



PCLS BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

6:00 PM January 16th, 2025

Hampton Memorial Library

PRESIDING: Ms. Lori Osborn, Chair – At Large

Dr. Alfred Wheeler – District 1 (Clemson)

Ms. Nancy Miller – District 2 (Six Mile/Central)

Mr. Danny Parton – District 3 (Pickens)

Ms. Alesa Pinkerton – District 4 (Liberty)

Dr. Henry Wilson – District 5 (Easley)

Ms. Susan Childers – District 6 (Dacusville)

1. **Moment of Silence and Pledge of Allegiance**

Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm.

2. **Welcome new board member Dr. Henry Wilson**

Dr. Wilson was not present.

3. **Public Comment**

Comments are limited to three (3) minutes per participant and 30 minutes total.

Ms. Osborn read aloud the Public Comment Policy and informed the board that 17 participants had signed up to speak.

Mr. Parton made a motion to cap public speaking at 10 speakers. Ms. Pinkerton seconds the motion, unanimous approval.

1. Johnelle Raines – She expressed that her first amendment rights have been violated because of the limitations for submitting reconsideration requests. She strongly suggested that the board revisit the reconsideration policy, or it will face legal action. If the collection policy was in alignment with the Greenville Library policies, we wouldn't have to file so many reconsideration requests.
2. Kate Byrd – She explained that it is on the Republican Party website that they want to overwhelm the library director and the Board of Trustees with book challenges. The group of 4,700, that is trying to censor books, is 6% of the registered 68,175 voters in Pickens County. Being a registered voter is not a requirement for a library card, of the 135,495 Pickens County residents, this group represents 3% of that population. This small group has cost the taxpayers precious time and dollars by creating chaos and mistrust in our librarians, our library director and the library system that serves our community so well.
3. Katrina Heise – She would like to see the passionate voices advocating for the ban or relocation of books, redirected towards pressing issues that affect our community rather than targeting valuable resources like the library. South Carolina is ranked 6th in the nation for domestic violence and Pickens County ranks 10th out of 46 counties in South Carolina for high-risk opioid abuse. Youths who regularly visit the library demonstrate greater social skills in the community connection, which fosters resilience. Students who participate in public library summer reading programs score higher on the reading achievement test.
4. Abi Clark – Judging by the comments, the slurs and beliefs she's heard in these meetings, many adults here are struggling to break the cycle of intolerance. As a former teacher she displayed a wall of banned books and students flocked to them. Banning or relocating books today is a modern form of book burning creating a cultural eraser or genocide. Libraries exist to provide information, not restrict it for personal bias or political agendas like senator Rice's proviso. If you want a segregated collection build it yourself with your own money, Pickens County Public Libraries belong to all of us.
5. Craig Holcombe – He voiced his support of the library system, the librarians, and the board members. Thanked them for educating, informing, and supporting the community by providing diverse and inclusive materials in the

library. We can learn about all kinds of people and their stories and through these stories we can be open to new ideas and open to kindness. A good library can make us better people.

