

ALAMANCE COUNTY LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Meeting in person

Tuesday, May 14, 2024

12:30pm

Minutes

Present: Logan, Savits, Kim DiMuro, Cheryl Sandford, Paula Hendricks, Jessica Simmons, Courtney Doi

Staff Present: Susana Goldman, Kathy Garrison, Terri Lamm

County Commissioner Representative: N/A

County Attorney: N/A

County Staff Member: Bruce Walker

Absent: Lorna Nelson, Bonnie Whitaker, Kiah Glenn

The meeting was called to order at 12:36 pm by Logan Savits. There were 6 board members to make a quorum. Everyone introduced themselves since there were some new faces.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Logan called for a vote on the approval of the minutes from the last meeting. Paula questioned some of the information in the minutes. She talked about a law concerning parents and appropriate materials. Logan said her memory was that the Board was going to talk about picture books and then talk about going forward. She said, whether or not Paula agreed with what the Board was talking about doing, the minutes reflect the conversation in the last Board meeting. Paula said that the Board had talked about someone speaking to other libraries to see whether they use labels or not. She asked what the outcome was of that. Jessica said that right now, this is only speaking to what was said in the last Board meeting and approving those minutes. The actual rest of the discussion is on the agenda for today. Logan and Jessica both told Paula a couple of times that this approval was only verifying that the minutes reflect what was discussed in the previous meeting. Kim motioned to approve the minutes. Jessica seconded the motion.

REPORT OF DIRECTOR:

- Susana said we are gearing up for Summer Reading. The theme is Adventures begin at the library. These programs are being planned now. We have a lot of new staff that have brought great ideas with them.
- Most of our vacancies have been filled. We do still have a full-time position at each Graham and Mebane. The full-time vacancy in Graham resulted in the staff member realizing that a job in libraries was not for them. Susana said she understood, because public service is hard. The vacancy in Mebane is because someone moved into a full-time position in Technical Services. This was a promotion for her. Vacancies are being filled quicker. Susana said we have realized we only need to post a job for 7 days because we get between 60 and 70 applications. NeoGov syncs with Indeed, Monster and many other hiring platforms.
- The mobile library and BookMARK are going strong. The new staff member has jumped in with great enthusiasm. He likes meeting the many varieties of people at the stops. Statistics for the engagement and use of these vehicles has risen much higher in the last few months. Logan said she keeps running into both of these vehicles where they set up throughout the County. There are now 6 people in the Outreach department. Sometimes they bring other library staff with them in order to cover as many events within the County as they can.

