

**BLACKWATER REGIONAL LIBRARY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES  
October 16, 2024**

**Present**

Ora Briggs – Sussex County  
Deborah Dawson – Surry County  
Charlene Herrala – Isle of Wight County  
Pam Lease – City of Franklin  
Terri Hedgepeth – City of Franklin  
Kathy Lippard – Isle of Wight County  
Judge Alfreda Talton-Harris – City of Franklin  
Pam Vaughan – Isle of Wight County  
Johanna Wiggins – Isle of Wight County  
Bill Worsham – Southampton County  
Bonnie Lauver – Assistant Library Director  
Ben Neal – Library Director

**Remote (via Zoom)**

Jessica Moore – Sussex County

**Absent**

MeChelle Blunt – Southampton County  
Sylvia Claggett – Isle of Wight County  
Jennifer Cuthbertson – Southampton County  
Debbie Carter – Budget & Finance Manager

Chair, Deborah Dawson called the meeting of the Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees to order at 3:02 p.m. at the Franklin Branch.

**Consideration of Remote Meeting Participation Requests**

Trustee Moore requested to attend this meeting remotely. Mr. Neal read the Motion to Permit Board Member to Participate Remotely, filled in the required information, and Ms. Lauver conducted a roll call vote.

Ayes: Herrala, Hedgepeth, Lease, Lippard, Talton-Harris, Vaughan, Wiggins, Worsham, Dawson

Nays: none

**Agenda**

Ms. Lease moved, and Ms. Hedgepeth seconded that the agenda be approved as amended. Ms. Lauver conducted a roll call vote.

Ayes: Herrala, Hedgepeth, Lease, Lippard, Moore, Talton-Harris, Vaughan, Wiggins, Worsham, Dawson

Nays: none

**Minutes**

Ms. Herrala moved, and Mr. Worsham seconded the minutes be approved as presented. Ms. Lauver conducted a roll call vote.

Ayes: Herrala, Hedgepeth, Lease, Lippard, Moore, Talton-Harris, Vaughan, Wiggins, Worsham, Dawson

Nays: none

**Public Comment**

None

**Correspondence**

None

**Library Director's Report**

Roku device project is going well. Patrons have already shown a lot of demand for these devices.

Comparable data from previous year shows positive directional trends for community usage of the library. Circulation is up 13%, Visits up 5%, Active Users up 2%.

VLA conference starts October 17, 2024. Several BRL staff will attend.

Windsor library building update – Mr. Neal is working with Isle of Wight County on plans to move forward with the project.

### **Committee Reports**

*Budget & Finance* – Ms. Moore – The committee met on October 9, 2024 to discuss FY2026 operating budget and holiday gifts for staff. The committee recommended purchasing a \$30 gift card for all permanent staff. Ms. Lauver conducted a roll call vote.

Ayes: Herrala, Hedgepeth, Lease, Lippard, Moore, Talton-Harris, Vaughan, Wiggins, Worsham, Dawson

Nays: none

Mr. Neal presented the FY2026 operating budget and explained major changes, to include:

- Health insurance premiums and VRS percentage increases
- Salary Scale increase to \$13.75/hour minimum, plus 3% salary increase for all staff
- Rawls Trust – will take approximately 3.3%, instead of 1.9%
- BRL's attorney reviewed Trust to approve expenditures the additional percentage will be used for

Please review the Long Range Plan and Proposed FY2026 Operating Budget to ask questions before the November 20, 2024 Budget Workshop and Board Meeting. Please have all questions in by November 6, 2024.

Ms. Lease – staff has done a great job outlining the expected changes, and the Trust seems able to handle the change.

Ms. Dawson – mobile printing is a great addition. Mr. Neal explained this is being pushed down from the Library of Virginia. Having mobile printing would enhance the patron experience while also avoiding staff having access to patron's personal information.

*Personnel & Policy* – Ms. Vaughan – no report

*Long Range Planning* – no report

### **Accounts Payable**

Ms. Vaughan moved, and Ms. Lease seconded that the accounts payable be filed for the Annual Audit. Ms. Lauver conducted a roll call vote.

Ayes: Herrala, Hedgepeth, Lease, Lippard, Moore, Talton-Harris, Vaughan, Wiggins, Worsham, Dawson

Nays: none

### **Unfinished Business**

None

### **New Business**

*Staff In-Service* – Mr. Neal – BRL's annual Staff In-Service Day was held on October 14, 2024 (all branches were closed). Barry Trott from the Library of Virginia gave a presentation on Customer Service, Mr. Neal presented the annual BRL Road Map, and Ms. Fisk rounded out the day with fun activities.

### **Board Member Comments/Announcements**

Ms. Hedgepeth – will be in Ireland for next meeting; Business After Hours at RMA on October 23, 2024

Ms. Briggs – Sussex Improvement Association will hold a Harvest Festival in the coming weeks

Ms. Dawson – Chippokes Harvest Festival, October 19<sup>th</sup>; Halloween with Sheriff's Department, October 26<sup>th</sup>

Mr. Neal – Outreach will attend Trunk or Treat at Gatherings, October 18<sup>th</sup>; Boykins Pumpkin Fest, October 19<sup>th</sup>

### **Announcement of Next Meeting**

The next Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees meeting will be the Budget Workshop on November 20, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. at the Franklin Branch. The Board meeting will immediately follow the Workshop.

**Adjournment**

Mr. Worsham moved, and Ms. Herrala seconded the meeting be adjourned. Ms. Lauver conducted a roll call vote.

Ayes: Briggs, Herrala, Hedgepeth, Lease, Lippard, Moore, Talton-Harris, Vaughan, Wiggins, Worsham, Dawson

Nays: none

The meeting was adjourned at 3:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Carter for  
Sylvia Claggett, Secretary