

ALAMANCE COUNTY LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Meeting in person

Tuesday, November 12, 2024

12:30pm

Minutes

Present: Lindsay McKinney, Cheryl Sandford, Jessica Simmons, Bonnie Whitaker, Matthew Roberts, Paula Hendricks

Staff Present: Susana Goldman, Kathy Garrison, Terri Lamm

County Commissioner Representative: Pam Thompson

County Attorney: N/A

County Staff Member: Bruce Walker

Absent: Kiah Glenn

The meeting was called to order at 12:30 pm by Susana Goldman, due to not having a president of the committee. Everyone introduced themselves since there are new members.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Cheryl made a motion to approve. Jessica seconded. None opposed. Minutes were approved.

REPORT OF DIRECTOR:

- Susana said, looking at October, across all locations and vehicles, the library checked out (including downloadable materials) over 26,000 items. We saw over 23,000 people through our doors (including events). In September, the staff put on over 150 programs. We saw over 2,900 people attend these programs. Some of the programs were: improve your job application skills, job and career programs, baby story time, and tech programs, just to name a few.
- We have hired a consultant to embark on the next strategic planning process. We are required by the State to have a strategic plan. This must be a 5-year plan. If we don't meet that requirement, we are not eligible for State library funds. The current plan ends in June 2025. We have begun scheduling the meetings happening in the community. The consultants will confirm that they are available on those dates. Then, the calendar will be available to everyone. Susana doesn't have a member of the library committee serving on the steering committee yet. When we get to that point, she will ask for a volunteer from the Library Committee. The consultants tell us the process will only take around 4 months. We appreciate that because the last time it took about a full calendar year. The consultants will have a plan together to go before the commissioners to get approval around April. The primary focus of the strategic plan is the community. There will be around 15 input sessions scattered across the County, as well as an online survey. This survey will be about the community and what they need and how the library can support them in what they need. Someone asked about the cost of this strategic plan. Susana said we successfully applied for and received a grant from Library Services and Technology (State Library) to pay for the consultants.
- Susana said she didn't know if any of the committee members made it to Alamance Reads 2024. It was a great event. The novel, *American Refuge*, by Diya Abdo, who lives in North Carolina was the chosen novel. The author came to speak at Walter Williams High School, the Paramount Theater and Elon University. The Alamance Reads committee is made up of staff and community members that read and review books in order to put forward a potential author. The committee is now evaluation titles for 2025.

- We have never pinned down a specific date for the beginning of the history of libraries in Alamance County. All the records we have say the first library we had in Alamance County was in the 1920's. We have decided to use 2025 as the year to celebrate 100 years of libraries in Alamance County. A committee will be convened to do a year-long celebration of libraries in Alamance County. Susana hopes to have a 100 years library card, along with fun events to celebrate this milestone. The committee will be made up of current staff, community members and retired staff. The Friends of the Library group is a non-profit fund-raising group for the library. The library can't fundraise for themselves. Their money pays for 100% of the programs the libraries put on. The County pays for library salaries. 2025 is also the 40th year for the Friends. They will be aligning with the 100 years of libraries to do a joint celebration. This group brings in around \$25,000 - \$30,000 each sale – both spring and fall. Pam Thompson said that she would encourage the Friends of the Library to come to a commissioners' meeting soon. She will see about getting them on the agenda to make sure the commissioners and the community know about the Friends and what they do. Susana said they are always looking for volunteers and board members. Their annual meeting is the last Monday of the month. Anyone from the general public can come to the meetings. Pam asked if Susana would send her that date. Someone asked where the Friends get the books to sell. Susana said they are donations. Some are library discards. The great majority are donations. We take donations year around. The next book sale is March 7 – 16. Susana told them the volunteers never stop volunteering. 2 weeks after the sale ends, the shelves are cleared and they start fresh re-stocking the items. Some of the volunteers come daily. In January, the Friends will begin having the drive up and drop off events. Susana said for this calendar year, we have taken in over 75,000 donated items for the book sale.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- Sticker Request & Use
 - The Committee meeting packet included copies of possible sticker options and basic explanations of the current request. New committee members were provided explanations of the ongoing conversation that has led to the request for a LGBTQIA+ sticker. New questions and concerns were discussed surrounding age-appropriateness of materials, new laws that might apply to libraries, censorship, unattended children in the library, and whether there are materials rating systems similar to movies and television.
 - A request for a way for parents to express their concerns and have a sticker created that can be added to the spine of materials with possible adult content was made. Parental Discretion Advised is what was recommended for the wording on the sticker. Matthew made a motion for Susana to come up with a form and sticker options for the committee to review prior to a meeting to vote. Jessica seconded this motion. All in favor. No one opposed.
 - Lindsay asked how many books this would affect. Susana said there is no way on knowing. She explained each book comes with a MARC record that allows someone to search our catalog. It has the subject, summary, author, how many pages, etc. There is not a lot more information in the MARC record that would indicate what subjects, genres, or topics that might be questionable to parents. Lindsay asked how materials would be chosen. Susana said that once there is a form, it is available to anyone.
 - Discussion ensued about the possibility of a special meeting being called in January to continue this conversation.

NEW BUSINESS

- Nomination & Election of Chair & Vice Chair for Library Committee*
 - Bonnie made a motion for Jessica to be Chair. Matthew seconded. All were in favor, none opposed.

- Jessica made a motion for Bonnie to be chair. Matthew seconded. Bonnie said she appreciated it. But, could not do it due to other obligations. Matthew made a motion for Cheryl to be Vice-Chair. Bonnie seconded. All were in favor, none opposed.
- Susana said both Cheryl and Jessica's terms end in June. However, should they want to, they can re-apply. There would not have to be a vote again, if both re-apply and are accepted.
- Library Committee Participation
 - Strategic Plan Steering Committee – this person would need to attend 2 – 4 meetings over the next 4 months. They would also need to review submissions and drafts of information we are provided by the consultants. They will be daytime meetings.
 - Jessica volunteered to be on this committee
 - Alamance Reads Committee - The Friends of the Library funds this. There are criteria that the author has to meet. They must still be living, have a book with subject matter that is either set in North Carolina, the South or is relevant to NC, the south or Alamance County. The work, right now, is reading books to see if there is anything interesting. There will be a top 5 list that will be finalized in January. Our Adult Programming Coordinator will work with getting the author and making that contact. Cheryl asked if everyone was reading the same few books. Susana said the volunteers are reading 4 – 5 different books for a total of around 60 books in order to pick 5 strong contenders. Susana talked about the evaluation form.
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 - 100 Years of Libraries (2025) Committee – the first meeting will be in December. This will bring everyone together to brainstorm some ideas.
 - Cheryl volunteered for this committee.

FUTURE MEETING DATES

Tuesday, February 11th at 12:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 13th at 12:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:52pm.