitment with United Way in support of the Recompete Grant United Way is applying to in an effort to attract chip manufacturers to this region.

VIII. Branch Report

Deputy Director Gabriel Lundeen presented the Branch Report. A new branch manager, Cathleen (Catie) Tierney, has been hired for the Mildred L. Terry Public Library. She starts next Wednesday. Tierney brings more than 20 years of experience in libraries with her.

The Teddy Bear Party last week at the CPL Children's Dept. attracted more than 350 attendees. For the partial Solar Eclipse on April 8, the CPL Children's Dept. held a scavenger hunt. 160 plus children participated in the scavenger hunt. Story time at Mildred L. Terry has increased to an average of 30 children. One family from the MLT Storytime program said that since attending story time, interest in reading has increased among their children. Another family that participated in the CVL LENA Start program has also seen a significant improvement in their children as well. Two ladies from Gwinnett County drove two hours to renew their families' library cards. One of them had ten library cards to renew. They stated that our Hoopla access is much better than their county library's access.

Deputy Director Lundeen showed a slide show of pictures illustrating the progress of the renovation at the South Columbus Public Library.

IX. Unfinished Business – there was none.

X. New Business

i. Vote on the FY25 Preliminary Budget.

Treasurer Eckley went over the FY25 preliminary budget. Dahmon H. King made a motion to accept the FY25 preliminary budget as presented. Todd Robinson seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously by Brito, Robinson, Barnett, Berry, Eckley, Hilts, Jones, St. John, Schwartz, and Stone McMurphy.

ii. Vote nomination of Donovan Granville to Vice Chair.

Denise Eckley made a motion to accept the nomination of Donovan Granville as Vice Chair of the Muscogee County Library Board. Judy Barnett seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously by Brito, Robinson, Barnett, Berry, Eckley, Hilts, Jones, St. John, Schwartz, and Stone McMurphy.

XI. Chair's Report

Chair Brito reported on the PLA 2024 Conference which she attended on behalf of the MCLB along with Nea Permenter from the SCLB and several staff that went on behalf of the CVL. She encouraged other library board members to consider attending future PLA Conferences as she learned a lot about the ways that libraries work.

XII. Next meeting is set for June 10, 2024, at 11 AM. Location: Columbus Public Library.
Meeting was adjourned at 12:12 PM

