



**Trustees Attending:** Stephanie Thompson, Lauren Emert, Dawn Reagan, Tim Moore, Greg Brakebill, Susan Williams, Logan Hill, Rebecca Wolfenbarger, Dexter Stewart

**Staff Attending:** Manny Leite - BCPL Director, Anjanae Brueland, Summer Dale (via Zoom), Kathleen Christy, Kathy Thompson

**Visitors:** Dee Barham - Friends of the Blount County Public Library, Bill Pope - Blount County Public Library Foundation, Nikki Branam-Snyder - Ocoee River Regional Library, Mariah - The Daily Times

**Call to Order:** Stephanie Thompson called the Blount County Public Library Board to order on 18 June 2024 at 5:30 pm.

**Welcome:**

- Stephanie Thompson thanked everyone for being here tonight.
- She welcomed the new Board Members, Becca Wolfenbarger and Dexter Stewart, who will be taking Logan Hill and Susan William's seats.
- The Board did receive other Trustee Information Sheets for potential replacements for Tim Moore.

**Approval of Minutes:** Lauren Emert made a motion to approve the 14 May 2024 BOT Meeting minutes with corrections. Susan Williams seconded the motion to approve the minutes with corrections. The motion carried.

- Corrections were made to the ORRL portion of the 14 May 2024 Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes.

**Trustee Officer Nominations:**

- Tim Moore discussed that the Leadership Committee met last month.
- The nominations are:
  - The Board Chair - Lauren Emert
  - The Board Vice Chair - Stephanie Thompson
  - The Board Secretary - Summer Dale
- There were no volunteers from the floor.

Logan Hill made a motion to approve the slate of nominations. Susan Williams seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Public Comment:**

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

**Report of Board of Trustees Chair by Stephanie Thompson:**

- Tomorrow the Lactation Pod Grand Reveal will be at 9 am.



- Everyone's really excited about it!
- Stephanie commended BCPL staff on a great Mini-Con!
  - Anjanae explained that we finally got the formula right on staffing it!
  - All hands were on deck.
- Congratulations to Melinda Rust on 40 years of service to the library.
- Congratulations to Kathleen Christy on her upcoming retirement!
  - Reading about her accomplishments in the Board Packet was very impressive.
  - Kathleen expressed that it was lots of fun and many years.

**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.
- First Manny thanked Logan, Susan, and Tim for their dedication and for serving on the board.
  - There were some breezy and easy meetings and some not so much. Thank you for your dedication!
- Manny expressed his thanks to Stephanie for the past year of being an absolute rockstar as the Board Chair. Some meetings were easy and some were challenging but you were phenomenal at what you did. Manny really appreciated her for being the Chair of this Board!
- Youth Services: Mini-Con was fantastic. Staff were not running around in chaos this year. Everyone had a good time looking at the vendors and participating as judges for the costume contest. The Book sales were awesome as well by the Friends.
  - Manny met with staff and did a Monday Morning Quarterback meeting on what they could do to improve next year.
  - Summer Reading has been great so far. Youth Services is taking the library out into the County with storytimes at John Sevier Pool and Louisville Town Hall in addition to Smoky Mountain Pickleball right down the street in Alcoa.
- Reference: It's all about Kathleen and her 19+ years at the library. She's done a terrific job and we're sad to see her go but she'll still be around even though retiring.
  - Reference gets asked many interesting questions such as the number for the Lion's club to donate their eyes and then there was a question regarding what is a semiotician, which is the study of the meaning behind signs.
- Collections: Kathy does a terrific job showing how the weeding process goes. Weeding means to remove books that aren't circulating, are damaged and to make the collection look more inviting.
  - Logan asked where the books go.
    - If they're in good shape, they go to the Friends.
    - Then they are either retired, replaced, or repaired.
- Patron Services: There were 559 new cards made in May, wow!
- Public Relations: Anjanae presented on PR: There was a QR code made by Louisville Mercantile who did a book review on Instagram about using the Louisville locker
  - The Louisville Locker is being appreciated and supported!
  - Mini-Con, PR-wise was very exciting: this was the launch of Harper. The program was a success!
- Financial Services: Is tracking very well under Projections. We are doing very well with Revenue.