- We have had staff do their first programs, specifically at May Memorial. We have record high numbers in attendance because these are new programs we are promoting. One program was on book folding. This staff person had never done a program before. They had around 20 people attend.
- Paula said, considering the book mobile, she knows there was concern about supervision – not having a parental presence. She wanted to know if that had been addressed or rectified. Susana said when it goes into a neighborhood, someone has to have a library card to be able to check out items. Kids can't get a library card without a parent or guardian. Paula asked if they could check out something that is under the law she referred to earlier. Susana said they could check out anything in the library with a library card. There are no restrictions. There is no way our system to be able to do that. It is up to the parent or guardian. Paula asked what would happen if the parent or guardian was not there. Logan said the books are selected to go onto the cart by librarians that are employed by the County and go through library training to become staff members. Those books are selected at those events for the audience they will see. Logan went on to say that if a school request a mobile library or BookMARK visit – Susana the teacher has an institutional card to be able to check out for the students on the institutional card. It is the expectation of the card that those books stay in the classroom and don't go home with the kids. The teachers take responsibility of those books until another visit comes.
- Jessica asked about the other programs the library staff has been doing that were so successful. Logan asked if she missed the house plant swap. Susana said yes, it was last night. They have also had a science day at North Park. Graham has the seed library, in conjunction with the master gardeners. Jessica mentioned that she liked the puzzle swap that the library does. There are more new programs coming up as staff gets more confident doing the programs. As example, for the month of April, the total programs across the system was 160.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- Materials Selection Policy Revision
 - Logan said, for 2 meetings now, the Board has been reviewing the materials selection policy. There have been revisions made and reviewed. Everyone has the updated version of the policy with changes in place. This is the meeting where the Board approves it. There was a lot of discussion regarding various items on the policy. Jessica asked what the reliable selection tools were. Susana said it was listed in Section 4. Jessica was satisfied. Cheryl said she could not access the "make a suggestion form" electronically. Susana said she thought she had gotten it fixed. She also said we have them in paper form. Cheryl said the reason she was asking was there was something she wanted to suggest. She tried the link again and checked it. It was still not working. Susana looked at the app and said she would try to get the link working, if it doesn't work, she will reach out to the vendor. Cheryl talked about the book series she wants to suggest the library purchase. Susana said she thought she got the link fixed. Once Cheryl closed out the app and tried it again and it worked. Kim verified that the materials selection policy was a different vote from the book labels vote. Logan said the materials' policy was up for a vote. The label discussion is still on-going. With that, Kim made a motion to approve the policy. Paula said voting on it doesn't make sense. She said the policy needs to be revised because of the new law that she said came into effect in December. Logan talked about what the law actually said. She was trying to show that this particular law didn't apply to the materials selection policy. Kim asked if there couldn't be a line added that said something to the effect of the policy is subject to any legal changes that may take place between the date of the policy and now. Susana said, even if that line is not in there, that is still the case. She said we are government employees and as such, follow the law. Jessica asked about the last paragraph regarding going through the policy every 5 years. She said since the library board terms are 2 years, Jessica suggested the policies be reviewed every 2 years, or, at least, less than 5 years. There was discussion on what the frequency would be regarding reviewing the library policies. Susana

suggested every 3 years. Logan asked how this addition would affect the vote of the materials selection policy vote. Susana said someone would make the motion to accept the change as edited. There was discussion on whether to approve the policy or not. Kim wanted to make clear that the labels discussion was separate from this vote on the materials selection policy vote. Logan said that this is a vote by the library board to adopt the new materials' selection policy, separate from the labels. Also, regarding the labels, that is a procedure. The Board can only make recommendations to procedure. They can't vote on changing a library procedure. Jessica asked if the sticker issue was part of a policy. Susana said the stickers we use, as Logan said, are part of our library procedure. Changing the procedures happen as need demands, instead of revising policies every 2 years. The policy only guides how you do things. When it comes down to the details, those are procedures. Paula started talking about the book list she had he had brought to the Board a year and a half ago. Logan said a lot of those books are not even in our library system. She said if someone wanted the books out of the library, they must go through the proper procedures. The responsibility is on the person who wants to remove them from the library. Both Jessica and Kim said that anyone who had a problem with any book we have in the library, they should fill out the form. Bruce said, to be fair, everyone should do their own research. Cheryl also said that we should take responsibility for what is a concern for us and move forward. She said this whole discussion is not moving forward. This is continuing to spin our wheels. Kim made a motion to approve the policy, as edited. Cheryl seconded the motion to approve the policy, as edited. All in favor. None opposed.

- Sticker Request and Use:

