

Pulaski County Library System
Library Board of Trustees
Minutes
May 26, 2009
Pulaski Public Library

Trustees Present: John Freeman, Chair; Mason Vaughan, Jr., Vice-Chair; Elinor Farmer; Marva Hickman; Nancy Hudson; Martha Jackson; Joseph Slaughter; and Don Stowers

Staff Present: Sally Warburton, Director; Carol Smith, Technology; and Courtney Price, Library Assistant

Guest: Robert Hiss, Assistant County Administrator

Citizens: Janie Hurd Akers (Pulaski), Barbara Bryant (Pulaski), Bill Bryant (Pulaski), Jena Hardy (Southwest Times Newspaper), Deanna Hopkins (Draper), Audrey Kertesz (Pulaski), Leah Leonhardt (Newbern), Lynn Loftus (Pulaski), Sheila D. Nelson (Pulaski), Linda Nisbet (Hiwassee), Ann Reeves (Pulaski), Elmer Roush (Dublin), Tammy Roush (Dublin), Carroll Stone (Draper), and Melinda Taylor (Dublin)

Trustees Absent: Danny Collins

- I. Call to Order & Welcome: Chair John Freeman called the Pulaski County Library Board of Trustees meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 26, 2009 in the Virginia Kelly McNeil Room of the Pulaski Public Library.
- II. Approval of Minutes – April 28, 2009: The Board reviewed the minutes of April 28, 2009. A motion was made by Mr. Vaughan, seconded by Mr. Slaughter to approve the minutes of April 28, 2009 as written. Motion was passed by the Trustees present with Mr. Stowers abstaining.
- III. Library Reports: The following reports were reviewed by Trustees present. A copy of each report is filed with the records of this meeting at the Pulaski County Library.
 - A. Expenditures
 - B. Statistics
 - C. Dublin Library Report
 - D. Children & Youth Services Report
 - E. Library Director's Report
- IV. Follow-up from Previous Meeting:
 - A. Belle, the cat residing at the Charles and Ona B. Free Memorial Library: All Trustees present have previously read the packet of information in favor of keeping Belle at the Dublin Library. In addition Mr. Freeman presented the following:
 1. A petition and letter from Tammy Roush in favor of allowing the cat to remain at the Dublin Library.
 2. A letter from Irene M. Melvin in favor of allowing the cat to remain at the Dublin Library. Ms. Melvin stated that people come to the library to see Belle and the children take great pleasure in her.

3. A letter and copy of on-line petitions from Mr. Bill Bryant, President of the Pulaski County Humane Society, in favor of allowing the cat to remain at the Dublin Library. Mr. Freeman expressed his appreciation of Mr. Bryant's efforts.
4. A letter from Linda Bryan Cadwell in favor of allowing the cat to remain at the Dublin Library, stating "If it ain't broke, don't fix it".
5. Two on-line petitions in favor of allowing the cat to remain at the Dublin Library. One which includes people from around the world and one limited to residents of Pulaski County.
6. A letter from Rebecca English in favor of allowing the cat to remain at the Dublin Library, stating that the Board should not set a precedent to undo prior board's work nor should a few be able to dictate and "bully" the Board. (In an aside, Mr. Freeman commented that he felt more bullied by those in favor of keeping Belle.)
7. A letter from Eloise Alkire in favor of allowing the cat to remain at the Dublin Library stating that she is allergic to cats but Belle "lifts my heart".
8. A letter from Kathryn Sowder, Library Assistant, of her experience with patrons in favor of allowing the cat to remain at the Dublin Library.
9. A letter from Harold McLeod of Roanoke, VA in favor of allowing the cat to remain at the Dublin Library.

Comments from the Board:

- Mr. Freeman stated that regardless of the outcome of the vote, the public should know that in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, the issue has not been discussed in any sort of closed session. He expressed a wish that there will be a cooperative effort between the Library System and the Humane Society to hold an Adopt-A-Pet Day at the Dublin Library which could also involve getting library cards and include a Friends of the Library Book sale.
- Mr. Vaughan reported that he had received a phone call requesting that the cat be removed from the library due to a child having to go to the emergency room after visiting the Dublin Library due to a cat allergy.
- Ms. Jackson asked if there were any stipulations when the cat was adopted but Mr. Vaughan and Ms. Hickman reported none. They were both members of the Board when Belle was adopted.
- Mr. Freeman reported that Maria Everett, a specialist on Library Board By-Laws stated that Boards cannot vote by secret ballot or go into a closed session for discussion of this issue.
- Ms. Farmer reported that a library patron called her to tell her about a child at a local preschool who must be given allergy medication before the preschool visits the library because the parent wants her child to take part in library programs and she doesn't want her child "harassed"
- Courtney Price, Library Assistant reported that whenever a person requests the cat be removed from the library, Belle is shut into the work room with no questions asked
- Ms. Jackson reported that the Virginia Library Association only reports 7 cats in Virginia libraries at this time. 6 additional library cats have died and never been replaced and of the 235 "official" library cats in the United States many of them are stuffed animals, statues, and even a ghost cat. She suggested that library cats have been romanticized and they are not universally accepted.
- Mr. Slaughter commented on his love of animals but the simple fact that animals are animals and even our pets can scratch, snap, or attack.

