

CUMBERLAND COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY & INFORMATION CENTER

MINUTES LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES JUNE 17, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Wilkerson called the regular meeting of the Library Board of Trustees to order at 9:05 a.m. on Thursday, June 17, 2021 in the Boardroom of the Headquarters library.

Trustees Present: Chair Belinda Wilkerson, Vice Chair Irene Grimes, Dennis Cedzo, Jeremy Fiebig, Ann McRae and Katrina Tiffany

Trustee Absent: Pamela Story

Present from the Library: Director Faith Phillips, Programs & Services Division Manager Nora Armstrong, Collection Development Division Manager Pamela Kource, YS Division Manager Carla Brooks, new staff (see table below) Service Award recipients (see table below) and Admin. Coordinator to the Director Marili Melchionne

Others Present: Assistant County Manager Sally Shutt and the Friends of the Library North Regional Branch Representative Flora McLain

A. INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUEST(S):

- Chair Wilkerson welcomed and introduced Friends of the Library North Regional Branch Representative Flora McLain and she gave the following report on behalf of the Friends Executive Board:
 - ✓ There are now 176 Friends members for 2021.
 - ✓ Barbara Kiser and the volunteers are now back in the book sale room doing what they do best, sorting books and getting the room ready for the next book sale. We are not sure when the next book sale will be but we do know it will be this year.

II. APPROVAL OF TODAY'S MEETING AGENDA

MOTION: Chair Wilkerson moved to approve today's meeting agenda.

SECOND: Trustee Cedzo seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Unanimous

III. APPROVAL OF MAY 20, 2021 REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: Chair Wilkerson moved to approve the May 20, 2021 minutes.

SECOND: Vice Chair Irene Grimes seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: Unanimous

IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. Introduction of new staff: Phillips introduced the following new staff member:

Name	Title	Branch Location
Brian Plank	IS Librarian II (Local & State History)	Headquarters

B. Service Award Recipients: Phillips recognized and honored the following staff members for their years of service with the library:

Name	Title	Branch Location	Years of Svc.
Penny Sizick	Page (not present)	Hope Mills	15
Nazreen Shaib	Technical Services Manager	Headquarters	5
Candice Jasper	Admin Support Specialist in Technical Services	Headquarters	5

C. Director’s Update – Director Faith Phillips
 Phillips shared the following report:

1. Program Highlight: Freedmen’s Bureau Transcription Project:

Phillips gave everyone a handout explaining the transcription project. This project is a collaborative undertaking by the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, the National Archives and Records Administration, FamilySearch International and the Smithsonian’s Transcription Center. It is the largest crowd sourcing project ever done by the Smithsonian.

Spring Lake Branch Manager Michelle Gross and her team are working with community members and they are having virtual transcribe-a-thons. They are all working together to transcribe the documents.

This initiative is to create accessibility and interest in the records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands and will provide information regarding the history of African Americans and the United States during the Reconstruction Era.

2. Hotspots:

Phillips announced that through an agreement with the State Library of NC and NC Student Connect, the library received 100 hotspots for free check out to customers. With COVID there has been a lot of American Rescue Plan and Cares funding with the digital divide and digital equity and inclusion. Details and internal procedures are being worked on. Customers will be able to check the hot spots out with their library card.

3. State Library NC ADAPT Grant:

In a discussion with State Librarian Timothy Owens, he shared with Phillips that there is “Cares Act” grant funding through the State Library and it is for digital equity and inclusion. Phillips shared a copy of the grant proposal that she put together and submitted on June 15.

The library received the hot spots, but in digital inclusion and digital navigation, it’s not always enough to put technology in front of people; you have to have someone who can help people understand how to use the technology.

The library offers the Book A Librarian services but librarians are busy doing many other things. In the grant proposal the budget is \$95,846 and no funding match is needed. The grant will fund two temporary positions; one is a full time librarian the other one is a part time library associate for 16 hours per week as digital navigators. Phillips added there is a need for a mobile computer lab and supplies, such as pop-up tables and chairs.

Staff can handle navigating in the building but we have to have partners so we can go out into the community and meet folks where they are. You will also see letters of support from Public Defender Cindy Black, and there are a lot of people her office works with who need to get jobs as a part of their probation and hopefully our navigator will be able to work with Black’s team. Phillips believes they have a grant position and our navigator can go sit in their library once a week and help people.