- The fiscal year ends June 28th, as of June 14th we are not allowed to raise any more purchase orders but we are coming in strong and steady!
- Administrative & Projects: We had a wonderful Staff Development Day. The United Way's Wendy and Sarah did a fantastic job discussing ALICE. There were lots of questions. Bryan Daniels CEO of the Partnership presented on what the Partnership does and what's coming in the future. Mary Beth Lima from the UT Extension presented as well. It was neat to have the half-day off-site. Many staff hadn't been to the Partnership before.
- The Pre-bid meeting of the Book Return Project happened this afternoon. 3 General contractors showed up, as well as Greg Brakebill representing the Board, and Eric Bowen, the Architect, were present.
  - They were shown the exterior and the interior of where the Book Return would go. The unsealing of the bid will be on 11 July 2024 at 1:30 pm over Zoom. Mallory Pack from Purchasing will be opening the bids.

**Report of Foundation Board, Bill Pope:**

- Bill Pope discussed his Fundraising training. He did follow-up training with Foundation members and will continue training them.
  - The training with Board members will begin in a couple of months. They will be taken through a series of how-to's to alleviate the anxiety that some people have with fundraising.
    - They've been asked to identify some folks who may want to get to know the library better. This will give them a place to start and will give them a close-up view.
- The Board did not meet in May.
- The Foundation is looking forward to seeing the progress of the Book Return Project.

**Report of Friends of the Library, Dee Barham:**

- Dee Barham presented on the Friends of the Library.
- They had an amazing month! They made \$15,500 during their Book Sale.
- Friday night the Friends launched the 4th and final Vietnam Voices that the Friends published. It was a very successful night!
- Saturday was a celebration on the lawn celebrating the 50th anniversary.
  - The face painter did great!
  - They sold Golden Anniversary T-shirts.
  - Many came out and took advantage of the Food Trucks and just had a lot of fun.
- This month the Friends received \$3,089 foundation from the Dollywood Foundation.
  - If you sign up for an Imagination Library License Plate then Dolly funnels that money back out and sends a percentage.
- The Friends had their annual meeting and Election of Officers.
  - Vandy Kemp will be the new President.
  - Laurie Smalley will be the Vice President.



- Dee will still be on the Board as Past President, she will still volunteer downstairs and she is still involved with the final Golden Anniversary events.
- August 3rd will be the Teacher Thank You Event.
  - Newell donated supplies for teachers, Kroger is donating apples for the teachers, and a florist is donating roses for the teachers as well.
  - There will be a private book sale too.
- October 25th is the big event.
  - 5 of the 23 tables are reserved.
    - Seats cost \$50 and a table costs \$350.
  - Clickbid has been contracted for the auction.
    - They are still looking for donated items
    - All of the funds will go to the Library
- The Annual meeting also celebrated the Friends projections for the year:
  - Booksales went from \$71,000 to \$75,000
  - eBay went from \$126,000 to \$138,000
  - Donations are up over \$10,000
  - Membership is up a few thousand dollars
- The Friends received the \$20,000 Top Grant for technologies.
- All the pieces are coming together for another great year.
- Dee said it has been her pleasure to be a part of this side of operations.

**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.
- Nikki Branam-Snyder shared updates from the Regional Library.
- There is not a ton of training going on at the Region but there are quite a few deadlines coming up at the end of the fiscal year.
- Anjanae did get the Tech Grant and she was one of the first ones to submit it.
- Nikki encouraged staff to complete their Continuing Education requirements for staff.
- Liz previously sent the Library Service Agreement.
- Title VI Training is required for all library staff because BCPL are recipients of Federal funds through the ORRL office.
- The Standards Survey is due 15 July 2024.
  - This is a benchmarking (advocacy) tool not a report card which Manny will complete.
- The only training coming up will be at the TN State Library and Archives on 24 June 2024.
  - Archives and preservation training.
- The next Trustee Workshop will tentatively be on 25 September 2024 at Art Circle library.
- Stephanie Thompson expressed that in the report by the ORRL Director, she thought it interesting that the city of Dayton's Storybook Walk was so interactive.



