

**BLACKWATER REGIONAL LIBRARY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES  
May 21, 2025**

**Present**

Ora Briggs – Sussex County  
Sylvia Claggett – Isle of Wight County  
Deborah Dawson – Surry County  
Terri Hedgepeth – City of Franklin  
Charlene Herrala – Isle of Wight County  
Pam Lease – City of Franklin  
Kathy Lippard – Isle of Wight County  
Jessica Moore – Sussex County  
Pam Vaughan – Isle of Wight County  
Johanna Wiggins – Isle of Wight County  
Bill Worsham – Southampton County  
Ben Neal – Library Director  
Bonnie Lauver – Assistant Library Director  
Debbie Carter – Budget & Finance Manager

**Remote (via Zoom)**

**Absent**

MeChelle Blunt – Southampton County  
Jennifer Cuthbertson – Southampton County  
Judge Alfreda Talton-Harris – City of Franklin

Chair, Deborah Dawson called the meeting of the Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees to order at 3:01 p.m. at the Franklin Branch.

**Consideration of Remote Meeting Participation Requests**

None

**Agenda**

Mr. Worsham moved, and Ms. Herrala seconded that the agenda be approved as presented. The vote was unanimous.

**Minutes**

Ms. Moore moved, and Ms. Lippard seconded the minutes be approved as presented. The vote was unanimous.

**Public Comment**

None

**Correspondence**

None

**Library Director's Report**

Checkout of materials was almost 30,000 in April (+7% over comparable pre-pandemic period).

Staff has begun process of updating public computers in some locations. Will be adjusting number of public computers per branch to meet demand.

Marketing for Summer Reading is underway. A mailer will be sent to approximately 2,000 homes in new neighborhoods in Franklin and northern Isle of Wight, and to citizens along the 460 corridor (reaching IOW, Southampton, and Sussex).

Isle of Wight and Surry have approved budgets for FY2026 with full funding. BRL is fully funded in proposed budgets for Franklin, Southampton, and Sussex.

## **Committee Reports**

*Budget & Finance* – Ms. Moore – Please continue to monitor locality budgets for adjustments.

*Personnel & Policy* – Ms. Vaughan – committee met, but did not have a quorum. Background Check policy will fall under New Business.

*Long Range Planning* – Mr. Neal – The first community conversation is scheduled at StoreHouse Coffee in Franklin on June 12, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. These conversations will help assess community needs for the library's strategic planning process. Library of Virginia staff will assist.

## **Accounts Payable**

Ms. Moore moved, and Mr. Worsham seconded that the accounts payable be filed for the Annual Audit. The vote was unanimous.

## **Unfinished Business**

*Nominating Committee* – Ms. Lease – The proposed slate of officers for fiscal year 2026 is Deborah Dawson, Chair; Pam Lease, Vice-Chair; and Ora Briggs, Secretary. The Board will vote on this slate at its June 18, 2025 meeting. Ms. Dawson stated that nominations from the floor will be accepted at that time.

## **New Business**

*Background Check Policy* – Ms. Vaughan stated that Personnel & Policy met and discussed this policy at length. Mr. Neal stated that BRL has always conducted background checks on new employees, but did not have a policy. He asked BRL's attorney to draft a document, which the committee edited, and recommends for approval. Ms. Vaughan moved, and Ms. Claggett seconded the policy be approved as presented. The vote was unanimous.

*FY2025-2026 Schedule of Board Meetings* – Ms. Briggs moved, and Ms. Hedgepeth seconded the schedule be approved as presented. The vote was unanimous.

## **Board Member Comments/Announcements**

Mr. Worsham – attended a men's breakfast in Sedley and heard lots of good things about BRL

Ms. Moore – Wakefield & Waverly book clubs are still meeting. Staff attended a great Spring Fling event in Stony Creek on 5/17. Staff is preparing for Summer Reading.

Ms. Claggett – Read to 1<sup>st</sup> graders at Carrollton Elementary on behalf of her sorority. Great experience!

Ms. Lippard – Smithfield sponsored a local authors meet and greet at Smithfield Arts Fest on 5/17, and has storywalks at the library and Browder's.

Ms. Wiggins – heard from a new Franklin patron. Very pleased with Franklin's customer service!

Ms. Briggs – Attended Waverly Farmers Market – great event!

Ms. Hedgepeth – Wonderful High School Art Show is up at RMA!

Ms. Dawson – Surry/Claremont are getting excited for Summer Reading!

## **Announcement of Next Meeting**

The next Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees meeting will be on June 18, 2025 at 3:00 p.m. at the Franklin Branch.

## **Adjournment**

Ms. Moore moved, and Ms. Lease seconded the meeting be adjourned. The vote was unanimous.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Carter for  
Sylvia Claggett, Secretary