There is also a partnership letter from the Public Works Commission. Phillips met with Ashley at NC Works and they are in support of this initiative. There are other organizations that we want to partner with, including Veterans services.

We should know by July 15th if the library will be awarded the funding. From what Phillips understands from the State Library, funding is going to be distributed based on economic need. There is a metric that is used to determine who is in most need.

Assistant County Manager Sally Shutt shared that Cumberland County has received a \$65,000,000 allocation from Federal so the Commissioners have formed an American Rescue Plan Committee of three commissioners. The committee will be making a recommendation and information will be gathered from the community through a survey and public meetings.

Also under the American rescue plan, counties and municipalities have until December 31, 2024 to have encumbered the funding and the projects should be completed by 2026. This funding can have a great impact on the community but it should be for one-time funding.

4. Advertising:

Something else Phillips is working on is library advertising. She is working on gradually phasing in services and the library wants to make sure that the community knows that the libraries are open. One goal that Phillips has is thinking about the library as a brand. Libraries traditionally are good at marketing programs and services but are not as good at marketing as a brand.

While at a recent Woodpecker's baseball game, Phillips looked out to right field and noticed the PNC logo and other sponsors and she looked up and she could see the top of Headquarters library and thought, "There is an advertising opportunity for the library." This advertising would be sponsored by Systel funds.

Phillips plans on speaking with the Woodpeckers tomorrow about displaying the library's logo and new website so when people go to the games they will see the library's logo and website. The goal is to have the advertising up before the July series starts and it will also be up for next year's season.

The library is also looking at creating bus wraps again along with other ways of advertising the library brand. The library is exploring additional creative opportunities for advertising the library in non-traditional areas.

5. Hiring the new Deputy Director:

The position has been posted and at this point there are four applicants. Programs & Services Division Manager Nora Armstrong looked at the library's FaceBook Page and the posting has had 6,103 reaches which is astounding because the normal reach for library postings are 600 to 700.

6. Communication Survey Update:

So far 111 staff members have taken the internal communications survey that was mentioned last meeting. The survey is a combination of statistical data and three response questions. Several staff members have provided extremely good and tangible feedback. Phillips referenced the pie chart with one of the questions, "I feel valued by the library" and 10.8% chose "strongly agree," 51.4% chose "agree," 4.5% said "strongly disagree," 13.5% chose "disagree," and 19.8% chose "neither agree nor disagree."

Once the survey is done the results will be brought back to the trustees. Questions about morale were asked, service to diverse communities and customers, the leadership shown by the Division Management Team and Admin. Staff have been taking this very seriously. This is going to give us a look at communication going forward. The plan is to give the information back to the entire staff with the implementation strategy. We will do the survey on an annual basis so we can have a baseline to see how we're doing every year.

7. Updates: Reopening Plans

The Library system will be adjusting to Phase 2 beginning July 6, 2021. Phillips spoke with Director of CC Department of Public Health Dr. Jennifer Green and Assistant County Manager Sally Shutt to get their advice. The library will phase in programming and outreach slowly. Chairs will be put back in and the hours will be extended to 6:00 p.m. Branch Managers have been asked to do a staff analysis and that analysis will show the number of service points we have to staff, the number of duties they have to do and the number of open hours. The current hours that the library is open and a minimal staff, and full staff and the hours that we were at pre-COVID, minimal and full staff.

For example, East Regional with their current staffing numbers are great. Looking at staffing hours as a pure resource, they have enough hours to do the services they need to do. But when we do full open with Teen Scene and Chillax, they become a little stretched thin in their staffing resource number hours.

This analysis is going to allow us to look at areas where they are ok and we can expand, but when we go back to being fully open, we wonder how that will look. Do we need to reallocate some of the other responsibilities so that staff can do the Chillax programming. It's going to give us a better snapshot of the system as to where we are and where we can go.

Phillips just received the data and she is in the beginning stages of looking at it and analyzing it. But extending the hours to 6:00 p.m. seems like a really viable option to give us some after five hours.