- o Nikki expressed that the story centered around strawberries and included some math, they partnered with the Parks Department...etc. Dayton did a very good job.
- o The Governor's Early Literacy Foundation provided a grant for that and it will open again in the Fall.

**Long Range Plan Committee:**

- There were no updates.
- Possibly in August the Board can come in an hour early before the scheduled Board Meeting to get an update on the Long Range Plan.

**Old Business:**

- The **Confidentiality of Library Records Policy** was discussed.

**Tim Moore made a motion to approve the Confidentiality of Library Records Policy. Lauren Emert seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

**New Business:**

- The **Internet Safety Policy** was presented.
  - o There was no discussion. No action was taken at this time. The discussion was tabled.

**Friends Funding Requests:**

- First, Manny thanked Dee for being a wonderful Friends' President!
  - o Over several years on the Board, she took the Friends from one level to another, opening new thoughts and ideas, and it's not easy!
  - o The Friends now have over 140 volunteers, which is a lot of personalities, and Dee has managed that very well!
  - o Manny is excited to still have the Thursday morning chats with Dee and Dick and now Vandy.
  - o He thanked Dee for being open to some out-of-the-box ideas and always wanting the best for the Library. "Not all Friends' Presidents are like that so thank you so much".
- **Silent Disco on Saturday, 28 September 2024**
  - o Manny has already made sure that there is no UT Football game on that date.
  - o Another regional library did a Taylor Swift launch party with great success.
  - o Manny heard from the companies out of Knoxville that they do a lot of Taylor Swift Silent Discos.
    - The music is silent as it is streamed through headphones but the participants will most likely be noisy.
      - Amanda Small took her daughter to one where both children and adults were singing at the top of their lungs.
  - o There will be 3 music channels patrons can chose from, "Taylor Swift" DJed by Savannah McCarter, "Dance #1" DJed by Summer Dale and "Dance #2" DJed by Rebecca Melvin.



- The Library will be closed but this Disco will be from 6pm to 8pm. Staff members will be there to serve as “bouncers”. The Cafe will be open as well.

**Logan Hill made a motion to approve the opening of the library after hours from 6pm-8pm on Saturday, September 28th, for a Silent Disco. Susan Williams seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

- Tim clarified that there was adequate security. Manny expressed that BCPL will have staffing to do security and the Main Gallery will be cleared out. No patrons will be allowed in the rest of the Library during this time.
- Lauren said that this Friday Hops in the Hills will be hosting a Silent Disco and a lot of younger folks enjoy it. It is hilarious to watch.
  - The biggest issue is making sure that folks don’t walk away with headphones.
  - Manny said that we will limit BCPL to only one entrance.
- The FFR is for \$1,000 which includes the tablets, playlists, and headphones.
  - There would be an additional cost to use their DJ so Manny will be utilizing staff to save money.
  - Manny jokingly said he wants to see 100% Board participation.

**Dawn made a motion to approve the FFR for the Silent Disco. Susan Williams seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

- **Annual Friends Funding Budget:**
  - Manny explained that this request is lower than last year and then pointed out some specifics for the Board to review.
    - AS204 Anna Belle Smith Literary Festival
      - This is the new name of the Literary/Local Authors Fair.
      - Anna Belle Smith was the first librarian at BCPL so then name echoes out history.
      - Kathleen actually has some artwork from Anna Belle Smith in her office which will be showcased. She was not just a librarian but an artist as well.
    - ADM251 Library Spaces Evaluation
      - Manny explained that back in the spring Anjanae, Beth H., Zoe, and Summer attended a training at Art Circle featuring David Vinjamuri regarding Library Space Evaluations. Manny and Stephanie attended virtually.
      - That line item would be for David to fly to Blount County and do a full evaluation of the Library. He would host a community forum for the public.



