



## **West Georgia Regional Library System Board of Trustees Meeting**

### **MINUTES**

**September 22, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.**

[This meeting was held via teleconference per O.C.G.A. 50-14-1(g).]

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m. by Denise Askin, Chairman.

#### **Pledge of Allegiance**

Trustees in attendance (county in parenthesis):

- Denise Askin (Carroll County) – Chairman
- Tracy Crooks (Douglas County) - Secretary
- Beth Hammond (Heard County)
- Denney Rogers (Heard County)
- Elaine Stokes (Paulding County)
- Jenna Barton (Paulding County)
- Keri Perkins (Haralson County)
- Mike McPherson (Carroll County)
- Pat Rakestraw (Paulding County)
- Shannon Bentley (Douglas County)
- Urshla Fouch (Douglas County)

Staff in attendance:

- Jeremy Snell, WGRS Director
- Stephanie Irvin, WGRS Deputy Director
- Cherry Waddell, WGRS Business Manager

Absent:

- Karen Tarpley (Haralson County)
- Tim Grizzard (Carroll County)

#### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion to Approve Agenda - Hammond; Second - McPherson; No Discussion;  
MOTION APPROVED: Vote 11-0.**

<b>Askin</b>	<b>Crooks</b>	<b>Rogers</b>	<b>Hammond</b>	<b>Stokes</b>	<b>Barton</b>	<b>Perkins</b>
<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>

<b>McPherson</b>	<b>Rakestraw</b>	<b>Bentley</b>	<b>Fouch</b>	<b>Tarpley</b>	<b>Grizzard</b>
<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion to accept minutes from July 28, 2020 regular meeting – McPherson; Second – Crooks; No Discussion. MOTION APPROVED: Vote 11-0.**

<b>Askin</b>	<b>Crooks</b>	<b>Rogers</b>	<b>Hammond</b>	<b>Stokes</b>	<b>Barton</b>	<b>Perkins</b>
<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>

<b>McPherson</b>	<b>Rakestraw</b>	<b>Bentley</b>	<b>Fouch</b>	<b>Tarpley</b>	<b>Grizzard</b>
<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

o Mr. Snell updated on the nine new additions to the WGRLS team. Two are new management team members: Stephanie Williams, the new manager at the Whitesburg Public Library, and Laurie Eubanks, the new manager at the Douglasville library.

o He gave an update regarding the opening status of WGRLS libraries. Most libraries are offering some degree of limited in-person services, with the Douglas County libraries open for browsing as of July 6. Roughly 2/3 of libraries in Georgia are offering some degree of limited in-person services, with the rest remaining contactless.

o Circulation is slowly increasing every month since reopening. Carroll, Douglas, and Paulding Counties continue to have the highest circulation. In August the system had circulation close to 63% of what it was this time last year. There were 870,454 checked out in FY2020, as opposed to around a million items last year. Most of the items (74%) of items checked out in FY2020 were print books. He notes e-books and e-audiobooks are growing in popularity. He praised the Assistant Director for Materials Management (Kristy Greene) and the Assistant Director for Technology (Justin Nobles) for making the report possible due to cleaning up the large amount of items previously cataloged with no circulation modifier.

