

ALAMANCE COUNTY LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Meeting in person

Tuesday, February 10, 2026

12:30pm

Minutes

Present: Jessica Simmons, Bonnie Whitaker, Paula Hendricks, Tim Check, Cheryl Sandford, Shelbi Fanning, Lindsay McKinney

Staff Present: Susana Goldman, Kathy Garrison, Terri Lamm

County Commissioner Representative: Ed Priola

Absent: Lynn Merrill, Debbie Johnson,

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

There were 13 members of the public in attendance.

30 minutes public comment period

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- Southey Blanton –from Burlington. He is a frequent library user. He has 4 children at ABSS. His family are at the library a lot. He said he was frightened about cuts to funding for the libraries. He said he was also frightened about forms for censoring books. He said he is here to speak up for all the library supporters. He wants to emphasize how important libraries are to his family and the community.
- Emily Conway – she is reading a comment for someone who can't be here today. The person's name is Vanessa McArther. Vanessa said the by-laws have just been put on-line. Within the by-laws, the meetings used to be varied in the times. She asked why meeting times had been changed.
- Debra Kaufman – form Mebane. She is also a big library supporter. She has 2 questions. First question: is if the library meetings can be live-streamed. Second question is for Mr. Priola. She asked about the library committee applications and how appointments were chosen. Debra said she saw some of the applicants and they were very qualified. One of them even had a Master's degree in literature. The City of Burlington put her forward to admission to the library committee. However, the Commissioners chose someone else. She asked if there was a process.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- Motion to amend or accept. Tim made a motion to accept the minutes. Cheryl seconded the motion. Minutes were accepted.

REPORT OF DIRECTOR:

- Libraries are still doing what we do. All the numbers are not in yet. However, total for programs. We did more than 152 programs in January. 2,926 people at these programs. Mebane numbers are not in. Graham adult numbers are not in.
- We participated in 2 community events. Those numbers are not reflected above. We saw 142 people.
- We do one-on-one appointments for people who need assistance with their electronic devices. There are 5 staff that specialize in that. Those staff had 17 individual appointments in January. A number of them were cancelled due to snow days. The appointments last up to an hour each.

- Update on Grants and Current Projects – The County Commissioners approved our request to apply for a grant in November, and we were notified that we did get the grant – worth \$40,000. This was a timely grant because the number one complaint the library gets is patrons being dropped off the Wi-Fi. The equipment we currently have is at end-of-life (Summer 2026).
- We also applied for another grant – called the Wi-Fly grant for increasing the technology available to our patrons. We have not heard back about this one yet.
- The digital literacy grant we received is for 3 years for \$79,000. The grantors gave us all the money up front to close out their books. We have 20 Chromebooks for patrons to check out and take home. The 2nd portion of the money is to add Udemy. Everyone with a library card can use this resource. The subscription went live yesterday. It is a 2-year subscription. This is an expensive resource that we would not be able to pay for ourselves. We have let patrons know that we will not be able to continue this subscription once the 2 years is up.
- We will ask the County Commissioners to apply for an LSTA grant to start a Mobile Memory Lab at the upcoming meeting. This will allow us to purchase archival scanners and equipment. Once we purchase these items, we will be able to sustain this program without needing further funds. It will just be staff time moving forward. If we are awarded this grant, it will be for FY 2026 – 2027.
- It is budget season. This means Susana will submit the budget to the County for approval. Most of our monetary requests are the same as last year's. Our extra expenses use grants or Friends' money.
- The 4 self-check machines are at end-of-life and are operating on Windows 7. Funding to pay for replacing these will be from Gardner Trust. None of the money will be County funds. The existing vendor's response time for technical support is around 3 months, so we probably won't be using them again.
- The Friends of the Library book sale is in March. Dates are March 6 – 15. They are interested in any good quality donations and will work with people if there are large quantities of books. The money the Friends' make go to fund all our programming. Ex: Zoom passes, Seed library, craft supplies, Alamance Reads, Lucky Day collection, 100 Years of Library, American 250. Around \$20,000 goes to materials for our collections. They fund around \$77,000 worth of things for us every year.
- Strengthening Grant is a state grant that came from unspent ARPA money. This project needs to be completed by the end of June. Susana will only have to pay the expenses. IT is taking the lead to do the work.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- Lindsay talked about the QR code poster. She doesn't like that this flyer is so small and doesn't explain anything. She saw there was one book on there. She would like them to be alphabetized when more are on the list. She also wants to make the sign bigger and more attractive. It needs to be self-explanatory with more instructions. Jessica asked what the QR code goes to. Susana said it goes to the list of submissions. It says, "Content Notice Review." This is the name of the form. Jessica asked what the mission statement is for the library. Susana read the mission statement for everyone. Jessica asked about the values. Susana read that, as well. Jessica talked about putting a title on the list to better inform people. She asked the Committee for input. Cheryl said, if there was a way to link the form with instructions, she would like that. Lindsay wants instructions on the form itself and where to obtain it. There was discussion on what else is needed on the poster.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Reminder on terms ending in June 2026

- Four members have terms ending in June. But it will be both representatives from Graham, Debbie from Burlington, and Lynn from Mebane. She will let them know that they need to re-apply through an email in April.

ANSWERS TO PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Ed Priola – said thanks for the question. He said there are around 24 committees. The Commissioners are obligated to listen, not obliged to follow the advice. What he considers is whether or not the person aligns with his values. There are different formulas. He said it was a balancing act. He is not necessarily looking for people who agree with him on every detail, just share the same values.

Susana said the library doesn't have the capability to stream our meetings. It is a costly set-up with all the equipment needed.

Susana talked about the meeting times. There was a time that the November meeting was at 6pm. At the time, the annual meeting was considered. Terms also ended in September. So, it was the first meeting of the new members. This time also interfered with election day, so it was adjusted with this year's calendar.

LSTA grants are State grants. Susana said all federal funds are filtered through the State. She said it is possible to apply for direct Federal funds, but it is very complicated. We do not often seek this option. LSTA funds an annual and has a recurring process from one year to the other, so it is the more consistent and easier way to receive federal funds.

Next meetings:

May 12, 2026, at 12:30pm.

Jessica made a motion for adjournment at 1:09pm. Cheryl seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned.