

UNICOI COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
February 23, 2023

The Board of Trustees of the Unicoi County Public Library met February 23rd, 2023, at the Unicoi County Public Library in Erwin, TN. Members present were President, Cathy Griffith, Vice President, Jan Bowden, Treasurer, Travis Bishop, Secretary, Andy Frazier, Jenna Lafever and Chris Privette. Also present were, UCPL Director Suzy Bomgardner, Regional Library Director, Jennifer Breuer and UCPL Foundation member Carrie Hovey. Member absent was Gail Snodgrass.

- I. Call of meeting to order. Ms. Griffith called the meeting to order at 6:04pm.
- II. Approval of January meeting minutes. Upon the motion of Mr. Bishop, seconded by Ms. Bowden the minutes of the January 26th, 2023, meeting were unanimously approved as submitted.
- III. Treasurer's report. Mr. Bishop presented a report on the January finances.
  - a. Approval of January 2023 financial report. Upon the motion of Ms. Bowden, seconded by Mr. Frazier, the January financial report was unanimously approved as submitted.
- IV. Director's report. Ms. Bomgardner shared a report on recent library happenings.

UCPL had 51 new patrons in January! Two staff members, Ms. Garst and Ms. Groll, were leading an outreach event at Temple Hill Elementary and returned soon after the meeting began to share how that went. The First Friday in March will feature a special event with members of the cast of Seussical the Musical from the Bonnie Kate Theater in Elizabethton.

Ms. Bomgardner reports that a meeting with Mayor Bullen of the Town of Unicoi and the Director of Communications, Laura Rodgers went well. Some exciting opportunities are coming up to participate in events at the Bowman-Bogart Cabin, the Community Kitchen and the Strawberry Festival. There will also be an installation of a Little Free Library at Jack's Natural Playground in Unicoi in the near future, in addition to one coming to Fishery Park.

The Daddy Daughter Dance went well and is a fundraiser for the Imagination Library. Former UCPL Director Angie Georgeff invited Ms. Bomgardner to speak at the Monday Club. She also participated in a recent Chamber of Commerce luncheon, which was a good opportunity to network with area businesses and organizations. UCPL plans to purchase a membership.

The Mad Hatter Tea Party had over 45 people in attendance and got some good press. Conversational Spanish classes have been well attended. Staff member Ms. Emil has been leading that and had 17 participants in her first class. Mr. Frazier has helped make some updates to the UCPL website to better highlight the most important information we want website visitors to see and features we want them to interact with.

February 25<sup>th</sup> will be the soft launch of the new Seed Library. UCPL will host Tennessee Master Gardner and Southern Appalachian Plant Society President Earl Hockin to teach

three season gardening. Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds and Eden Brothers Seeds generously donated lots of great seeds to help get us started. On March 31<sup>st</sup> at 4pm, there will be a special 10<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration for Story, the library's cat.

Ms. Bomgardner concluded her report by distributing the March calendar and reviewing some documents with charts and information related to circulation, participation, and library assets.

- V. Holston River Regional Library Report. Ms. Breuer shared a report from the regional library. Mr. Bishop was presented with his Trustee Certification certificate to acknowledge his recent completion of that program. Other Trustees are encouraged to go through the program as well as it can help with funding requests and is valuable training. Ms. Breuer complimented Ms. Bomgardner on her weekly e-mail updates which she has enjoyed and considers a valuable way to communicate with local leaders.

Some upcoming training opportunities were discussed, including Emergency Succession Planning and Mange/Gaming in Libraries. Many of these have digital options if someone cannot attend in person. Starting on Monday, 2/28, the regional library will be undergoing some building renovations and the staff will be working from outside of the office.

- VI. President's Report. Ms. Griffith shared that the Department of Labor is likely increasing the threshold for exempt salaries from about \$35,000/year to about \$50,000/year. As a Board we will need to prepare for this and take a look at staff salaries in the near future. She also shared some information she has been gathering about health insurance options for our qualifying full time employees. We may need to see what the municipalities decide to do this year as far as funding to see what our options are, but even if they do not provide adequate funds this year, we should prioritize finding alternate ways to offer this benefit. Keystone Insurance is the company she is working with to get quote from at the moment. In addition to updating salaries and health insurance benefits, the possibility of offering other benefits like retirement was also discussed.
- VII. Unicoi County Public Library Foundation report. Ms. Giffith, Mr. Bishop, and Ms. Hovey were all present to share some quick updates from the foundation. No major news beyond ongoing efforts related to things already discussed in past meetings. The next meeting of the UCPL Foundation is April 25<sup>th</sup> at 6pm at the library.
- VIII. Toney Foundation report. No report.
- IX. Old Business. Ms. Griffith and Mr. Frazier shared some updates on the Encore project. Equipment is now scheduled to arrive on 5/16/23 but could still arrive even sooner. We are still pushing for this project to happen as soon as possible, preferably before summer programs begin.

TOP Grant updates include that Mr. Frazier has been teaching some computer coding classes to homeschool students and teens. Hot spots are now circulating and have been well received. The solar charging bench should be delivered and installed soon

Ms. Griffith reminded the Board that the workshop day has been rescheduled to Monday,

March 27<sup>th</sup> from 9am-1pm. At this workshop we hope to spend some time discussing many things related to the library's long-term vision and mission and a variety of topics we don't usually have time to dive into in regular meetings. The owner of Clinchfield Sub Station has graciously offered to help provide lunch for a discounted cost. Please send requests to Ms. Griffith or Mr. Bomgardner prior to the meeting.

X. New Business.

A. Walmart store card. Ms. Bomgardner presented a proposal for the library to get a Walmart store card. This would be used for regular library purchases, has no annual fee and earns some cash back both at Walmart and from other purchases.

a. Upon the motion of Mr. Bishop, seconded by Mr. Frazier, the motion was unanimously approved.

B. Close ½ day on April 6<sup>th</sup> for staff training. Ms. Bomgardner presented a proposal for closing for part of the day on 4/6 for staff training purposes

Upon the motion of Mr. Bishop, seconded by Ms. Bowden, the motion was unanimously approved.

XI. Board comments. Mr. Bishop mentioned that the county commission budget workshop meeting was coming up on 3/1 at 5pm at the courthouse if anyone wished to attend. Ms. Bomgardner shared that one of our staff members will be leaving at the end of March. She has been a wonderful asset to the library and community and is leaving on good terms for personal reasons. She will be missed. A search for a replacement will begin soon. Mr. Frazier mentioned that starting with the January 2023 minutes approved at the start of this meeting, we will begin posting approved minutes and meeting agendas on the UCPL website for the public to more easily access. This also brings us into compliance with another state standard for libraries of our size.

XII. Adjournment. Upon the motion of Ms. Griffith, seconded by Mr. Bishop, all agree to adjourn the meeting at 7:10pm. Next meeting will be Thursday, March 30th, 2023 at 5:30pm at UCPL.

Respectfully submitted,



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Andy Frazier, Secretary