Vice Chair Irene Grimes: Regarding the reopening plan, I haven't seen a reopening plan but it is being referenced in different departments of the county but I haven't seen one.

Phillips let the group know that she has a document that the team put together that can be passed out to the group because it will also be available to all staff.

Assistant County Manager Sally Shutt: The County Manager consulted with Dr. Green. In Cumberland County right now, we are still in a yellow tier which means significant spread. It is an improvement, but the metrics that we have, Cumberland County's vaccination rates, we are not receiving the information from Womack or from the VA because those are Federal vaccinations and they are not coming from the state.

When you go to the NC Department of Health & Human Services Dashboard they are showing we are about 20% which is skewed for Cumberland County because we can imagine the numbers that are going to Womack and the VA. Dr. Green did not recommend that we use that as a metric. We are using the tier system that the state has developed. Once we go to light yellow which is moderate impact, then it may change.

What County Manager Amy Cannon has done is for the public we have signs saying, "We request that you wear a mask." For our employees, the memo went out saying that regardless of their vaccination status, if they are within six feet of another person they need to wear the mask. If you're speaking in a meeting you can take them off.

If you are not vaccinated we request that you wear a mask at all times in the work place. This is the guidance that has gone out except for two important county facilities, the Health Department and the Courthouse, which they have to wear a mask at all times.

When you talk about a reopening plan, while there are plans, it is important to realize that we're still following the metrics.

Grimes was grateful for the explanation.

Phillips shared that when she was speaking with Dr. Green in reference to the library, the recommendations that we have were based on the tier system as well. One thing she recommended was that we wait on for when we are at light yellow or green, is the use of large meeting rooms for customers. Dr. Green said that you can't really control the space or the distancing.

Also, we are partnering with Dr. Green. She has been looking for Saturday vaccination clinics. Phillips met with Ashley and her team and starting in July some libraries will have vaccination clinics Saturdays from 10:00 to 4:00 at Headquarters, East Regional, Spring Lake, Cliffdale Regional and maybe Hope Mills. All they need access to is a space, a restroom, tables and chairs. This will give Saturday access to those who want to get vaccinated.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. FY 2022 Library Budget Update, Library Director Faith Phillips:

On June 7th the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners unanimously approved the FY 2022 budget. Within this budget, all full time and part time employees, active on July 1, 2021 will receive a 3% cost of living increase.

During this meeting the board of commissioners also voted to ensure that the county no longer has any employee earning under \$15.00 per hour. The way this will work is the 3% cost of living amount will be applied to all staff salaries (full and part time). If the 3% COLA does not bring the staff members to \$15.00 per hour then the salaries will be increased to \$15.00 per hour for those in pay grades 55-61.

Specifically for the library, all of the operating budget except for travel & training was approved. Travel was reduced to \$13,750 and training was reduced to \$5,500.

FY 2022 Library Endowment Fund Comparison Summary: The group followed on their handout as Phillips read out the amounts of disbursements from the 8 library endowments. The disbursement total comes to \$47,835.

Grimes: Regarding the budget, the travel budget is \$13,000 and I assume that there was a travel budget last year during the shut down due to COVID. Is the library allowed to spend those funds on something else?

Phillips: One thing that Business Manager Fabienne Narron is doing is doing some reallocations for us so that they will be reallocated to other areas.

Grimes: For the library?

Phillips: Yes, from what I understand.

Trustee Dennis Cedzo: I understand that there would be training assistance that could come from the Friends.

Phillips: Absolutely, and the total funding amount from the Friends is about \$100,000 which also covers programming.

Budget presentation – Trustee Katrina Tiffany asked if the County Manager's budget presentation was available for viewing and Assistant County Manager Shutt suggested that those interested look at the county's website and view their YouTube channel and the budget presentation was given on May 27, 2021 and the document is on the website under budget.

Shutt also followed up with what Phillips shared, County Manager Cannon started the presentation differently than usual to look and tell the story about the staff contributions. Shutt thanked the library staff for helping with contact tracing and for those who maned the testing information line. Then it became the vaccine information line. Anything that went out with the information phone number, library staff were answering it. The National Guard also helped by going to East Regional library which became a hub for the call center.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Other Business: None

VII. ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to discuss, Chair Wilkerson adjourned the meeting at 9:51 a.m.