



Trustees Attending: Stephanie Thompson, Lauren Emert, Dawn Reagan, Andy Simon, Tim Moore, Greg Brakebill, Susan Williams, Shawn Graham, Logan Hill

Staff Attending: Manny Leite - BCPL Director, Summer Dale, Rebecca Melvin, Judith Belew, Kathleen Christy, Kathy Thompson,

Visitors: Dee Barham - Friends of the Blount County Public Library, Liz Schrek - Ocoee River Regional Library, Mariah Franklin - The Daily Times, Eric Bowen - Johnson Architecture, Blount Partnership

Call to Order: Stephanie Thompson called the Blount County Public Library Board to order on 20 February 2024 at 5:30pm.

Approval of Minutes: Andy Simon made a motion to approve the 20 February 2024 BOT Meeting minutes with corrections. Dawn Reagan seconded the motion. The motion carried.

- Correction: The Friends Report that the Memorial Donation is \$3,000 not \$4,300

Presentation of Johnson Architect, Eric Bowen:

- Eric Bowen provided the Cost Estimate
- Andy Simon asked that if the Contingency is not all used would it come back to the Library as a Credit. To which Eric replied yes.
- Eric explained the difference between sod and seed mulch depending on the location of the foot traffic. Sod is stronger than seed mulch.

Andy Simon made a motion to approve the Cost Estimate and to send it to the Foundation for approval. Lauren Emert seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Presentation of the Blount Partnership, Jeff Muir & Allison Lester:

- In response to some vocal criticism the Blount Partnership (BP) wanted to dispel the misinformation by explaining who they are and what they do.
- The Blount Partnership is an umbrella organization composed of the Chamber of Commerce, Home for Tourism Development, and the promotion of the National Park and the businesses that lead into it, and the Industrial Development Board of Maryville, Alcoa and Blount County.
- In October 2022 a survey was conducted to explore the good points and pain points in the community.
 - Many people said that Blount County is growing too fast. However, growth is inevitable when you have a great community like we have.
 - Blount County is growing at 1% per year which is manageable.
 - People believe this is a great place to live and raise a family.
- Blount Partnership wants to be a unifying organization between government, business, and the public.



- BP wants the young people in this community to stay here.
- BP is working with schools and keeping open communication with businesses to make sure they have the tools they need for training.
 - They are trying to provide training to people for jobs that haven't even been created yet such as in the technology field.
- BP is working to get more airlines and to expand the airport.
- The BP's role is a facilitating role. They make sure businesses inform the BP what they need to fulfill their jobs, make sure schools are offering certificates that are needed and offer workshops to students.
- The BP is working with 12 developers on a revitalization plan downtown to make sure the community is growing in the right way.
 - The Armory will be opening on Ellis Avenue.
 - There is a hotel ground breaking in a couple of weeks.
- Lauren Emert added to the discussion on the Workforce Development Plan. There is a major focus on the trades and it is the best in the state.
 - There is a focus on K-12.
 - There are apprenticeships and internship programs sponsored by local companies.
 - Cooperative Workforce Learning with hands-on business training.
- Allison Lester from the PR firm explained that it's easy to get distracted by the vocal minority and get tied up in the messages being heard.
 - The BP wants to make sure they are growing in the right way, getting the correct and accurate messages out to the community.
 - Worked with Perfectly Blount
 - It's Perfectly Placed, beautiful, convenient, with top tier amenities
 - It's Perfectly Planned, with planning going into all decisions being made
 - There is a National Park that takes up $\frac{1}{3}$ of the County
 - There is an effort to build the future workforce
 - It's Perfectly Proud: It's home, family, history, it's love.
 - BP is working with local leadership to make growth bearable and preserving what makes everyone so proud.
 - There is a microsite, perfectlyblount.com to keep people informed.
 - PDFs, video messages, quarterly newsletter, social media (messaging about what's so great about Blount County, truth about rumors, and education)
 - BP is also working to increase Media coverage
 - The Daily Times, Knoxville News Sentinel, WBIR, WATE, WVLT...
 - As a result of meeting with the TV networks, WBIR opened a Blount County segment with a dedicated reporter, Libby Cunningham, about things happening in Blount County.
 - This is a great opportunity to get the correct information out.



- Some upcoming improvements and additions planned: Downtown Armory, Greenway Village, Bridge Park Condos, Splash pad, Broadband Infrastructure to more rural areas, Working on Creative Arts, Housing, Greenway connectivity...etc.
- The request is to please spread the word that positive improvements are being made and coming to Blount County.
- Sean Graham brought up how Blount County gets lumped into Sevier County and that there should be a way to champion our differences.
 - Economic Development and Tourism Development has been battling this for years.
 - Last year the BP partnered with a marketing group and came up with “the greater smokies region” that connects us to the Smokies and not just Sevierville.
 - Another tourism brand BP uses is “the peaceful side of the Smokies”.
 - We are not Dollywood or Sevierville, this is where you come to relax and find your peace.

