

ALAMANCE COUNTY LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Meeting in person

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

12:30pm

Minutes

**Present:** Jessica Simmons, Bonnie Whitaker, Paula Hendricks, Lindsay McKinney, Debbie Johnson, Tim Check, Cheryl Sandford

**Staff Present:** Susana Goldman, Kathy Garrison, Terri Lamm

**County Commissioner Representative:** Pam Thompson

**Absent:** Shelbi Fanning, Lynn Merrill

The meeting was called to order at 12:31 pm by Jessica Simmons.

There were 5 members of the public in attendance.

Board members introduced themselves since there were 2 new members. Debbie Johnson and Tim Check, both chosen as City of Burlington representatives.

30 minutes public comment period

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

- Jessica let everyone take a moment to review the minutes. Bonnie made a motion to approve, Cheryl seconded, none opposed.

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR:**

- Susana talked about the Annual Report. It is on the Mission and Vision page of our website. Mr. Priola had some questions regarding this report at the County Commissioners' meeting last night. The library was on the agenda last night regarding this. Susana said the growth, since Covid, has increased steadily. However, people use the library differently than they did in the past. The library's website and digital resources have become more popular. Those of you on the committee have seen the libraries revise some spaces within the buildings to accommodate smaller meeting spaces and study rooms. We have adapted our services to meet the community's needs.
- State Aid increased this year. Our allocation was \$7,000 more than what we budgeted. Last year, we were allowed \$243,000. Susana will do a budget amendment with the Commissioners to reflect this increase. We also got approved to apply for a grant last night from the State Library. This will allow us to replace the Wi-Fi devices since they will reach end-of-life next year. This was a new grant opportunity. The grant allows us to replace electronic devices. Normally grants don't allow for replacement of items, only the purchase of new things.
- In October, programs were exceedingly high. The number of programs (with one library not reporting) was 226. This includes festivals and fairs. 11,692 people were in attendance for these programs, fairs and festivals. Every city holds a Halloween celebration. We attended all of them. Some of the non-profits did events, as well. We also participated in those events. If we can't be present, we provide resources for them. We track a lot of things within the library. We have 84,923 active library cards in our system. Active means that our cards, when created, are good for 2 years. Unless the cardholder asks for the card to be renewed, it goes inactive. Expired cards get purged in 3 – 5 years. We get 200 – 300 new library cards created each month. The library has an app. There are around 3,400 people that have the app downloaded. The other

number we can track is how many times people use the app to search our catalog. Numbers are pulled 30 days at-a-time. 17,403 searches were done in the app in October. Downloadable materials are very popular with 4,823 ebooks downloaded in October. 4,888 eAudioooks were downloaded in that same time period, along with 1,968 magazines. Magazine downloads are increasing because print magazines are dying. The downloaded issues don't expire on your electronic device.

