UNICOI COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

March 27th, 2025

The Board of Trustees of the Unicoi County Public Library met on March 27, 2025, at the Unicoi County Public Library in Erwin, TN. Members present at the meeting were President, Cathy Griffith, Treasurer, Jan Bowden, Secretary, Andy Frazier, and members Stana Donnelly and Jenna Lafever. Vice President, Gail Snodgrass, was absent.

Also present were UCPL Director Morgan Olson and Holston River Regional Library Director Jennifer Breuer.

1. Call of meeting to order. Ms. Griffith called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.
2. Public comment. UCPL employee, Elizabeth Kyker, commented on how much she is enjoying the work she does for the library. The Board expressed thanks to her and the staff for their ongoing great work.

Ms. Griffith also noted that it had been six months to the day since the flooding disaster in our area. She requested those present to observe a moment of silence in memory of those who lost their lives that day. After a brief time of silence the meeting continued.

1. Approval of January 23rd, 2025 meeting minutes.
   1. Upon the motion of Ms. Donnelly, seconded by Ms. Lafever, the minutes of the January 23rd, 2025, meeting were unanimously approved.
2. Treasurer’s report. Ms. Bowden shared that two months of reports were provided for approval due to the cancelation of the February 2025 meeting. Ms. Griffith noted that in a recent audit it was recommended that we add bank statements to the Board packets in addition to the usual reports from QuickBooks. This added roughly an additional 40 pages of information for Board members to review. Net revenue as of the end of January was $52,147.12 and at the end of February it was $40,326.21.  
   1. Approval of the January 2025 financial report. Upon the motion of Mr. Frazier, seconded by Ms. Bowden, the January 2025 financial report was approved unanimously.
   2. Approval of the February 2025 financial report. Upon the motion of Ms. Bowden, seconded by Ms. Donnelly, the February 2025 financial report was approved unanimously.
3. Director’s report. Ms. Olson shared some good news regarding grant funding. RISE Erwin granted UCPL $5,000 for assisting with Helene recovery efforts. The 2024 Storybook Trail Plot Twist grant was awarded and will allow for updating to a new story called, “When the Storm Comes”. An additional $1,000 grant was sent from the East Tennessee Foundation, which has already given $10,000 this year. Ms. Olson applied for the Dollar General Summer Reading Grant which could be up to $3,000. If approved, we would find out in May.

Fundraising for the 100th Anniversary of the library building is underway. Shirts are being sold for between $15-$20 based on size, with about 35 sold so far. Commemorative bricks are being sold for $100 each, but not as many of those have sold yet. Ms. Olson shared that we make approximately $82 on each brick sold.  
  
Programming has been very busy lately and will likely only increase over the summer. Take your child to the library day had 22 in attendance. The Mad Hatter Tea Party went great with 46 in attendance. Homeschool programs have also been going well, with 33 attending the first program and 81 at the second one. New programs for kids have been added to fill some programming gaps, including a big kid story hour and the story seekers book club. Teen programs continue to average about 13 attendees per program. Adult programs also continue to go well, including a new cookbook club that started recently. Participants pick recipes from a cookbook to make and then bring in for sampling and discussion.

Upcoming programs include an Everyday Herbs class with Herbalachia on 3/29 at 12pm. The library will be closed on 4/18 to observe Good Friday. The summer reading program theme this year is, “Color Our World”. The staff has already started planning artistic themed programs for all ages this summer. Training opportunities include a half-day session on 4/25 where the library will be closed in the morning and open at 1:30pm. During that time Ms. Olson will offer training on our ILL system, dealing with difficult situations, and getting some information from CHIPS. Lunch will be provided.

1. Holston River Regional Library Report. Ms. Breuer shared that they are nearing the end of this year’s training schedule. Online Trustee Orientation is coming up on 4/10 at 7pm for any who are interested. The class takes about 45 minutes. Trustee certification is also available and has been recently revised with new content. Certification is especially helpful with grant funding. Youth services summit will be online on 3/31. April will include a leadership development training on 4/24 with a guest speaker named, Catherine M. Rymsha. She has been a TEDx speaker and is very experienced in leadership. After the initial session there will be weekly follow-up sessions throughout May.

Several new professional development books have been added to the collection. Also working on getting some story time kits for area libraries to use as needed. Other upcoming training opportunities will be related to burnout and self-care on 4/16 and archival basics on 5/7. Assistant Director, Selena Harmon, has recently stepped down and taken a new position at JCPL, so they will be looking to hire a replacement for that position soon.

1. President’s Report. Ms. Griffth shared that she met with Tim Bailey and Valerie Bradley in connection with UCPL being included in this year’s Town of Erwin audit. What prompted this year’s inclusion compared to previous years was the larger amount of money that came in through fundraising after the leak in our Children’s Room. Overall the audit went well but there were a couple of findings that will require some changes. One finding related to a need to better segregate duties so that Director Olson does not have so many responsibilities. This was not a criticism of the excellent job Ms. Olson has done, but a suggested better practice. Going forward we will need to start having 2 signatures on all checks, with Ms. Griffith and Ms. Bowden on the signature card.

Approval of the 2 signature requirement on every check, starting 4/15/25

* 1. Upon the motion of Ms. Lafever, seconded by Ms. Bowden, the 2 signature requirement motion was unanimously approved.

1. Toney Foundation report. Ms. Griffith shared some updates including mentioning the $35,000 donation from the MacDonald Foundation. She also mentioned that the ceiling is fixed and the lights have been changed and fans cleaned in the process. Some work is still happening in the Teen room. These things are being paid for with some of the new funds. We were declined by several insurance companies except for one that wanted to devalue the policy. So we are looking at about a $12,000 premium from Westfield in the coming year. $36,438.56 is currently in the account but some of that will be paid out soon.
2. Unicoi County Public Library Foundation report. Ms. Griffith shared that this group will meet next in April. Last statement there was $321,108.88 in the Raymond James investment account and $9,970.52 in the MCB bank account.
3. Old Business. None
4. New Business.
5. Code of Conduct. Ms. Olson shared that this is just the scheduled review of this policy. Currently, this policy states that no tobacco products are allowed on the property, but we do have a receptacle for cigarettes outside the door. Item #3 should also be updated to combine the first two sentences, indicating that children 11 and under must be accompanied by and supervised by an adult at all times.
   1. Tabled until the next meeting
6. Image Survey. Ms. Olson shared that she would like all members of all library boards and some regular patrons to complete the image survey document she provided. It may require some time to walk through, observe, and answer questions. Not every question will apply but having several eyes look at these things would be helpful

XII. Board comments. Ms. Lafever asked if we have any connections to ETSU and their Appalachian Studies department. There may be an opportunity to host an exhibit or connect with them more for assistance with grant opportunities.

XIII. Adjournment. Upon the motion of Ms. Donnelly, seconded by Ms. Lafever, all agree to adjourn the meeting at 7:14pm. The next meeting will be Thursday, April 24th at 6:00pm at UCPL.

Respectfully submitted,

Shape

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Andy Frazier, Secretary