

ALAMANCE COUNTY LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Meeting in person and via Zoom

Tuesday, February 13, 2024

12:30pm

Minutes

Present: Logan Savits, Cheryl Sandford, Paula Hendricks, Jessica Simmons

Via Zoom: Courtney Doi, Kiah Glenn

Staff Present: Susana Goldman, Terri Lamm

County Commissioner Representative: Pam Thompson

County Attorney: Rick Stevens

Guest: Cindy Williams, friend of Pam Thompson

Absent: Lorna Nelson, Bonnie Whitaker, Kim DiMuro

The meeting was called to order at 12:33 pm by Logan Savits. There were 5 board members to make a quorum. Everyone introduced themselves since there were some new faces.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There was no public comment. Logan said she received a couple of pieces of mail to the committee. Several were Right to Read postcards. She also received a letter from a member of the public. Logan read the letter to the committee. She said she would have the letter and postcards available for anyone to see after the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Logan asked if there was a motion to approve the minutes of 11.07.23. She said there were some paper copies if anyone needed to see the minutes. Susana had sent the agenda for this meeting and the minutes from the previous meeting to all board members 2 weeks ago via email. Logan asked if there were any changes to be made or if there was a motion to approve. Paula requested revisions which were agreed upon. Jessica made a motion to approve the revised minutes. Cheryl seconded the motion. Minutes were approved at 12:57 pm.

REPORT OF DIRECTOR:

- Susana began by letting the board know that we received news earlier this morning that one of our staff died suddenly last night. Martha Way had worked in our library system for almost 35 years. She will be greatly missed.
- Operational programs are happening. Our libraries are doing well.
- We do still have some vacancies, though much less than we have had.
- We had some success with the County Manager getting 2 part-time positions merged into a full-time position. This is more cost-effective to have one full-time position than 2 part-time. The new full-time position will be a Graham Public Library. This will help ease the rotation of staff and allow for coverage for programs.
- We are in the budget planning process right now.
- Susana talked about grants we are applying for and have applied for.
 - The Digital Equity Champions Grant from the State of North Carolina Information Technology for up to \$400,000 to help bridge the digital divide and create access in our community. We were asked to be one of the spearheads in this community to apply for that grant. If we are awarded those funds, it would mean we are able to add the capabilities of checking out laptops to community members for them to take home for use. This will be paired with our existing hotspots that are able to be checked out. This grant will also allow the library to hire 2 contract employees for 2 years to be able to do digital equity classes and literacy classes. These classes

would be help both in the library and in the community to help improve skills. This would include improving your resume classes and any other classes that will help community members improve their lives. We should find out at the end of March or April if we get the grant.

