Board of Trustees Meeting
15 October 2024 Minutes

Trustees Attending: Lauren Emert, Stephanie Thompson, Dawn Reagan, Greg Brakebill, Andrew Simon, Dexter Stewart, Becca Wolfenbarger, Richard Fogg

Staff Attending: Manny Leite - BCPL Director, Anjanae Brueland, Summer Dale, Beth Hall, Zoe Bellew, Polly Taylor

Visitors: Laurie Smalley - Friends of the Blount County Public Library, Bill Pope - Blount County Public Library Foundation, Liz Schrek - Ocoee River Regional Library

Call to Order: Lauren Emert called the Blount County Public Library Board to order on 15 October 2024 at 5:30pm.

Approval of Minutes: Dexter Stewart made a motion to approve the 24 September 2024 Meeting minutes with corrections. Andy Simon seconded the motion. The motion carried.

- Stephanie suggested some grammatical corrections to the minutes, which were accepted by the board.

Public Comment:

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

Report of Board of Trustees Chair by Lauren Emert:

- Lauren Emert reported on Manny Leite's departure, expressing gratitude for his contributions and announcing the next steps for the executive director search.
  - Lauren said Manny came at the perfect time and she can’t express how much we will miss and are thankful for him.
  - She expressly thanked Manny for getting the Library to the point that we are at today. She stated that there was a lot to overcome.
- Lauren added an item to “New Business” to discuss the next steps in the Executive Director search.

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.
- Manny Leite began by explaining that October is a very busy month for the Library.
- Youth Services: He detailed the Fall Festival, which will be this Saturday from 11am-2pm.
  - The Fall Festival will include food trucks, vendors, and forecasted warm weather.
  - He mentioned the Spooktacular event (on October 25th) and a Halloween karaoke event in the teen room (on the 24th).
- Reference: Manny highlighted the new Manager, Sara Corso. He feels that she has been doing an excellent job and is really blending in.
  - Reference has some wonderful Adult programs coming up.

- The all-ages Taylor Swift Silent Disco was a big hit. There was a friendship bracelet-making station manned by Sara. Manny offered kudos to the three staff DJs (Savannah McCarter, Rebecca Melvin, and Summer Dale). He hopes that BCPL will host this event again. The final headcount was around 150.
- The Anna Belle Smith Literary Festival will be on October 26th from 9:30am-1:30pm.
  - The Bookmark Cafe will be open during this time.
  - The event will have breakout sessions hosted by Frank X Walker, the first African American, Kentucky poet laureate, as well as Francis Figart and author Jeremy Lloyd will be there.
  - Manny thanked the Friends for making these things possible.
- Focus on Seniors will be tomorrow, October 16th in the Main Gallery. It will focus on Medicare which is usually popular.

- Hospitality: Manny spoke about a new volunteer, Abby, who is working in the Bookmark Cafe and who is aspiring to work in a coffee shop. She's doing a great job. Manny encourages everyone to say hello to Abby.
  - Andrew Simon thinks this volunteer opportunity is a great idea and something we can continue to do moving forward.
  - Lauren Emert suggests creating an internship program with local high schools or Maryville College to provide work experience for students.

- Patron Services: The Main Gallery display's disco ball has remained up for December. December's theme will be 1970's Letters to Santa.
  - We said goodbye to longtime staff member, Martha Lee Beasley.
  - Rebecca is in the process of hiring for this position.
- Administrative & Projects: Manny, Lauren, and Anjanae, met with stakeholders from Blount County, Alcoa, and Maryville, for their monthly meeting to speak with them.
  - They felt the conversation was positive, the stakeholders know this is a gem of a library and they want to continue to see it grow.
  - Lauren said it was a good affirmation that the stakeholders care about the library, the staff, and the community utilizing it. They were very interested in the different programming. They were very impressed with the statistics from READs and everything that we've accomplished with the size of staff and everything since Covid. Lauren thought it was a great meeting. She expressed that the Board or Administration had never been at that Interlocal meeting before, and it was a good step. She commended Manny for putting BCPL out there in that way.
  - Lauren Emert and Manny discussed the importance of the strategic planning process and the need for additional staffing in the future.
  - They drafted a new document that was presented and the stakeholders didn't have any issues with it.
- Manny, Lauren, and Anjanae also met with the Library Leaders (Admin, Board, Friends, Foundation) upon request from Vandy Kemp, the Friends President. They will make this a recurring meeting every quarter to discuss what's happening with the Library so that everyone is on the same page.
  - Manny mentioned the need for a master plan and the first step of issuing a request for a proposal (RFP) for public library consulting services.