Public Comment

- The board heard comments from 0 members of the public.

Report of Board of Trustees Chair by Stephanie Thompson:

- Stephanie Thompson explained to community members looking to participate in Public Comment that effective 1 July 2023, as stated in the Public Comment Policy, community members wanting to speak during Public Comment may only speak on active Agenda items.

Report of Blount County Public Library Director by Manny Leite:

- The Board Meeting Packet, which includes the Library Director’s Report, was distributed by email prior to the board meeting.
- Youth Services
 - Children’s is having fun with elections. Elephant and Piggie won the election; there’s another election where Dogman and Cat kid , Frog and Toad, as well as Wilbur and Charlotte are on the docket. Children can cast their vote in the Youth Services department.-
 - Knoxville Children's Opera have rescheduled their performance of Cinderella to March 23rd.
 - The One Book Blitz is ongoing. Participants are reading “Charlotte's Web”.
 - all program and storytime have a farming theme
- Reference
 - There were 400 people that attended the Southern Appalachia Series.
 - Dr. Aster from Maryville College spoke.
 - The next one is May 6th with Amy Campbell on the subject of Food.
 - There will be a program on Music in August.
- Collections
 - There are 11,280 DVDs and Blu-rays in our collection and many are getting checked out.
 - People in our community rely on watching our DVDs and videos.



- Patron Services
 - Rebecca Melvin, Patron Services Manager, is in attendance today. Last month the Main Gallery display had a snowman and this month in coordination with the One Book Blitz Penny and Lacy have showcased Fern and Wilbur from “Charlotte’s Web”.
 - Stats have been included of how many New Cards have been added for the month.
- Public Relations
- BCPL gets many positive testimonials and comments which PR have included in the Director’s Report.
- The Library was closed from January 16th-21st and Manny gave kudos to the General Services department.
- There are many projects underway including the Storybook Walk in partnership with Maryville Rotary, Alcoa Kiwanis and Blount County Parks and Rec.
 - We are getting pricing from Tipp Signs on the storybook posts.
 - Manny hopes that this is the first of many. He hopes to include Louisville and Townsend in the future.
- Currently Manny is researching Study Pods using an Arconic grant.
 - These “Hush” pods look quite futuristic and completely dampens sound. They are enclosed in glass so that you can see inside.
 - Our study rooms currently do not have ceilings and thus are not completely soundproof.
 - These Hush Pods are 85 inches tall and 55 inches wide and would be placed where the study carrels are now.
 - Manny would like to see these Hush pods in other parts of the County as well.
- BCPL is also working with the Friends on a Lactation pod in the Children’s Dept.
- Guests from Denso donated several books in honor of Black History Month.
- Tomorrow is Part 2 of Active Attack Training, so the Library will be closed until noon tomorrow.
 - Corporal Brakebill will be conducting the training.

Report of Financial Services and Public Relations, Anjanae Brueland

- Anjanae Brueland was not present to give a report on BCPL Financial Services or Public Relations.
- The Financial Services Report was included in the Board Packet.

Report of Foundation Board, Bill Pope

- There were no Foundation Board members present to give a report.

Report of Friends of the Library, Dee Barham

- Dee Barham gave a report on the Friends.
- Friends helping Friends assisted Knox Friends of Library and did training on Ebay.
- Last Fall the BCPL Friends helped the Ripley Friends Group get off the ground. BCPL Friends then nominated Ripley for The Small Library Friends of the Year and they won!
- The next Book Sale is fast approaching. If you would like to be an Elevator Operator please let Dee know.
- Ebay is about to have their best February ever, over last year they are up 15%!
- The Friends have added more volunteers. There are about 60 in Ebay alone.
- The Golden Anniversary is kicking off with the 50th Anniversary date: April 19th.



- The Friends will be having an event for teachers in July.
- During Mini-Con there will be a tent on the front lawn, food trucks have been lined up as well as a face painter and mobile silk screener.
- The Gala has been scheduled for October 25th.
 - The Friends are in discussions with Pellissippi's Culinary Arts Program. They will be meeting at the end of next week. It will become part of their training program. They provide the Servers and the Friends will just pay for the food.
 - They are accepting donations for the Silent Auction
- Lauren Emert stated that the Blount Partnership utilized the Pellissippi Culinary students for the Long Table event.