- o 753,117 physical items are owned by WGRLS, including 40,671 new physical items purchased for libraries
- o The annual report was completed last week, and Mr. Snell is now looking at what the funding agencies have spent on behalf of the libraries. This number will be reported next board meeting.
- o Ms. Crooks asked if there were any expectations of libraries prior to COVID-19 related to benchmarks for checkouts or growth of the e-book collection. Mr. Snell said the libraries have invested more in the e-book collection this past year than in the previously. This year they have budgeted \$34,000 but he is still looking at SPLOST monies in some library funds and whether they can be used towards buying more e-content. During the COVID shutdown WGRLS saw use of the e-book collection grow around 150% and use of the e-audiobook collection has grown 100%. There has been a slight drop since August, but WGRLS wants to maintain its commitment to building material on its cloudLibrary platform. Ms. Crooks asks about places for improvement in library circulation and Mr. Snell said he will look into what the statistics were like prior to COVID and report back.
- o The Neva Lomason Memorial Library has opened to the public. There was a donor ribbon cutting on September 16, and the opening to the public was on September 21. State Librarian Julie Walker sent a letter of congratulation, thanking those who worked to complete this project. Mr. Snell read it to the group, and shared photos from the events.
- o The Villa Rica Public Library's city council approved the purchase of two new HVAC units which have dehumidifiers built into them in order to help with humidity issues. There is also an application to GPLS for state money to be allotted to the project and WGRLS has been notified half the monies for the project will be refunded by the state. The city council voted to pay for the rest.
- o The Warren P. Sewell Library in Bremen is currently using MR&R money to fix issues with some windows pulling back from their frames
- o Automated digital access cards have been approved by PINES. During the COVID-19 closures WGRLS manually created digital access cards for patrons. PINES used CARES funding to work with a company Quipu to allow for interested patrons to apply for a card online and to automatically get a card number to access electronic material. They can complete their application in a library and gain full access to library materials. Despite it being a soft launch with minimal advertising, PINES has seen 107 applications so far, with 12 in WGRLS.
- o Live Oak Libraries in Savannah and the Thomas County library have begun a student card pilot project, the goal of which is to get library cards for students using an automated card process between the school and the library. WGRLS has been added to the list of potential systems to be in the next wave for this program, and Jeremy will be speaking with the school systems and pursuing an MOU.
- o Other items in the works include the closeout of the FY2020 fiscal year, and scheduled fieldwork for the audit of that year. Stephanie Irvin oversaw the submission of the annual report and the application for state aid. These are requirements for continuing to receive state aid. Ms. Irvin is also the contact for a new partnership with a group focusing on audiology testing for

children. This program would make use of meeting rooms in WGRLS libraries to provide this free service. Regionwide the system is working on virtual programming such as book clubs that might otherwise be too niche for a singular location. Angela Thornton and Luke Brown are currently gathering book talks from staff which will be shared on WGRLS social media. Ms. Stokes asked if the audiology testing would only be for children, which Mr. Snell confirmed.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Finance Committee

- o Ms. Hammond said the first action item for the committee was the approval of the first two months of the FY2021 budget.
- o Mr. Snell reviewed the funds for each WGRLS location. The cloudLibrary platform fee (which was previously approved by the board) was put under Dues, Fees, and Travel in error rather than materials, so there was a shift in this budget line for the regional office. The Neva Lomason library had an increase in the amount spent on Other Purchased Services due to a cleaning bill prior to opening, and the Villa Rica Public Library has some unspent SPLOST funds. The Buchanan library has seen an increase in supply costs this year, but it has been reimbursed by the Friends and there will be a budget amendment reflecting it. The library in Franklin has an outstanding reimbursement, but it is only due to differing timelines between the submission deadline date and the date the report is pulled. The Whitesburg Public Library’s fund balance is currently around \$20,000 though Mr. Snell notes most of the fund balance is earmarked grant and SPLOST monies. The remaining libraries are operating within budgetary guidelines. The state salaries grant and materials grants are set to be expended as expected. The MR&R fund is awaiting monies from the state for the Villa Rica Public Library.
- o WGRLS is working with their accounting software vendor MIP to correct errors in how data is displayed to create clearer reports regarding total net revenue and expenditure percentages.

**Motion to approve first two months of FY2021 budget – Hammond; Second – Rogers; No Discussion. MOTION APPROVED: Vote 11-0.**

Askin	Crooks	Rogers	Hammond	Stokes	Barton	Perkins
YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

McPherson	Rakestraw	Bentley	Fouch	Tarpley	Grizzard
YES	YES	YES	YES	ABSENT	ABSENT

- o Budget Amendment 2021-01 is due to an accidental over expenditure in materials monies due to an attempted new method of invoicing by the previous materials manager, which resulted the funds not showing as spent when they actually were. Since \$3,100 had been earmarked for spending, Mr. Snell recommended \$3,100 in shared services funds be moved to materials to

cover the error so the orders do not have to be cancelled. The assistant director for materials management recommended there being quarterly reconciliations of spending in materials in the future to prevent errors of this nature, and Mr. Snell said this process will be implemented.