- Manny strongly suggests going with a group that specializes in RFPs.
- Book Return Project kicked off today, but they are waiting for the Erosion Specialist. Construction should begin later this week or early next week.
  - Lauren explained that step one in all construction projects is setting up erosion control.
- Manny expressed how much he has loved his time here at BCPL.

- Financial Report: Anjanae said the Financial Report looks a little bit different this time around.
  - She reminded everyone that If the Board has questions regarding the Financial Report, please email bcpl.director@blounttn.org.
  - Anjanae explained that the finances are tracking well with how BCPL is going through the year in terms of both how we're spending money within our operations and our personnel lines, as well as the revenue that we're pulling in.
    - The Operations spreadsheet now has a monthly breakdown. There is a capital component because that's where the foundation funds have been moved. This is where you will get a tracking of how the money is spent down throughout the Book Return project.
    - Line 335 in the Operations for General Services has been moved into capital so that it's kind of similar to our contingency fund. If BCPL needs to make any purchase order changes or something similar, we will use that line and then the Director will go to the commission to ask for funds to be put back so that General Services have what they need to maintain our building.
    - Anjanae explained the notes section of her report which states that the appropriated total includes the Foundation funds and the architecture carryover funds from last year which is put into the Book Return Project line.
      - ➢ The appropriated line says $298,629 in the Contribution and Gifts line. This consists of the foundation funds from this year, a carryover from last year, and the $45,000 that the finance department has put into our budget.
      - ➢ This is the first time the Finance Department has said we are actually going to be making this specific amount of money so Anjanae included this for transparency so that we can clearly track it and be better suited in the projections for next year's budget.
      - ➢ This is not part of the MOE.
  - After prompting from Dexter Stewart, Anjanae clarified that the end of the Fiscal year is June 30th with last year's hard close on June 28th.
  - Lauren thanked Anjanae for taking the time to break everything down.
  - Lauren asked Liz Schreck to please give the Board some recommendations for consultants to use for the strategic plan as well as for the Director hiring process.
    - Liz will get that information to the Board,

Report of Foundation Board, Bill Pope:

- Bill Pope reports on the foundation's activities.
- The Foundation will be giving the $250,000+ check to the County to pay for the Book Return project.

- He mentions the need for consistent branding across the library, Foundation, and Friends organizations.
    - Bill explained that the Foundation's logo is a panoramic view of the Library.
        - They will possibly be working with Visual Voice for recommendations on how to go about this.
- Bill also thanked Manny for his leadership. He expressed that Manny has made their job much easier. The Foundation knows now that if they receive a request, the Library Administration wants it and the request has already received Trustee approval. Bill explained this is the only reason the Foundation exists is to give the Library the funds it collects and they want to make sure it's their highest priority.
- Lauren thanked Bill for his report. She really liked the meeting with the Library Leaders and talking about consistency with the branding. She encouraged Bill to look more into it.

Report of Friends of the Library, Laurie Smalley:

- Vandy was absent from tonight's meeting.
- Laurie Smalley gave a report on the Friends.
- The Friends are very excited about the 50th Anniversary Celebration on the 25th. The party will be at Pellissippi State Community College (PSCC). They anticipate a good turnout, catered by PSCC culinary students, with a silent auction, and sales that support the Friends.
- Next week will be National Friends of the Library Week! Friends organizations throughout the US are committed to supporting their local libraries through financial support for library programming and by expanding community support.
    - They anticipate a joint resolution from the three supporting governments to mark the occasion.
    - Laurie encouraged everyone that if they're not a member, they should be!
- Saturday, October 26th, is the Anna Bell Smith Literary Festival from 9am-1:30pm.
    - Frank X Walker who coined the term "Afrolacia" will be hosting breakout sessions. There will also be additional speakers such as Jeremy Lloyd and Francis Figart.
- Laurie expressed that she hates to see Manny go, but encouraged everyone that change brings new opportunities. In the meantime, the Friends will continue to support BCPL's mission through sales and leadership, and expect to begin their own strategic planning process once the Anniversary Celebration is over.

