

**BLACKWATER REGIONAL LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
September 17, 2025**

Present

MeChelle Blunt – Southampton County
Sylvia Claggett – Isle of Wight County
Deborah Dawson – Surry County
Charlene Herrala – Isle of Wight County
Pam Lease – City of Franklin
Kathy Lippard – Isle of Wight County
Margie McClenny – Southampton County
Karen Richardson – Sussex County
Kisha Watford – Southampton County
Johanna Wiggins – Isle of Wight County
Ben Neal – Library Director
Bonnie Lauver – Assistant Library Director
Debbie Carter – Budget & Finance Manager

Remote (via Zoom)

Absent

Ora Briggs – Sussex 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 2:13 p.m. at the Franklin Branch following the Board Retreat.

Consideration of Remote Meeting Participation Requests

None

Agenda

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

Minutes

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

Public Comment

None

Correspondence

None

Library Director's Report

Summer Reading Program 2025 was a success with over 1,000 children participating and over 22,000 children's books checked out system-wide. Over 100 programs were held with over 5,000 people attending.

Fully staffed as of 9.10.2025

BRL participated in multiple National Night Out events throughout the service area.

Committee Reports

Budget & Finance – Ms. Lease – will have formal meeting the day of October Board meeting. Ms. Lease will confirm time via email.

Personnel & Policy – Mr. Neal – The committee did not have quorum at its meeting, but came to a broad consensus on an updated Travel Policy. The policy will fall under New Business.

Long Range Planning – Ms. Dawson – Committee will meet October 8th, Ms. Dawson will email details.

Accounts Payable

Ms. Lease moved, and Ms. Herrala seconded that the accounts payable be filed for the Annual Audit. The vote was unanimous.

Unfinished Business

None

New Business

Travel Policy – Personnel and Policy discussed details of this policy at length. The draft includes travel expense updates based on local governments and schools, and the Department of Human Resource Management. Ms. Herrala moved, and Ms. McClenny seconded that the policy be approved as presented, effective November 1, 2025. The vote was unanimous.

Board Member Comments/Announcements

Ms. Dawson – happy to see everyone at Board Retreat earlier in the day. Nottoway Indian Pow Wow is this weekend in Surry. BRL will attend on Saturday.

Ms. Watford – Delta Sigma Theta will host a Wellness Rodeo on Saturday from 10:00a – 2:00p in the Paul D parking lot.

Ms. Lippard – The Smithfield Branch Manager transition from Terry Andrews to April Watkins is going very well.

Ms. Richardson – The Waverly Farmer's Market was held on Tuesday.

Ms. Lease – Franklin Fall Festival is October 4th in downtown Franklin.

Announcement of Next Meeting

The next Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees meeting will be on October 15, 2025 at 3:00 p.m. at the Franklin Branch.

Adjournment

Ms. Lippard moved, and Ms. Watford seconded the meeting be adjourned. The vote was unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Carter for
Ora Briggs, Secretary