

Minutes for Board Meeting of July 25, 2017

Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Library Board Meeting / October 24, 2017

Members Attending: Anna Brown, John Clements, Sherrysue Davis, Ben Jacobs, Mayor Mark Masee, Marsha Stembridge, Chairman Steve Taylor, and Virginia Watson. Staff Attending: Director Martha Powers-Jones and William Duke McKinley (attending as a member of People First). Guests Attending: Members of People First – Brad King, Dorothy Harris, Sandra Wilcox, Marian Jackson, and Tawana Brooks (Jessamine Place Staff member).

The Meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chairman John Clements.

Chairman John Clements welcomed board members and guests. Clements asked if there were any changes to the agenda. Chairman Steve Taylor moved to change the agenda by moving the People First Proposal from under New Business to the first item on the agenda; Virginia Watson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Clements asked Director Martha Powers-Jones to present the People First Proposal. Powers-Jones said that in an attempt to better serve underserved communities within Ben Hill County, she felt that it would be a good idea to find a way to make sure they are represented in community leadership. One way to do this would be to name a representative of an organization that serves an underserved community as an advisor to the Library Board of Trustees. Mayor Mark Masee said that People First would be a good first organization for the pilot program due to their involvement in the community. Clements noted that his son has a disability and he wanted him to see all of the possibilities available to him. He thanked People First for all that they did for people with disabilities and for their work in Ben Hill County. Masee moved to accept the proposal as presented; Watson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Clements thanks People First for coming to the meeting.

Minutes were presented for the April 25, 2017 regularly scheduled meeting and the June 22, 2017 called meeting. Chairman Steve Taylor moved to accept the minutes for both meetings; Sherrysue Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Clements asked Powers-Jones to present the financial report. Powers-Jones noted that the 2017 Quarter 2 Local Financial Report reflected the budget as amended June 22nd to account for the County funding reduction. She said that that the Library was over budget partly due to miscalculating pending expenses for the June budget amendment proposal and due to overages in the Building Repair and Maintenance line item from expenses related to the plumbing issues in the Women's bathroom, the outdoor light by the book drop, and hardwiring the handicap accessible door for the front entrance. She also noted that there was an increase of around \$700 for the yearly building insurance premium that will be reflected in the October report. She was hopeful that with close monitoring of the budget, they would be back on target by the October Board meeting. Powers-Jones also presented the 2017 Final State Financial Report. She stated that the year closed on June 30, 2017 and 100% of state funding had been spent. Masee moved to accept the financial report and Ben Jacobs seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

Clements asked Powers-Jones to highlight any notable items from the Director's Report. Powers-Jones highlighted the Summer Reading numbers – nearly 2,500 people attended programs this summer. She said that they had programs nearly every day. She thanked Mayor Masee, as representative of the City, for the use of the Grand Theatre for June kick-off week events and the movie days in July. Powers-Jones said that

Library Card Sign-up Month would again be in September and the Library planned to create READ posters featuring each board member and possibly some County Commissioners and City Councilmen. She also noted the Rural Gateways programs would begin with a program on September 18, 2017. She noted that the Library was one of the libraries selected to receive Solar Eclipse Glasses and they would be giving those out starting August 1, 2017. Powers-Jones also discussed statistics noting that the numbers were largely holding steady with an 11% increase in Internet / Computer usage of the same period last year. Clements asked for any further discussion. Jacobs thanked Powers-Jones and the Library staff for their hard work this summer. Powers-Jones noted that Sue Hostetler and Jennifer Johnson were largely responsible for the success of the children's programs and teen programs respectively.

Mayor Masee moved to go into Executive Session to discuss Personnel; Sherrysue Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Clements again thanked guests for attending.

After completing discussion on the topic of Personnel, Davis moved to leave Executive Session; Jacobs seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Masee moved to approve the Executive Committee's evaluation of Powers-Jones and their recommendation for a 2% raise according to state guidelines and available state funding; Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Clements asked Powers-Jones to present the proposal for Fine Forgiveness. Powers-Jones noted that this was a popular program each year and helped the Library's image in the community. She did note that budgetary considerations should be taken into account when considering the proposal this year. Anna Brown asked how much money could be lost on this program; Powers-Jones noted that the Library typically takes in \$584 for lost card replacement and fines each month. Taylor pointed out that many outstanding items are returned during this period each year saving the Library the expense of having to replace them. Masee added that patrons who might avoid the Library due to excessive fees might be encouraged to come back to the Library during this period. He moved to set the whole month of September for a Fine Forgiveness and Free Library Card Replacement period; Taylor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Clements asked Taylor if there was an update on the County's budget situation. Taylor said that the County was just finishing the audit and should be getting final numbers soon. He emphasized that the preliminary numbers indicate a dire situation. Clements, on behalf of the Board, thanked Taylor for his work and dedication during this difficult time for the County.