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.
- She thanked Lauren for attending the Trustee Workshop. There was a good turnout.
- A big part of what the ORRL does is training. Many training opportunities are coming up.
    - In-person, online, hybrid options. ORRL is trying to make it as easy as possible to get hours.

- They had a great summer reading conference at Art Circle. The theme this year will be "Color Our World".
  - Liz encouraged that there's no time like the present for planning for the future!
- Liz will update the Board Appointment form with the new Trustees' information.
- She submitted the Annual Maintenance of Effort Agreement and will send out a copy.
- She reminded the Board that ORRL has Enchroma glasses kits (for colorblindness) for libraries to check out through their office, so folks who might be considering the idea of purchasing them can try them beforehand.
- Liz will work with BCPL administration and the new Trustees to coordinate the New Trustee Certification program.
  - Will connect with Dexter, Richard, and Becca.
- Lauren explained that the Trustee Workshop was wonderful. She thanked Liz for such a great opportunity. Lauren wants staff to feel like they can go to any training possible. She also thanked Liz for the opportunities.

Long Range Plan Committee:

- This Long Range Plan Committee item will be struck from Agendas moving forward.

Old Business:

- The **Emergency and Safety Plan** was presented.

Stephanie Thompson made a motion to approve the Emergency Safety Plan. Richard Fogg seconded the motion. The motion carried.

- The board discusses the emergency and safety plan.
- Andy Simon suggested adding the City of Alcoa to the distribution.
- There was discussion regarding the decision to close the library when Maryville City Schools are closed.
  - Stephanie suggested that the power lies with the Director rather than the Schools such as all other County Departments.
- Manny Leite explains the rationale behind closing the library during inclement weather for staff safety. The mindset is not all staff lives in Maryville but in all areas of the County.
  - Manny agrees that it would be great to leave the ultimate decision at the discretion of the Director with consultation from the Board Chair.
  - Richard Fogg explained that as a Wing Commander for installation, any decision to close was with safety in mind and in collaboration with the police. They would have a teleconference with all agencies, getting input prior to making the decision. He explained that from an emergency management perspective, you want to make sure you're assessing all the information to make that call, and it is with safety in mind.
  - Lauren expressed that when Dr. Winstead makes calls for Maryville City Schools it is with counsel from police.

        - Anjanae explained that the mentality behind closing if Maryville City Schools closed was that BCPL didn't want parents to think that if the schools were closed but BCPL was open, we were saying it's safe for everyone.
        - Stephanie suggested the language state, "Blount County Public Library Director will consult with the Board Chair, the Police department, and whoever else they need.
        - Lauren suggested adding "local government authorities".

    - The board agrees to revise the language to something like "At the discretion of the library Director in consultation with local government authorities and Board Chair". in the plan to give the director more discretion in making closure decisions.

        - Summer will revise the language and send the Emergency Safety Plan back out to the Board.
    - Andy asked where the emergency supplies were stored.
        - Manny said we are continuing to work on the supplies- some are located in the custodial closet and others are in different places. We are trying to find a central location for everything.
        - Manny recommends purchasing items that BCPL doesn't have on the list.
            - Lauren recommends tabling the discussion and determining which items need to be purchased and creating a plan for their location and itemized list.
        - Liz stated that the County may have guidance on this.
    - The Board decides to table the Emergency and Safety Plan for further review and revisions.

- The **Digital Platforms Policy** was presented.

Dawn Reagan made a motion to approve the Digital Platforms Policy. Stephanie Thompson seconded the motion. The motion carried.

    - There was no discussion.
    - Lauren thanked everyone for the work they put into this policy.

New Business:

- The **Collection Development and Weeding Policy** was discussed.
    - Manny explained how proud he is of this Board for sticking to their guns with regard to this policy. He expressed that the Board has been nothing but fair and wishes the Board to continue in this way.
    - Manny feels that this is a solid policy and it didn't need any major corrections.
    - Lauren reminded the Board that this policy had been cleaned up previously. She believes it works for the fundamental purpose that it stands for.
        - This policy puts a lot of work on the Director's shoulders.
    - Lauren asked the Board to take a look over this policy and send any corrections to Summer.

- The Board will look at this policy again next month and vote on it.

- **2025 Building Closure Schedule**
    - Manny explained that this is the same schedule as last year. The dates are the only things that are different.
    - The board approved the building closure schedule for 2025 without any comments or changes.