- Susana talked about what stickers we use currently and what stickers we had used in the past. At the last meeting, she supplied the Board images of stickers that we use. She said, just to clarify, the system has used stickers commonly, in the past. But, for the past 8 years, we have gone away from using stickers. Now the only stickers we use are "New" and various Holiday stickers. These Holiday stickers are only used in the Juvenile section. The reason for that is the spine label on a juvenile says, "JHOL," then the author's last name. These books are housed in a special area. There may still be stickers on older materials. But, as we see them, we remove the stickers or take the item out of circulation. Now we put genre on the holdings' codes. For example, instead of having a sticker that says, "Graphic Novel," the holdings' code says "GN." It is a clear and easier way to display it. Stickers don't age well.
- She said most libraries in our state have been moving away from genre stickers. Susana looked at a database of North Carolina libraries. This is the common trend to move away from stickers. Kim said, "So you're saying that we are not going to do the stickers. Then are we going to put the LGBTQ in a separate section?" Susana said she was just telling everyone the information she has at this point. Logan said up to now, the library has been moving away from using stickers for a number of reasons. Susana said it was a status update. Kim asked what the next step is. Susana said that is part of the conversation that needs to be had.
- Logan said if stickers are something the Board feels strongly about, moving forward, then it's a matter of figuring out exactly how to do that. How to classify it? What information is included with the new books coming in? Do existing materials get re-classified? Susana said there is not a pre-done sticker of this topic. Staff would need to design a sticker. Kim asked if it would be better to have a separate section. Logan said a problem of putting all these books in one section is that many books are on numerous topics.
- Paula asked why the books could not be rated, like movies. Susana said the difference is there's actually a nation-wide group that categorizes the age and gives the rating to the movies. When it comes to books, there is nothing like that.
- Cheryl said when she proposed this, months ago, her goal was to empower parents to know what their children were taking home. That was all. She said ultimately parents and care givers

are the people responsible for those choices. Cheryl said when a book is labeled “LGBTQ-Friendly,” it could be a character, a picture, any time of friendly. It alerts patrons to what they are getting. She said that was her whole goal.

- Logan said she thought this was a conversation that needs to continue. She said she liked the idea because it didn’t segregate anything out, it didn’t remove any materials. It allows parents to have a slightly easier way to look at the books.
- Kim asked why the board could not go ahead and vote to get an LGBTQ Friendly sticker made and put on the children’s books. Logan said the board could not vote to do it. The board can recommend further consideration of this idea. She said there needs to be further discussion on how this would look.
- Susana said she could ask staff to design a new sticker. What is the threshold if there’s a new subject or request? Should one be created for just one book? How many books is the tipping point? Just having the details in writing and putting a procedure together would help staff determine what is included, what is not included. Should stickers be put only on new materials? Should old materials be stickered?
- Logan said patrons can request a sticker now. It is on the form for reconsideration. She said what we are talking about now is the actual procedures staff would need to follow.
- Susana said she could put something together regarding the wording.
- Paula talked about getting someone, Amy Galey, possibly, to look at it, as it pertains to the law for K-3rd grade.
- Susana said that any library policy goes through the Alamance County legal department. Rick Stevens reviews and signs off on all of it.
- Paula asked what procedures he goes through to determine whether we are compliant or not.
- Bruce said that Rick does this all the time. If he has questions, he will call the State to get clarification.
- Kim said she didn’t think we needed another meeting to get this started.
- Logan said we needed to have something written in order to send it to the County Attorney. Susana said she will put some things together that complies with all the requests that have been made. This would go to the County Attorney to be approved or re-written, as necessary. Then she can bring it back to the next meeting.
- Jessica said the new stuff would be priority. Then, staff would start on the older items.
- Kim said she didn’t want the sticker to be the flag. She liked the “LGBTQ Friendly” words.
- Susana said the words may not show up well due to the size of some children’s picture books. She will ask other libraries what they use and bring options.
- Cheryl asked if the board could see what Susana comes up with and gets approved by the County Attorney before the August meeting? Susana said she would send it to the board.
- Logan reminded everyone that when Susana emails regarding the upcoming meeting, she also attaches the minutes from the previous meeting, the agenda and any other pertinent documents. So, be on the lookout for them.

NEW BUSINESS

- There are 5 members of the Library Committee who have terms ending in June of this year. All 5 are from cities. They have to apply to their individual cities to re-apply.
- Logan cautioned that due to the 5 terms ending, we may not have a quorum in August. The cities don’t appoint someone quickly.
- Susana said the past 2 years, the Commissioners had not made their decisions on who should be on the library board. Therefore, she had to cancel the August meeting.

FUTURE MEETING DATES

August 13 @ 12:30pm

November 12 @ 6:30pm

The meeting was adjourned at 1:40pm. Jessica made motion. Cheryl seconded.