6. Sophia Gallimore – She is a Clemson sophomore from Atlanta, GA and the most important life that she has lived is the one that books have helped her to create and to love. For a long time, books were her best friend and saving grace, she would not be the person she is today without the freedom to learn from books. Taking away the freedom to learn and grow is harmful, it hinders free expression, restricts access to diverse thought and prevents exploring other perspectives that might challenge societal norms. It’s not about encouraging children to read inappropriate books but teaching them to be mature and responsible while reading them. Censorship erases voices of marginalized communities and distorts history by sanitizing uncomfortable truths.
7. Rachel Cox – She is a strong supporter of the library and appreciates the dedicated knowledgeable and outstanding library staff. She and her family enjoy attending and participating in library programs. She is grateful for the many services that the library provides for our community. She stands against the concerted challenge campaign of a very small number of people in our community and asks you to trust individuals and families to make their own decisions about the books they read. She asked the board to consider including the names of the book challengers with the list of challenged materials on the library’s website, just like the state board of education and local school boards do so that we can see what a very small number of people are challenging the books.
8. Cathy Travers – not present
9. Kathleen Campbell – She believed that after 10 pervasively vulgar books were found in the children’s section of the library, that the board would immediately take action and relocate these books to the adult section, not ban books. Especially after those on the library board admitted to being personally uncomfortable with vulgar contents of these books. This board denied requests for relocation and supported inappropriate material that is harmful to children. She was embarrassed to attend library board meeting where board members publicly reprimand one another, publicly insult our state senator, and publicly give the middle finger to Proviso 27.1 by ignoring the recommendation of book placement given by the state library director.
10. Luke Campbell – The state library director clearly stated that there’s adult and there’s youth, there’s no 3 to 15, 9 to 16, 85 to 95, those categories don’t exist. The minor number of people that have been talked about tonight represents well over 90% of Pickens County, not just the 4,000 people. 30 people in this room do not have the majority, they’re a vast minority. You can’t be something to all people because as soon as you put evil sitting around on a shelf that anybody can pick up you alienate the vast majority.
11. Denise Davidson – When she arrived at the Sarlin Library last year she decided to record the visit. She was told “Demon School” anime was chosen to share Japanese culture. She stated there was a 2 second clip of a classroom with Japanese students depicted as devils with horns, their parents are scumbags and sold them to demons. This is not an uplifting or positive theme for young impressionable minds. Bias has been repeatedly demonstrated by the gallery. A group of people were allowed to hold up signage when concerned citizens commented. When others spoke in favor of no restrictions their colleagues were allowed to clap and the group was never told not to clap, this selective outrage is undignified and unprincipled.

4. Approval of Minutes

a. Library Board Meeting 12/19/24

Mr. Wheeler asked if the Director’s correction note on Johnnelle Raines’ comment was added to the November minutes. The board clerk confirmed the note was added. Ms. Pinkerton made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Parton seconds. Ms. Miller abstained from voting because she was not present at the December meeting. Unanimous approval of the December minutes by Ms. Osborn, Mr. Wheeler, Mr. Parton, and Ms. Pinkerton.

5. Library Director’s Report

a. Library Information

The Director points out the printed packets given to the board are for the reconsideration appeals of *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison and *Brave Face* by Shaun Hutchinson. We will help with access to these books should the board need it. The Director shared that we received the South Carolina Native Plant Society Grant to support our Seed Library. The Sarlin Library Branch Manager, Beth Buchanan, takes the lead in managing our Seed Library. Beth coordinates donations and volunteers to pack the seeds. The Seed Library will open in February at the Sarlin Branch as well as pop-up locations at the other branches each week. Details about where and when the pop-ups will be, will be on social media and in our newsletter. The Sarlin Library also has a new work study program in collaboration with Pickens County School District and Vocational Rehabilitation program, helping students earn a South Carolina employability credential by acquiring essential skills. We are currently working on our annual report for the 2024 calendar year. We have the free tax prep

program starting this month with VITA. Households with income under \$60,000 can have trained volunteers assist with their taxes. Appointment for the VITA program can be made by calling 211. The Hampton Memorial Library is celebrating its 20th anniversary on February 27th, we are hoping to put together a celebration on that day. On March 31st at 7 pm we will have a big author event with Harlan Coben at the library. This will be a ticketed event, and we will be publishing the details for this event very soon.

b. Financial Report

The Director reports that not much has changed since the last meeting. We will be using these reports for budget planning. Mr. Wheeler asked about the running great than 50% on expenditures. The Director explained that it is due to paying up front for the year for things like insurance and that is normal.

c. Foundation Report

The Director reports that there is \$76,852.66 in the foundation account.