Stephanie Thompson made a motion to approve the 2025 Building Closure Schedule. Dexter Stewart seconded the motion. motion carried.

Funding Requests:

- **Commission Funding Request - Automated Materials Handler Service Level Agreement Years 2-7:**
    - Anjanae Brueland presented a request for funding to use the library fund balance for a one-time payment to avoid future cost increases.
    - She explained that our library fund balance is currently $775,000 and our Commissioners have actually commented that they'd like to see it used.
    - The fund balance is used for this specific type of thing, one-off, non-reoccurring expenses. This is ideal for the Service Level Agreement.
    - It is the difference of $23,761 in savings, and if it doesn't come out of fund balance, that means we have to find it in our operations. We will save money by paying in one lump sum rather than paying year after year.
    - Richard clarified that this is a cost avoidance, not a cost savings.

Dawn Reagan made a motion to approve the Commission Funding Request. Stephanie Thompson seconded the motion. The motion carried

Director Manny Leite's Resignation:

- Lauren asked the Board if they accept Manny's resignation. With reluctance, they accept.
- Lauren explains that this puts the Board in a good position to begin the New Director Search.
    - Three years ago there was a Selection Committee made up of 4 Board members and 3 Outside Members.
- It was recognized that we are in a different position this time and do not have to repeat the same exact process.
    - The culture is different now. They needed to rebuild relationships last go around but not now.
    - Mayor Mitchell would like to be a part of the search.
- Stephanie will email a document with the steps taken in the past and a time frame to give everyone an opportunity to look at and then discuss how to handle this moving forward.

- Lauren proposed Anjanae as the Interim Director with a 10% raise. She thinks Anjanae would be a great fit and she believes others would agree.
- Anajane was also proposed by Manny and she is very excited to take on this role if approved.

Dawn Reagan made a motion to accept Anjanae Brueland as the Interim Director with a 10% raise. Dexter Stewart seconded the motion. The motion was retracted once the discussion began.

- Andy thinks Anjanae's raise should be a 15-20% raise rather than just the 10%.
- There was discussion around what the current difference is between Anjane and Manny's salaries.
    - After some calculations, Anjanae said the difference in salary from Manny is 20.3%

Richard Fogg made a motion to accept Anjanae Brueland as the Interim Director with a 15% raise contingent upon compliance with HR directives for the first three months, subject to increase to 20% thereafter. Andy Simon seconded the motion. The motion carried.

- Lauren will send an email to Mayor Mitchell regarding Anjane's approval by the Board.
- There was a discussion on the Director search timeline.
    - Liz said it's dependent on the search committee and if the Board decides to hire a consultant. If the search is nationwide, it could take 4-6 months.
- Anjanae expressed that she has big shoes to fill and she is happy that Manny agreed to be on her speedial. She spoke about how last time she experienced this role in a completely different way. The library culture is completely different now and she wants to continue in this vein.
    - She thanked the Board for the nomination and consideration and said she would wholeheartedly accept.
- Lauren asked Laurie Smalley to please pass on the Vandy Kemp, Friends President, that there will be some expenses coming down the pike for recruiting purposes.
- Andy suggested that the Board bring Director Search Committee member recommendations to the next Trustee meeting on November 5th.
- Liz suggested referring to the Trustee Bylaws Article 3 for responsibility for committee appointments.
- The Board would like the Friends and Foundation to be a part of the process as well.

Additional Closing Comments:
- The next Board Meeting will be on November 5th at 5pm.

Important Dates:

Other Library Meetings

Blount County Commission Meeting – 17 October 2024, 6:30 pm – BC Courthouse
Blount County Friends of the Library – 22 October 2024, 4:00 pm – BCPL
Foundation for the Blount County Public Library – 18 October 2024, 8:30 am – BCPL
Maryville City Council - 5 November 2024, 7:00 pm – Maryville Municipal Bldg
Alcoa Board of Commissioners - 12 November 2024, 7:00 pm – Alcoa Municipal Bldg

Next Library Board Meeting – 12 November 2024, 5:30 pm, Sharon Lawson Room

Motion to Adjourn:

Dawn Reagan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Andy Simon seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The next Library Board meeting will be held on, 5 November 2024 at 5:00 pm, in the Sharon Lawson Room

Respectfully submitted,
Summer Dale