

**BLACKWATER REGIONAL LIBRARY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES  
November 19, 2025**

**Present**

MeChelle Blunt – Southampton County  
Ora Briggs – Sussex 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 McClenney – Southampton County  
Karen Richardson – Sussex County  
Judge Alfreda Talton-Harris – City of Franklin  
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**

Chair, Deborah Dawson called the meeting of the Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees to order at 2:48 p.m. at the Franklin Branch following the Budget Workshop.

**Consideration of Remote Meeting Participation Requests**

None

**Agenda**

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

**Minutes**

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

Ms. Richardson moved, and Ms. Wiggins seconded the October minutes be approved as presented. The vote was unanimous.

**Public Comment**

None

**Correspondence**

None

**Library Director's Report**

Two vacancies as of 11.11.2025

Staff attended Virginia Library Association and Association of Bookmobile & Outreach Services conferences for important continuing education.

BRL participated in several National Night Out events in early October reaching over 700 members of our community.

Holiday School Supply Drive underway; collecting school supplies for those in need mid-way through the academic year.

## **Committee Reports**

*Budget & Finance* – Ms. Dawson – committee met in October, but did not have a quorum. The consensus of the group was to support the budget as proposed for FY2027.

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

*Long Range Planning* – Ms. Dawson – no report – Ms. Dawson would like to plan a meeting prior to the January Board meeting. She will communicate meeting information.

## **Accounts Payable**

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

## **Unfinished Business**

*Approval of Holiday Gift Cards for Staff* – Dr. Blunt moved, and Ms. Herrala seconded that each permanent staff member be given a \$30 Walmart gift card for the holidays. The vote was unanimous.

*Consideration of FY2026-2027 Budget* – Ms. Dawson asked for additional questions. Hearing none, she called for a vote. Ms. Richardson moved, and Ms. Briggs seconded that the FY2026-2027 Operating Budget be accepted as proposed. The vote was unanimous.

## **New Business**

*Acceptance of FY2025 Annual Audit* – Mr. Neal stated that an annual audit is required by the Library of Virginia, and per contract with localities. Ms. Lease moved, and Ms. Briggs seconded that the annual audit be accepted as presented. The vote was unanimous.

## **Board Member Comments/Announcements**

Ms. Richardson – Very nice Farmer's Market was held at Waverly yesterday.

Ms. Briggs – Senior Center is hosting a Thanksgiving giveaway for seniors.

Ms. Lippard – School supply donations in Smithfield are coming in nicely.

Ms. Herrala – Santa Breakfast in Windsor on 12/6

Ms. Dawson – Happy Holidays! Did a presentation for a church group in Isle of Wight and plugged many BRL resources, including 1000 Books Before Kindergarten and the Dolly Parton Imagination Library.

## **Announcement of Next Meeting**

The next Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees meeting will be on January 21, 2026 at 3:00 p.m. at the Franklin Branch.

## **Adjournment**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 3:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Carter for  
Ora Briggs, Secretary