**Motion to approve Budget Amendment 2021-01 – Hammond; Second – Stokes; No Discussion. MOTION APPROVED: Vote 11-0.**

Askin	Crooks	Rogers	Hammond	Stokes	Barton	Perkins
YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

McPherson	Rakestraw	Bentley	Fouch	Tarpley	Grizzard
YES	YES	YES	YES	ABSENT	ABSENT

**Policy Committee**

o Ms. Irvin shared the updates the internal policy committee made in response to suggestions and concerns from the regional board. The changes include stricter terms for termination of access for patrons who use library computers to access obscene content, and the appeal of termination would end with the director.

**Motion to approve Internet Acceptable Use Policy - Revision – Bentley; Second – Fouch; No Discussion. MOTION APPROVED: Vote 11-0.**

Askin	Crooks	Rogers	Hammond	Stokes	Barton	Perkins
YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

McPherson	Rakestraw	Bentley	Fouch	Tarpley	Grizzard
YES	YES	YES	YES	ABSENT	ABSENT

o Ms. Irvin introduced the new Code of Conduct Policy. She said the purpose of this policy is to create a set of standards by which all patrons can enter a WGRS building and expect to comport themselves to create a safe environment for other patrons and staff. It was created with input from leadership from all five counties to include rules which were applicable for all locations. Ms. Hammond asked if the terminology “privileges for an extended period of time” could include the potential for permanent removal of privileges since there is an escalation of consequences upon repeated offenses. She also asked if the right of appeal could be included.

Ms. Fouch agreed there should be progressive steps taken that lead to removal of privileges. Ms. Irvin agreed with the board that offenses are taken on a case by case basis, and that some cases would involve tiers and rights of appeal such as instances covered by the Internet Acceptable Use Policy. She asked for board opinion if it was necessary to clarify the tiers, since some, like Ms. Hammond had shared, would result in a permanent ban from services. Mr. Snell suggested “up to and including a permanent ban,” noting that as banning has operated in the past it has been taken seriously after multiple attempts to correct action.

Ms. Fouch asked for an example in the past and how staff kept track of offenses and Mr. Snell shared an instance that happened in his tenure. In this case management staff at the location with the patron in question kept the director in the loop during the progression of their attempts to correct the patron’s action, with a no trespassing order and ban finally being necessary when the patron repeatedly failed to comply with the no trespassing order. Mr. Snell was able to receive a picture from local law enforcement to share with member library managers, it was discussed in the monthly manager’s meetings, and a note was made in the patron’s account in PINES.

**There was no further discussion on the Code of Conduct, which Ms. Irvin will take back to the internal committee for edits and bring back to the board for approval at the next meeting. No vote was necessary for tabling the policy, since it is a part of the procedure for policy approval.**

o Ms. Irvin introduced the Exhibits Policy, which was created to create a procedure and set of expectations for artists and libraries which may exhibit their artwork. She noted that the policy mentions an application for potential exhibitors, but that these would be created at the member library level in order to be curated to the particular location, such as noting the space available at that library. Mr. McPherson asked if it included provisions for reviewing art for appropriateness prior to approval. Ms. Irvin confirmed the policy requires the artist submit a portfolio to the manager for pre-approval. Mr. McPherson recommended that there be a second pair of eyes such as a community member or someone on the regional staff look over the portfolio as a proactive measure to get multiple viewpoints on the work. Ms. Fouch agreed. Ms. Barton suggested the wording be clarified to make sure portfolio examples are of items exhibited, not only examples of the artist’s work. Ms. Fouch and Ms. Crooks agreed, and Ms. Irvin suggested “containing examples which will be in the exhibit,” which the board agreed was acceptable.

