

**Oconee County Library Board Meeting
Minutes for July 8, 2024**

4:30 p.m.

The Oconee County Library at Wire Park

Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. The following members of the Board were present: Chairman Mark Campbell, Vice-Chairperson Rubielen Norris, Secretary Fred Lutz, Laura Moore, Deann Craft, Daphne Norton and Rachael Watson.

Oconee County Library and Athens Regional Library System members were also present including James Mitchell, Donna Butler, Valarie Bell, Toby Mayfield and Lorrie Lavengood.

The meeting was video recorded by Lee Becker of the community. After a motion by Ms. Moore seconded by Mr. Lutz, a new business topic of "building emergency power" was unanimously added to the agenda. No public comments were offered by members of the community present at the meeting

A motion by Ms. Norris, seconded by Ms. Norton carried approving the minutes of the April 8, 2024 board meeting as amended.

The Branch Manager's report was provided by Mr. Mitchell. An extensive and impressive list of upcoming library events at Wire Park and Bogart for the current quarter were briefed in detail. Library statistics show that community interest, library usage and volunteerism have increased dramatically at both library locations.

Ms. Mayfield reported on regional services activity which included weekly branch manager meetings, personnel interviews, budget assistance, attendance at numerous receptions and meetings, and completion of annual reviews for branch managers and branch staff.

Director Bell reported major current actions in the region which included final resolution of IRS billing, development of new finance policies, preparation of a new technology plan, codification of public comment procedures needed in By-Laws, development of a payroll responsibilities flowchart, and identification of an accountant to perform the annual procedures audit. Director Bell also indicated that ARLS board members will be invited to the annual staff development day on November 20, 2024. Of concern is the unexpected announcement of an increase in employer contribution to the state health benefits program (SHBP). Effective January 1, 2025, the rate for each covered employee will increase from \$1093 to \$1580 monthly. This increase impacts all ARLS budgets.

Ms. Butler indicated there is no Friends of the Library report for Bogart. Mr. Mitchell reported that the Wire Park FOL would hold its book sale September 12-15, 2024.

Old Business:

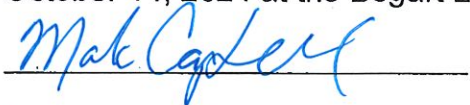
Art Committee report: An Art Committee comprised of Ms. Norton, Ms. Moore and Ms. Moss-Hill was formed at the January 2024 board meeting to coordinate with Director Bell and Mr. Mitchell to propose appropriate décor and dedication plaques for the Wire Park library. Mr. Mitchell reported that the committee has met and is coordinating with Wire Park regarding potential art locations on the library exterior as well as discussing interior art locations. The intent is to engage local artisans if possible. Available funding and proposal procedures are under review. A report will be provided at the October board meeting.

New Business:

Budget for 2024 – 2025: The unanticipated increase in required employer contributions to SHBP and TRS created a shortfall in the developed budget for 2024 - 2025. Library staff has trimmed the budget, but a shortfall in excess of \$21,500 remains below projected revenue. There were two options presented to the Board for discussion with option one including no cost of living adjustment for Oconee County Library staff and option two including a 3% increase for staff. Executive Director and Board discussed the need to increase revenue for the Oconee County Library. Also discussed were ways to reduce costs including a reduction in staff hours and program. After discussion including the information that there had been no cost of living increase for staff in FY 2023 or FY 2024 and the reserve fund healthy balance, the board opted to approve a motion by Mr. Lutz seconded by Ms. Norris to approved budget option two which authorizes movement of approximately \$34,300 from reserves to the current year operating account.

Building Emergency Power: During planning for the Wire Park building the board entertained the possibility of emergency power for the building and its systems. With the completion of the new building the subject of emergency power was raised again both for protection of the building and for support of the community in a disaster situation. Emergency power is also a reasonable topic at the Bogart library. Discussion ensued. Questions were raised including any history of power outages at Wire Park, availability of construction funding, natural gas service to Wire Park and coordination with Wire Park management. In view of the earlier budget discussion there was not much board enthusiasm for significant new expenditures at this time. Staff took the topic for review and advisement.

There being no further business, upon the motion by Ms. Norris seconded by Ms. Moore, the board adjourned the meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for 4:30 p.m. on Monday October 14, 2024 at the Bogart Library location.



Mark Campbell, Chairman



Fred Lutz, Secretary