Clements asked Powers-Jones to present the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Waiver Request. She reported that Chairman Taylor had provided the information needed for the request. She emphasized that the Board must initiate the request and vote on submitting the request; her job is to make sure they have the information they need for the request should one be approved for submission by the Board. Masee asked if the information provided by the County met the minimum qualifications for the MOE; Powers-Jones said that the cuts were still not equal but that Taylor included a letter that helped explain some of the discrepancies. She also said that Taylor had spoken to State Librarian Julie Walker and Walker had expressed positive thoughts about the conversation; Taylor agreed and said that it was a positive conversation and he was hopeful that she understood their situation and that the waiver would be approved. Jacobs pointed out that a MOE Waiver Request had never been denied and he did not want this Library to be the first to be denied and negatively affect our reputation. Masee asked Powers-Jones how these things are usually handled. She said that usually negotiations take place prior to waiver request submittal between the Board, funding agencies, and the State Librarian and that changes are made so that the waiver request will be in the position to be approved by the

State Librarian. Masee asked if Powers-Jones could talk to State Librarian Walker, Chairman Taylor, and Chairman Clements to see if our waiver request could be adjusted to the point where it would be approved. Board members agreed and Powers-Jones said that she would work with Walker, Clements, and Taylor to set up a phone conference to work on this. No motion was made.

Under New Business, Clements asked Powers-Jones to present the 2018 State Budget proposal. Powers-Jones reported that the 2018 fiscal year began July 1st and runs through June 30, 2018. The budget proposal includes funding for materials, system services, and state salaries. She noted that the system services monies will go towards our bookkeeping outsourcing and the costs of the AUP. She also noted that the salary monies include her 2% raise as approved earlier this meeting. Masee noted some discrepancies in the Adjustment column, but said they didn't affect the totals in the Proposal. Masee moved to approve the budget with those corrections; Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Clements then brought up the issue of joining a regional library system; he said that this was an issue that was brought up by a commissioner. He asked Powers-Jones if she wanted to highlight anything in the information she presented. She noted that there were many advantages to joining a regional system, primarily in the consolidation of administration and associated expenses. She also noted that the potential disadvantages included losing local control of state funds, library policies, and personnel. Marsha Stembidge stated that she did not want to lose the connection the community had to our Library and thought that this should only be considered as a last resort. Watson and Jacobs agreed with that sentiment, with Watson adding that our local control helps make our Library special. Masee stated that he was against joining a regional system and had always been quite proud of our Library being an independent institution that was able to be governed by our local community and focus on our local community's needs. He also noted that we might save \$40,000, but that savings would be insignificant since we lose control of around \$140,000 in state funding. Clements concurred and added that we had a good reputation as an independent library and this was something he hoped we would always continue to be. He mentioned the problems associated with other mergers such as Wiregrass Technical College; Davis agreed saying that the region doing the merging of the hospital received a lot of benefits, but the local community lost nearly everything and gained nothing. Powers-Jones asked Taylor if he wanted to share any thoughts as a representative of the commission. Taylor said that it had been discussed in terms of helping deal with the current budget crisis, but that it was not something the commission was advocating for. No motion was made.

Clements asked Powers-Jones to talk about the Fall Staff Training Day. Powers-Jones said that training days gave the staff time to come together with the doors closed. This time would be used for staff development in the areas of computers, PINES, and policies. She also said that it was good for morale to have this time together. She asked that the Library be closed on Columbus Day, this year falling on October 9, 2017. She felt that many expected the Library to be closed on this day as it was a government holiday so the impact on the public would be minimal. Watson moved to close on Columbus Day, October 9, 2017, for staff training; Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Having no further business, Clements called for a motion to adjourn. Watson so moved and Davis seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously. Clements noted that the next meeting will be on Tuesday, October 24, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. The meeting was adjourned.