6. Quarterly Statistical Report – Assistant Director

The Assistant Director reported that our visitor numbers are down a bit due to power outages and closures. For example, Pickens was closed for about a week due to a power outage after the storm hit. We've had a 33% increase in new library card users. eBooks show a slight decrease due to the new ordering guidelines and being in between bookkeepers. Computer users are down, and wireless users are up 15%. More people are bringing in their own devices to use Wi-Fi as opposed to using our computers. Attendance in programs are up across the board, with teen and adult attendance up over 50%. Mr. Wheeler asked why it is up so much. The Director explained that we are trying to focus on having fewer better-quality programs that people are interested in coming to. We had great success with this for the Finer Things Club program. The Assistant Director said that we are doing fewer outreach events. We have not resumed going to day cares yet, but we finally got a new person that is going to resume the daycare outreach program soon. For the adult outreach programs, we did not do the low attendance events we did last year and two events this year were combined. For teen outreach programs, we did one very well attended program verse last year's two low attendance programs. Overall, attendance has increased 62% and we are encouraging people to express what they liked and didn't like or want to see more of.

a. State Library FY24 Report has been submitted

The Assistant Director explained that we have completed our annual state report that compiles statistics across all departments of library services and the state library takes the statistics and it goes to the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

b. Compiling PCLS Annual Report for Calendar Year 2024

The Assistant Director reported that we started working on the calendar year 2024 annual report that will go with the budget.

7. Motion Period and New Business

Matters can be added to the agenda by appropriate motion, second, and majority vote of the Board.

Ms. Osborn explains that we have an item to add to the agenda that needs immediate attention regarding emails about the renovation project and to have it discussed first and then discuss the other New Business items. Mr. Parton made a motion for the renovation project emails to be added as item A under New Business and the other items moved down the list. Ms. Pinkerton seconds the motion, unanimous approval. Ms. Pinkerton made a motion to add to the agenda to discuss having a special-called meeting in February to go over the bylaws. Mr. Parton seconds the motion, unanimous approval to have this as item B under New Business.

a. Emails about Renovation Project

The Director explained a quick rundown of the plan for the renovation project. We started off good with an architect, we had a proposal and a contract with that architect. We went to the county to get the money to start this project, but the county was not happy with how the architect and the board wanted to move forward with the process of choosing a general contractor and managing the renovation project. The County Council handed the management of the project to the County Administrator a year ago. A new project manager was hired by the county, who was trying to help us figure out a way to move this over four-year-old project forward. We have been working with the project manager on a new proposal that would include the things the county wanted to do, which is take care of the HVAC before any other renovations happen. The county currently has 50% drawings and is working to change the contract with the architect to have 100% drawings for a HVAC replacement. We still need an RFQ, which the architect, the library and the project manager was not allowed to provide. The County Administrator emailed the Director saying that the Director was withholding plans, and this is why the project has not moved forward. This is not true, and it has been confirmed by staff and the architect that the county has everything that we do. In the county administrator's emails, he says that we must send drawings from

the architect to bid for a HVAC system by tomorrow 01/17/2025 or they will stop paying the architect and hire another architect to do drawings for a HVAC system. This would be a duplication of all the funds and effort that has already been put into this project. The Director feels that this is a decision that should be made by the Library Board, and she should not be pressured to make a decision like this without the Board's approval and involvement. Since the beginning, at no time has this project ever been stalled by anything she, the staff or this board has done; still we have encountered roadblock after roadblock. She thinks it would be best for the County Administrator to communicate to the Library Board what exactly he wants to happen since he's in charge of the project now, and to answer the question of is this project just an HVAC replacement or can we include the renovation of the expansion spaces as well. The Director's suggestion is to, with the help of Mr. Wilson, have a committee meeting for everyone to get on the same page about how to move this project forward. Since the contract with the architect is with the Library Board and not the County, if the Board votes to request the architect to give the County Administrator what he needs, then he can get bids for an HVAC system. Based on the cost estimate from the 50% drawings it could cost around \$2 million to replace the HVAC system. Mr. Wheeler feels that to move forward we should have the architect do complete drawings. Ms. Pinkerton said that we should have a budget and renovation committee meeting with the County Administrator, then we can know what his plans are. The Director stated that the Library Board should be in contact with the County Administrator going forward and his emails should be directed to the Board and the architect. Ms. Osborn stated that she will send an email to the County Administrator, including the board members, to clarify what he specifically wants, so we can all see his response. Ms. Pinkerton made a motion for Ms. Osborn to contact Mr. Roper to find out exactly what he wants and then inform the architect to create what's needed and potentially amend the contract to include the county as the project managers going forward. Mr. Parton seconded the motion, unanimous approval.

b. Pickens County Library System Foundation

Ms. Osborn mentioned that according to Robert's Rules, board members are allowed to vote for themselves to be on a slate. Mr. Wheeler made a motion to approve the Foundation slate board members including Lori Osborn, Brittany Fowler, Alesa Pinkerton and Karen Culley. Ms. Pinkerton seconded the motion, unanimous approval.

c. Updating Collection Development (Library Materials) Policy

Ms. Osborn mentioned that everyone was given a copy, and this is just for discussion tonight, we will all need time to review this material. Mr. Wheeler just wants to mention a few editorial comments. The first one involving keeping consistent language throughout other policies, "No library materials will be excluded because of the race, nationality, *gender, sexual orientation, identity, * or the political, social, or religious views of its author or its intended audience." The rest of his changes are incidental or grammatical corrections. The Director clarifies that this discussion is to make improvements to the Collection Development Policy the way it is now, we will still have a discussion about teen versus YA. Ms. Miller moves that we skip ahead to discuss updates concerning the Proviso and State Library guidance. Ms. Pinkerton seconded the motion, unanimous approval. This topic was tabled, to discuss updates concerning the Proviso and State Library guidance.

d. Vote on Special-Called Meeting in February

Ms. Miller made a motion to have a special-called meeting on February 4th after the workshop with the County Attorney. Ms. Pinkerton seconded the motion, unanimously approved. Mr. Parton made a motion to move the March board meeting to the Hampton Memorial branch due to limited space at the Sarlin Library branch. Ms. Pinkerton seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

8. Old Business

a. Discussion/updates concerning Proviso and State Library Guidance

The Director said she did reach out to the State Library Director to schedule a time to talk, they are working on figuring out a time that will work. She reached out to other library directors across the state, most systems that responded to her have not moved forward with the guidance, some feel they already comply. Anderson county asked her to send them what everyone else was saying once the information is compiled. She reached out to two law offices, Burnette Shutt McDaniel in Columbia, SC and Carl F. Muller Attorney at Law in Greenville, SC. The American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom have lawyers available to look over policies. The Deputy Director, Sarah Lamdan, and her staff are looking at the guidance and have sent relevant information concerning lawsuits for creating these sections and moving YA collections. Which is why other libraries are hesitating to implement the guidance because it could lead to a lawsuit that would cost more than what is received in state aid. Mr. Parton made a motion to have the board, not the Director, reach out to other library boards about what actions or proposed actions they are taking to implement the State Library Directors guidance. Ms. Pinkerton seconded the motion, unanimous approval. Ms. Miller made a motion to table any changes to the collection development policy for now, because we have not settled the "teen" verses "young adult" issue. Ms. Miller does not see any point in going through the collection development policy, until we know what we are doing about that

issue. Ms. Pinkerton seconded the motion. Unanimous approval. The board will also contact lawyers for advice. The Director will forward the information for the attorneys that she has already contacted, to Ms. Osborn.

Ms. Miller requested to make a comment about something not on the agenda, for the record. Ms. Osborn explained that this was not added during the motion period for new business, so we will not discuss that tonight. Ms. Miller can send an email to Ms. Osborn to add it to the agenda for the March board meeting. Mr. Wheeler clarified that the two reconsideration requests they received with their packet will be discussed at the March meeting. Mr. Wheeler made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Parton seconded, unanimous approval. The meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 20th, 2025, 6:00pm at the Hampton Memorial Library, Easley