

**BLACKWATER REGIONAL LIBRARY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES  
January 21, 2026**

**Present**

Ora Briggs – Sussex County  
Deborah Dawson – Surry County  
Charlene Herrala – Isle of Wight County  
Pam Lease – City of Franklin  
Kathy Lippard – Isle of Wight 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**

MeChelle Blunt – Southampton County  
Sylvia Claggett – Isle of Wight County  
Margie McClenny – Southampton County

Chair, Deborah Dawson called the meeting of the Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees to order at 3:00 p.m. at the Franklin Branch.

**Consideration of Remote Meeting Participation Requests**

None

**Agenda**

Ms. Briggs moved, and Ms. Watford seconded that the agenda be approved as amended. The vote was unanimous.

**Minutes**

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

**Public Comment**

None

**Correspondence**

Staff sent thank you notes to the Board in appreciation of holiday gift cards.

**Library Director's Report**

Reference checks are in progress for the two part-time vacancies.

The Holiday School Supply Drive was very successful throughout the system. Donations were distributed to all of our local school systems.

Ms. Lauver explained the upcoming Winter Reading Program and using the Beanstack app. Winter Reading will include youth, teens, and adults this year.

Mr. Neal explained House Bill 236 and the Virginia Library Association's response. There are copies of both in the handouts for today's meeting.

**Committee Reports**

*Budget & Finance* – Ms. Lease – no report

Mr. Neal – available locality budget calendars are included in handouts for today's meeting.

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

*Long Range Planning* – Ms. Dawson – no report

**Accounts Payable**

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

**Unfinished Business**

*None*

**New Business**

*None*

**Board Member Comments/Announcements**

Ms. Richardson – recommends The Correspondent by JMU graduate Virginia Evans

Ms. Lippard – Smithfield Library’s 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration was very nice and lots of fun! Silent auction raised \$800!

Ms. Watford – SHS Junior, Kamyia Banks, has written two books for a Jabberwock fundraiser (The Color of Me and The Magic in My Hair).

**Announcement of Next Meeting**

The next Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees meeting will be on February 18, 2026 at 3:00 p.m. at the Franklin Branch.

**Adjournment**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Carter for  
Ora Briggs, Secretary