- Anjanae explained that it's a very thorough process where David will talk to stakeholders (Board Members, Friends, and Foundation), and front line staff. For the first few hours he will come in and observe where people gravitate and how they move through the building. Then he will make an assessment, hold a community forum, and then write a 60-100 page report of his findings.
- Thank you Nikki and the Regional Library for putting together this training. It was phenomenal.
- David taught through the lens of merchandising that you can make a space much more engaging by the layout and flow of movement. He will help us create neighborhoods that are inviting and encourage people to use our space at optimum levels. One example he used was that by creating this display, using dictionaries and thesauri, one library saw circulation increase of these items by 40%!
- Every customer service interaction is either trust building or trust weathering.
- David explained that patrons and the community begin to trust what you are putting out on display and on your shelves and want to explore it. Over-stuffing an area actually detracts from this. Well thought out displays are much more effective.
- Susan Williams suggested that his strategy is sort of like staging a home.
- Manny explained that this will be a wonderful tool to integrate in our Long Range Plan.
  - Anjanae explained that this will be helpful in how to arrange furniture, what type of signage to use, and how to create the right atmosphere.
- David will include the basement and possibly the garden areas and Learning Lab.
- This plan and request was already discussed with the Friends and Dee said they are excited. Dee encouraged Manny to put it on an FFR.
- Tim asked if the feedback from the public forum would be published?
  - Manny said that community forums are usually recorded.
- Manny described that David is very big on using mobile shelving.
- Lauren asked if staff are excited about the potential flexible spaces.
  - It was discussed that we would need to educate people.
    - It will change the way we do signage and how we fill the shelves...etc.
- Some of David Vinjamuri's trainings can be accessed on Youtube, WebJunction, He has spoken frequently at the Association for Rural and Small Libraries, and he has books as well.



- Lauren asked about the overall budget and how it went down but yet included the \$10,000 addition for David Vinjamuri .
  - Manny said the reason the overall budget is lower is that we want to wait until David does his assessment and then can add additional requests for things like shelving and furniture.
  - Dee said that the Friends requested that no request be higher than last year.
  - Both Lauren and Tim expressed that their Long Range Plan departments will have additional requests to increase functionality.
  - It was agreed that there are so many opportunities not being take with the current spaces.

**Dawn Reagan made a motion to approve the overall Friends Funding Budget for next year. Lauren Emert seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

**Foundation Funding Requests:**

- There were no Foundation Funding Requests.

**Additional Closing Comments:**

- Stephanie offered her farewell to the departing Board members whose terms are over and a welcome to those just beginning.
- We appreciate everything they have done for the library and community.
- Logan thanked the Board.
  - There have been many challenging times and he's proud how the Board stayed united as a team.
  - Logan appreciates Manny for coming on board as Director and feels like he was the best choice.
  - Logan really appreciates what Manny has done and what the Board has accomplished and what staff have done to make the Board's job easier.
  - Logan reminded everyone that the Library really is the jewel of Blount County and those that don't know it are living under a rock. He is proud of what has been accomplished..
- Tim echoed Logan by saying "ditto"!
  - He thanked everyone for listening to his crazy questions over the years and expressed that it really has been a wonderful experience.
  - Tim is sad that he can't continue on for another term but encourages the staff and Board members to take pride in this building and organization.
  - Tim encouraged the Board to never stop asking "how can we serve the County and people better?".



- He thanked both Dexter and Becca for stepping up to the Board and being willing to serve. Sometimes it feels light and other times it's heavy but their service and willingness is appreciated.

**Important Dates:**

**Other Library Meetings**

Blount County Commission Meeting – 20 June 2024, 7:00 pm – BC Courthouse

Blount County Friends of the Library – 25 June 2024, 4:00 pm – BCPL

Foundation for the Blount County Public Library – 19 July 2024, 8:00 am – BCPL

Maryville City Council - 9 July 2024, 7:00 pm – Maryville Municipal Bldg

Alcoa Board of Commissioners - 9 July 2024, 7:00 pm – Alcoa Municipal Bldg

Next Library Board Meeting – 16 July 2024, 5:30 pm, Sharon Lawson Room

**Motion to Adjourn:**

**Dawn Reagan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Logan Hill seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

The next Library Board meeting will be held on, 16 July 2024 at 5:30 pm, in the Sharon Lawson Room

Respectfully submitted,  
Summer Dale