

ALAMANCE COUNTY LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Meeting in person

Tuesday, August 12, 2025

12:30pm

Minutes

Present: Jessica Simmons, Bonnie Whitaker, Paula Hendricks, Shelbi Fanning, Lindsay McKinney

Staff Present: Susana Goldman, Terri Lamm

County Commissioner Representative:

Absent: Cheryl Sandford, Lynn Merrill

The meeting was called to order at 12:30 pm by Jessica Simmons.

There were 3 members of the public in attendance.

30 minutes public comment period

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- Jessica made a motion to approve the minutes with one change. Bonnie seconded, none opposed.

REPORT OF DIRECTOR:

- Susana welcomed everyone to a new fiscal year. She is working on the Annual Report. It covers July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025.
 - The library system saw 306,130 people in our doors
 - 477,614 items were checked out. Both numbers were higher than last year. We have defied the national trend.
 - We had 39,149 computer users.
 - 411 Zoom passes were used.
 - We had 252 book club kits checked out.
 - At this point, we have 80,033 active library cards in our system.
 - At the end of June, we owned over 180,000 items.
 - Library cards in our system are current. Library cards do expire. They are renewed every 2 years. After that, the account becomes inactive. After 5 years, the cards are removed from our system. Every month, we do a purge of all inactive cards. We follow the guidelines for the State. If someone doesn't have anything on their card and has been inactive, they are purged after 3 years.
 - Our catalog was searched 1,377,066 times.
 - We meet the standards that keep us eligible for State Aid.
 - Programing statistics –
 - We put on 1,826 programs.
 - We saw 67,602 people attend the programs. Around 20,00 more attendees than last year. We offered around 175 more programs
 - Early literacy subjects – 466 programs, 12,006 visitors.
 - STEAM – crafting, Discovery Labs, etc – 175 programs with 4,623 attendees.
 - Agricultural programs - 1,202 attendees and 39 programs.
 - Technology programs – 234 programs and 852 attendees.

- Graham started the plant swap, in conjunction to their seed library and plant propagation station. May Memorial and Mebane now do a plant swap. The plant swaps are very popular.
- The Alamance County Master Gardeners help with programs. They start in April and run into November.
- SRP ended Saturday, August 9. They are picking raffle winners now. SRP from June 9 – Aug 9. The library registered 393 participants. They read 846,008 minutes. 914 badges were earned.
- July numbers have been submitted. 188 programs in July. They saw 5,340 attendees. We saw around 26,000 people through the doors.
- Staff are responding and trying to do various programs and more programs. May Memorial had Loteria (Spanish bingo).
 - There are lots of requests for adult craft programs and numerous locations.
- NC Kids & Libby numbers in 24 -25 - We had 132,771 in audiobooks, ebooks and emagazines check out. In June alone, it was over 10,000.
- We started a couple of years ago to purchase branded water bottles. We make those available for free when there is a heat advisory. Each of the cities have installed water bottle filling stations at their libraries. The money to purchase the water bottles came from a trust. No county funds were used. It took about 2 years to get the cities to put in the water filling stations.
- May Memorial has a lot of organizations that come here to help our patrons. They connect people with getting whatever help they need. DSS comes in to help patrons. Goodwill comes to work with our homeless population to try and get them housed. Valores comes once a week to partner with our patrons for digital literacy classes.
- Staff have learned they can report bad landlords to the State. Our staff did report a specific bad landlord to the State in the winter who refused to fix a family's electricity problem. This family had no heat during a particularly cold snap. The State got the landlord to fix the problem, and the family was able to have heat in their home instead of using dangerous kerosene heaters.
- Our mobile vehicles are gearing up. It is slightly slower during the summer since schools are out. We are putting systems in place to evaluate new stops. They are trying to go to new areas of the county that we haven't been to before. Pleasant Grove provides meals for the elderly. We are now going there.
- We have 8 staff vacancies. Staff are continuing to cover these vacancies. They are interviewing for 2 more positions over the next few days. 2 postings close on Sunday. We are getting a lot of applicants.
- Jessica asked Susana to show everyone the website to see where our policies could be found. All policies and forms are available under "About." There is a drop-down menu that lists the various policy names. Susana said the parental guidance form is not available as a fillable form right now. We have had a lot of IT issues. Cheryl Sandford is on vacation. Jessica read a message from Cheryl regarding having a fillable form on-line and having a special link to this form. (See the scanned document under Related Documents folder.)
 - Shelby suggested the website not be cluttered by having links to each policy document. She said she didn't think patrons would go the children or teen areas to look for a policy on our website.
- We got the digital literacy grant we applied for recently. It was for \$79,000. We are one of 8 libraries in the nation that received this grant. They are giving us more money than we originally thought. The commissioners approved receiving the grant. Bonnie congratulated

Susana on getting the grant. Mellon Foundation, a non-profit World Education.org and ALA are the 3 organizations that are working together with this grant. This is a 3-year grant, divided by year. Our Emerging Technology Librarian has been attending the meetings and will lead this adult digital literacy grant process. Each branch has a staff member that does digital 1:1's with patrons. Staff are talking to the Emerging Technologies Librarian to discuss what the patrons say they need.

- The first library in the county was in the 1920's. So, we are celebrating 100 years of libraries. There are passive and active programs happening all through out the year. There will be specific coffee shops that have library-themed drinks available. These coffee shops change each month. When patrons purchase one of these drinks, they can get a 100-years card stamped. When the card is full, they can bring it to the library for a prize. The kick-off for 100 years event was in July. Our website has all the information on it. There is a 100-years library card that will be available as long as they last.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- Update Burlington Board appointments
 - Burlington City Council has continued to push back the decision on who to put on the Library Committee. There are around 12 people that live in the city that have applied. Once they make a decision, it goes to the County Commissioners to make the final decision.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- Vanessa Sullivan-Macarthur said she was very pleased that the libraries are staying open. She is grateful to everyone who stood up for our libraries.

NEW BUSINESS:

- No new business

Next meetings:

November 18, 2025 at 12:30pm – this is a new date due to Veteran's Day falling on the 2nd Monday in November.

February 10, 2026 at 12:30pm.

May 12, 2026 at 12:30pm.

- Bonnie asked if there could be a direct link to the parental concerns form. Susana said the search on our website is dependent on the website provider. Our website meets ADA law and is mandated by the County. She said she could talk to IT to see if there was a way to access this form with a link. Lindsay said she would like it to have a link under "kids." Susana feels you are bogging people down by putting too many links, if all the links are on the main page. There was discussion on how to find the forms. Susana will add subtext to the links for description. She has learned that "About" is where people go to look for policies, forms, etc. Susana showed the committee how to contact library staff by clicking on the envelope on the bottom right. She said the "How Do I" section is the top 12 things people ask about on our library website.
- Jessica asked about the fillable form on getting a new library card.
- Lindsay asked if there was a QR code on a poster for the Parental Guidance form. Susana said the QR code would go to the list of books that Parental Guidance sticker. Right now, there are no books that have had stickers put on them.

Jessica made a motion to adjourn at 1:40 pm. Shelby seconded it. Meeting adjourned.