**There was no further discussion on the Exhibits Policy, which Ms. Irvin will take back to the internal committee for edits and bring back to the board for approval at the next meeting. No vote was necessary for tabling the policy, since it is a part of the procedure for policy approval.**

o Ms. Irvin introduced the Staff Development Policy. She noted that continuing education and training happens at the member library level already, but that the policy is to show the regional system’s support for providing training to all staff. Mr. Snell said there had been a Staff Development Day Policy, namely to account for the day the library had to be closed for an in-person training day. He said the move was for more of an every other year format with outside speakers, and that the regional team would be available year round for training as needed. There will not be an in-person staff development day this year due to COVID-19. Ms. Bentley said the Staff Development Day Policy had been the result of a previous strategic plan Mr. Snell confirmed this plan was from FY2016. It has since been completed. Mr. McPherson

recommended having managers visit other locations as a part of staff development. Ms. Irvin and Mr. Snell acknowledged the new policy allows for more flexibility in training and collaboration among the library managers. Ms. Askin recommended giving high level views of management leaders and their skill sets.

**There was no further discussion on the Staff Development Policy, which Ms. Irvin will take back to the internal committee for edits and bring back to the board for approval at the next meeting. No vote was necessary for tabling the policy, since it is a part of the procedure for policy approval.**

**OLD BUSINESS**

Election of Vice Chair for partial term

o Ms. Askin nominated Mr. McPherson to complete the partial term for Vice Chair.

**Motion to approve Mr. McPherson for Vice Chair (partial term) - Askin; Second – Perkins; No Discussion. MOTION APPROVED: Vote 11-0.**

<b>Askin</b>	<b>Crooks</b>	<b>Rogers</b>	<b>Hammond</b>	<b>Stokes</b>	<b>Barton</b>	<b>Perkins</b>
<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>

<b>McPherson</b>	<b>Rakestraw</b>	<b>Bentley</b>	<b>Fouch</b>	<b>Tarpley</b>	<b>Grizzard</b>
<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>

o Ms. Askin noted she will be individually contacting board members regarding active committees and what roles they would be interested in.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The board moved into executive session at 11:30 a.m. for the director’s performance review.

**Motion to approve move into executive session - Askin; Second – McPherson; No Discussion. MOTION APPROVED: Vote 11-0.**

<b>Askin</b>	<b>Crooks</b>	<b>Rogers</b>	<b>Hammond</b>	<b>Stokes</b>	<b>Barton</b>	<b>Perkins</b>
<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>

<b>McPherson</b>	<b>Rakestraw</b>	<b>Bentley</b>	<b>Fouch</b>	<b>Tarpley</b>	<b>Grizzard</b>
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<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
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The board moved into executive session at 11:30 am to discuss personnel matters.

**Motion to return to regular session - Askin; Second – McPherson; No Discussion.**

**MOTION APPROVED: Vote 11-0.**

<b>Askin</b>	<b>Crooks</b>	<b>Rogers</b>	<b>Hammond</b>	<b>Stokes</b>	<b>Barton</b>	<b>Perkins</b>
<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>

<b>McPherson</b>	<b>Rakestraw</b>	<b>Bentley</b>	<b>Fouch</b>	<b>Tarpley</b>	<b>Grizzard</b>
<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>

The board moved back into regular session at 11:45am.

The board approved the director’s evaluation.

**Motion to approve director’s evaluation- Askin; Second – Hammond; No Discussion.**

**MOTION APPROVED: Vote 11-0.**

<b>Askin</b>	<b>Crooks</b>	<b>Rogers</b>	<b>Hammond</b>	<b>Stokes</b>	<b>Barton</b>	<b>Perkins</b>
<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>

<b>McPherson</b>	<b>Rakestraw</b>	<b>Bentley</b>	<b>Fouch</b>	<b>Tarpley</b>	<b>Grizzard</b>
<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>

**Motion to adjourn - Askin; No Discussion. MOTION APPROVED: Vote 11-0.**

<b>Askin</b>	<b>Crooks</b>	<b>Rogers</b>	<b>Hammond</b>	<b>Stokes</b>	<b>Barton</b>	<b>Perkins</b>
<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>



<b>McPherson</b>	<b>Rakestraw</b>	<b>Bentley</b>	<b>Fouch</b>	<b>Tarpley</b>	<b>Grizzard</b>
<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>

Minutes taken by Deputy Director Stephanie Irvin

Reviewed by WGRLS Regional Board Secretary Tracy Crooks