- 100 years committee is still actively planning programs. The Graham Cinema plays one movie per month from a book turned into a movie. This program has been very popular. Last month, it was *To Kill a Mockingbird*. It was so popular, the theater added another showing. People can get a loyalty card. Each time someone participates in an event or buys something from the library-themed coffee shops, they can get stamp. Susana listed some of the drinks that Olivia's in Graham is offering this month. The committee reaches out and works to secure the vendors. Cheryl said there was cross-advertising, so it's good for the vendor and the library. Graham's 100 years birthday party was in October. Mebane's is in December. May's is in the spring.
- The adult coordinator is also working on the next Alamance Reads. The last one was *Tobacco Wives* by Adele Meyers. Because this is a special pot of money, we are moving Alamance Reads to April. It works better for the Friends with regards to their fiscal budget. Their fiscal year is October – September.
- We are gearing up for America 250 in 2026. This will be aligned with our fiscal year from July – June.
- We currently have a Smithsonian Exhibit. It will be packed up on Thursday and shipped to another location. This came at no charge for us. There was a grant that paid for all the expenses.
- Jessica asked about the Commissioners' meeting last night and what Mr. Priola's questions were. He had a presentation that went back to 2018 to compare the current Annual Report numbers to. Bonnie said Mr. Priola kept talking about 2019 and the low numbers. He continued to talk about the budget going up and the performance level decreasing. Bonnie was wondering where he got some of his numbers from. Cheryl said some of the numbers he got were on pages 14 and 15 of the current Annual Report. Bonnie said her take-away was that his goal would be to cut funding for the libraries. Jessica asked if funding could be cut in the middle of a year. Susana said the way we track numbers is set by the State Library. The attendance is counted automatically. This number is literally the actual number of visitors. However, there is no distinction if someone comes in more than once. During programs, staff has a clicker that they use to count attendees. Jessica asked if Mr. Priola was suggesting any impropriety? Susana said not to her knowledge. She said if you look at the numbers from pre-Covid, the numbers do decline. However, now, they are rising slowly. Statistics are reported to the State Library. Jessica then asked how many positions have been added to the staff. Susana looked up the numbers and explained how she has, over the last couple of years, combined of 2 part-time positions into one full-time position in a few circumstances. This revising of positions has allowed us to decrease staff by 1.
- Pam said the libraries have always been a constant, no matter how technology has changed. The public has continued to speak to the County Commissioners as to how important the libraries are. Bonnie said many people don't pick up a hard cover book any longer. She said libraries have had to continually reinvent themselves. There was discussion of not being able to go back to the former times, due to lots of hurdles.
- Susana said in 2021, 62 total positions. 34 - ft.; 3-30 hr/week, benefited; 15-25 hr/week, benefited; 10-15 hr/week; She has never liked the part-time benefited employees. They are not

fully benefited. Susana has been working to merge 2 part-time positions into 1 benefited, full-time. They are better paid, benefitted and reduces turnover. Susana was told, historically, it was easier to get a part-time position approved than full-time. Positions are down by 1. Graham and Mebane are ideally staffed to cover the hours with nights and weekends. This allows us to retain staff now.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- Implementation of Requests for PG – Cheryl said the main issue is that there is a platform we use to get emails in. Emery had told her previously that if you register for an event, the information does not go to a specific staff member. It goes through a service. Cheryl asked if it was the service that would not allow to do a fillable form. The platform she is talking about allows us to register attendance for programs. This can be used for that one specific purpose only. She said we were still waiting on a fillable form that will automatically be sent. The .pdf is a fillable form, but people must save the fillable form to your computer. Then, people fill it out, save it, and email it in. Susana said that version is live. The program is a pdf and acrobat issue. Bonnie asked if it said that on the website. Susana said the information is not on our website. She will see that it is added.
  - Susana said we have had one content review – the title is, *The Action Bible* – Young Adult Graphic Novel. It has gone through the process and now has the PGS sticker on it. Susana wanted to make sure it was in the minutes, as per the procedure requested by the Library Committee.
  - Tim asked about what all this meant. Susana discussed what the stickers meant and what the process was.
  - Lindsay asked if there was a QR code on a poster. Susana said she wasn't sure of how she wanted this poster to look yet and what information she wanted it to have along with the QR code. Jessica and Lindsay directed Susana to implement this portion as soon as possible.
- Jessica asked Tim to introduce about himself. He said part of why he is here is that he wanted to be more active in the community.
- She then also asked Debbie about herself. Debbie said she wanted to reconnect with the community.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

- Emily Conway suggested that committee meetings make it onto the library calendar and the newsletter for the public. Susana took note of that and will implement those additions.
- Vanessa MacArthur asked for access to a copy of the Annual Report. Susana said the Annual Report is available on our website. She had a few printed copies for anyone that wanted them.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- No new business

#### **Next meetings:**

February 10, 2026 at 12:30pm.

May 12, 2026 at 12:30pm.

Jessica made a motion to adjourn. Lindsey seconded. Meeting adjourned at 1:28 pm.