- Library Services and Technology Grant to hire a consultant to conduct the next strategic plan. During the fiscal year July 2024 – 2025, a consultant to do a strategic planning process for the library. We are required to have a strategic plan in place in order to receive State Aid. Since State Aid is over \$200,000 per year that comes to the library, we want to remain eligible for that. The current strategic plan expires in June of 2025. Susana said between \$35 - \$40,000 depending on how many focus groups we have. Susana said she would like to have a large number of focus groups. Most do 4 – 8. She would like to do 15 – 20. This higher number will allow the groups to be spread across a wider section of the community to see what they need and where they need it.
- Staff are in the middle of planning summer reading. The theme is The Adventure Begins Here. There will be a lot of active programs of discover and adventure during the 2- month summer reading time frame.
- We are planning Alamance Reads. The committee is made up of community partner members (like ACC and Elon) library staff, Friends of the Library and some library board members. Once the committee convenes to pick a book, the goal is to bring the author to town for a big author event. The Friends provide the funding to be able to bring an author to town. This will likely be sometime in September. Cheryl asked how the decision is made to choose a book. The Alamance Reads Committee convenes. The guidelines used are that it is somehow tied to North Carolina in the book (subject matter or where the author is from), it needs to meet certain criteria of having enough themes to engage in interesting conversations and discussion and come in enough formats that we are able to get our hands on; i.e. audio, print, eBook, etc. Normally the committee ends up reading each of the potential books and writes reviews on them. They are presented to the other committee members to vote on. Then, if possible, we will get on ACC and Elon’s class reading list in order to get them to come to some of the events. Logan said she is glad Alamance Reads is coming back. She enjoyed being on the committee and reading the 25 – 30 books that were proposed. Unfortunately, they were gearing up just as Covid hit. So, it was cancelled. As Jessica said, it’s basically a social book club. It gets lots of people involved throughout the community. Susana said she has a master list of potential books for Alamance Reads. The Library Board can submit suggestions to her.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- Materials Selection Policy Revision
 - Susana made the suggested revisions to the policy from the last meeting
 - The Library Board is required to review this policy every 2 years.
 - Either the committee can move on approving it today or at the upcoming May meeting. The current revision does reflect all of the changes the committee suggested last time.
 - Cheryl asked about community input. Susana explained that there is a suggestion form both on line and on paper (available in each of the branches). Patrons can fill it out to offer suggestions of materials. Susana said we also get emails. All of those suggestions get sent to the purchasers of the library. Susana said that with the virtual items, there are ways to do it through the apps. In Section V, page 4 – Cheryl asked if it could be clarified how patron requests can be submitted. Logan suggested adding a line at the end as to how the patron requests can be submitted.
 - Section IX in title “for reconsideration” – Jessica said some wording needed to be added to clarify what reconsideration actually means. Logan suggested, “Library Patrons requesting reconsideration or removal.” Jessica agreed with changing only the title.

- Paula asked if this could be run by the County Commissioners. Susana said any edits that happen in-house for staff policies or the library committee review of policies go to the legal department to be reviewed and approved. Rick said in reading through the policy, as it exists, the library committee is here to ensure that the reconsideration process happened and was followed properly, not necessarily to act as an additional review board for library materials. He said further that the policy seems pretty clear that the library director is the ultimate abitur of the library materials and their suitability. He said, at the end of the day, the Commissioners are involved. They are involved in the employing and staffing of the library. Rick said, if the types of decisions being made aren't found to be suitable, then they could possibly be involved at that point. But, he said he wasn't sure there was a place for the Commissioners necessarily, at least in this policy as he sees it written today. With the changes today still to be made, the policy will be voted on at the May meeting. This will still be within the 2-year deadline.
- Labels in the policy? Jessica asked if the policy could ask if there was a special interest label anyone wanted to add to a library material.
- Labels for materials:
 - Susana submitted a list of the labels that are already used on materials. Some are ordered directly from a vendor. Other labels are created by Technical Services staff.
 - Logan said some of the committee members said they are hearing concerns regarding the picture books. This label is not to remove the item from the library. But will be helpful for busy parents to identify the LGBTQ themes easily – "LGBTQ Friendly" using a Pride flag – only used in the children's section. This is only a suggestion. Cheryl suggested labels for YA, as well. Logan recommended that we go forward with only picture books right now. She asked if Susana could ask other libraries how they handle this for YA. Courtney suggested we create a list to make it available for YA sensitive LGBTQ materials. Logan asked that we keep moving forward within the next few meetings. To find a balance. Jessica said a list is not enough to use. There was some discussion as to just what other levels the label should be put on, besides picture books. Susana said when she thinks of children's and juvenile books, it's all the same. They are in the same area. Young Adult is in a separate area.

NEW BUSINESS

- Pam Thompson requested each library branch have a safety plan in place in case of a threat from within the libraries. Each library will reach out to the police departments in their area to devise a plan in the event of a threat in the building. This will instruct staff where to go and how to handle these situations.

FUTURE MEETING DATES

May 14 @ 12:30pm

August 13 a@ 12:30pm

November 12 @ 6:30pm

The meeting was adjourned at 1:29pm. Jessica made motion. Cheryl seconded.