- Ms. Hudson reported a lawsuit in California involving an animal in a Public Library. Animals are unpredictable.

Dr. Stowers made a motion to keep the cat at the Dublin Library and establish guidelines to better care for the cat and to better serve the public to protect both the animal and the citizens. Ms. Hickman seconded the motion.

Discussion: Ms. Hudson stated that we must limit liability

Mr. Vaughan stated that the cat must be controlled and kept out of the drinking fountain.

Ms. Jackson questioned if caring for Belle is the best use of staff time and agreed that a cat in the water fountain is offensive.

Courtney Price stated that the water fountain is in clear site of the circulation desk and that patrons have requested that the water fountain be removed rather than Belle.

Ms. Farmer called for a vote and Ms. Jackson seconded the motion.

Division of the house: Those in favor of keeping the cat: Ms. Farmer, Ms. Hickman, Dr. Stowers, Mr. Freeman and Mr. Vaughan

Those opposed to keeping the cat: Ms. Jackson, Ms. Hudson and

Mr. Slaughter.

The motion carried.

- B. Staff In-service: Sally Warburton reported that the staff workshop took place on May 13, 2009 and covered Technology, Circulation and Customer Service Issues. Staff set up committees and worked on a revision of the Strategic Plan.
- C. Hiring for the positions of Bookkeeper/Acquisitions Clerk and Youth Services Coordinator: Robert Hiss reported that 21 applications have been received to date for the Youth Services position. There are approximately 5 local applicants with others coming from around the state & surrounding states. Sally Warburton reported that interviews for the Bookkeeper position will take place on May 28 & 29.
- D. Library Budget: The County Budget will be voted on at the end of June with no probable changes in the proposed budget. Sally Warburton thanked Peter Huber, Robert Hiss and Diane Newby as well as the Board of Supervisors for their hard work on putting together a fair and reasonable budget and Mr. Freeman thanked Nancy Burchett for her work on creating the library budget.
- E. VPLDA (Virginia Public Library Directors Association) Annual Meeting: In addition to stating that the State Aid Funding will be at 67% of the formula which is based on the local population, square mileage of the geographic area, and local support, legislation this year included a law that people cannot loiter in public libraries but the law to ban guns from libraries did not pass.
- F. Chamber of Commerce Business Expo: The library was represented at the expo; a benefit to both the library and other expo participants.
- G. Other reports: The Board of Supervisors voted to credit the library a total of \$9637.72 which reflects \$7971.07 for SESCO and \$1666.65 for advertising for the Director's Position.
Dr. Stowers thanked the library for donating books to the new Riverlawn School

Library and for the director attending the school's dedication ceremony.

Mr. Freeman thanked the Board for the thought and reflection given to the cat issue and emphasized that the decision was not entered into lightly and requested that suggestions for stipulations and recommendations for Belle to remain at the library be sent to Sally Warburton.

V. New Business:

- A. Strategic Plan: Sally Warburton reported that the Strategic Plan must be updated yearly to accompany the Application for State Aid. The recommendation was made that the library board read the proposed plan and send changes and additions to Sally Warburton so it can be voted on at the next meeting.
- B. New roof for Dublin Library: Ty Kirkner, Building Inspector, reported that the new roof at Dublin Library can be pushed back for several years and a shingle roof will be adequate, rather than a metal roof, so the door at Dublin and the porch at Pulaski can be repaired with money set aside in the Capital Improvement fund.

- VI. Adjournment: Chair Freeman entertained a motion to adjourn the Library Board of Trustees at approximately 6:30 p.m. Mason Vaughan made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Don Stowers and was unanimously approved by the Trustees present.

The next scheduled meeting of the Library Board is Tuesday, June 30, 2009 at the Charles and Ona B. Free Memorial Library. There will be no meeting in July. The following meeting will take place on August 25, 2009 at the Pulaski Public Library.

Respectfully submitted,
John Freeman, Chair
Sally Warburton, Recorder

Approved: _____