Report of Ocoee River Regional Library, Liz Schreck

- The Ocoee River Regional Library Report, and the READS FY 2023-24 Data Statistics were distributed by email prior to the meeting.
- Liz Schreck shared updates from the Regional Library.
- Training is coming up in the field of Early Math Literacy at the King Family Library on Friday. Space is limited but this will be a great opportunity for Youth Services to incorporate math into their storytimes.
- The Space Planning Workshop will be on March 12th regarding using the space you have and how to change things up a bit. This workshop will be at the Art Circle Public Library in Crossville, TN.
- Liz Schreck encouraged the Friends to go and cheer on the Friends group from Ripley at the TNLA Conference in Franklin, TN, on April 2nd-4th.
- Reminders:
 - The Tech Grant Spending 50/50 matching grant deadline is fast approaching.
 - Liz reminded the Trustees about the Trustee Certification program.
 - She gave a budgeting reminder.
- Liz Schreck provided the READs circulation report which is put out each month and is a benefit that regional libraries receive (Libby App usage).

Safety Committee Meeting Update

- The February Committee meeting has been canceled.
- On February 5th a Special Agent for Homeland Security did a Safety audit of BCPL.
 - The results will be shared behind closed doors due to their sensitive nature.

Old Business

Trustee Bylaws Policy was discussed and no action was taken.

- Stephanie Thompson has requested that the Bylaws Policy be postponed to next month.
 - Upon Susan William's suggestions and further research, the mission statement does not appear on other Trustee Bylaws policies.



- Stephanie looked to see if any libraries vote electronically and did find that Jackson/Madison County has it in their bylaws where they can do electronic voting.
 - It stated that meeting participation via video conferencing will be allowed and their vote would count.
 - She is not sure if this provision just hasn't been taken out since the Governor lifted the order but will ask our County attorney.
 - Shawn Graham said that the bylaws seemed vague given the date that was on the Bylaws. They were postdated when Governor Lee changed the law.
 - The guidance that ORRL received was that there should be no electronic voting and that once Governor Lee changed the executive order and no longer extended it then effectively it went back to precovid law.
 - Liz Schreck again suggests to check with our local attorney.

Public Meeting Rooms Policy was discussed. No action was taken.

- We discussed the price of the Meeting Rooms, \$75 for room rentals and \$35 for Non-profits.
- Andy Simon expressed that organizations should not be allowed to store items at BCPL unless there is insurance on it.
 - We should include a copy of insurance.
 - Shawn Graham suggested that the insurance clause be included and tied into the damages and liability section.
 - Stephanie Thompson noticed on the first page BCPL asked patrons to include a statement of non-endorsement but it had been struck through. Manny expressed that it is difficult to get people to include such a long statement.
 - The suggestion was to shorten the phrase and possibly include bullet points.
 - Tim Moore suggested adding a QR code to scan that goes directly to BCPL policies.
 - Logan Hill expressed that no matter what we need something stating that we do not endorse the outside party and Lauren Emert thought the QR code was a great idea.
- Manny said to strike through the statement regarding BCPL providing lunch boxes. Chelsea Mathenia, our Hospitality Manager is scaling back on Catering and it is becoming too much. We will however, see sandwiches and salads back in the Cafe.

New Business

Approval of the Joy Bishop Abstract and location

- The abstract will be located on the left side of the Entry Rotunda doors.
- March 22nd at 5:30pm will be the unveiling of the Memorial Statue.
 - This statue will be 650 pounds and epoxied to the floor.
 - The artist wants the abstract to be touched.
- Stephanie and Manny met with Carolyn Forester and the Foundation to decide who will have the reception. The money is already raised and the excess will be donated to the Foundation.
- The event will also include the unveiling of the plaque which denotes the name change of the bridge in honor of Joy Bishop.
 - The Foundation will be paying for and catering the event.



Lauren Emert approved the location of the Joy Bishop Abstract statue on the left side of the Entry Rotunda. Dawn Reagan seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Funding Requests:

- No requests

Tim Moore inquired about the painted parking lot lines. The County is responsible for this and wants to wait to paint until the issue with the Learning Lab is addressed in case demolition is needed.

Important Dates

Other Library Meetings

Blount County Commission Meeting – 21 March 2024, 7:00 pm – BC Courthouse

Blount County Friends of the Library – 27 February 2024, 4:00 pm – BCPL

Foundation for the Blount County Public Library – 22 March 2024, 8:00 am – BCPL

Maryville City Council - 5 March 2024, 7:00 pm – Maryville Municipal Bldg

Alcoa Board of Commissioners - 12 March 2024, 7:00 pm – Alcoa Municipal Bldg

Next Library Board Meeting – 19 March 2024, 5:30 pm, Sharon Lawson Room

Motion to Adjourn:

Lauren Emert made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Logan Hill seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The next Library Board Meeting will be held on 19 March 2024, at 5:30 pm, in the Sharon Lawson Room.

Respectfully submitted,

Summer Dale