



PCLS BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

6:00 PM July 16, 2026

Hampton Memorial Library

304 Biltmore Road Easley, SC 29640

PRESIDING: Mr. Danny Parton, Chair- District 3 (Pickens)

Dr. Alfred Wheeler – District 1 (Clemson)

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

Ms. Alesa Pinkerton, V. Chair – District 4 (Liberty)

Mr. Robert Sams – District 5 (Easley)

Mr. Brian Aiken – District 6 (Dacusville)

Mr. Mark Kilburn, Treasurer – At Large

1. Call Meeting to Order

At 6:00 pm.

a. Roll Call for the Record

When Ms. Miller did roll call, Mr. Aiken was not in attendance, the rest of the board was present. Mr. Aiken came in late at the end of the public comments.

b. Accept Agenda as written

Mr. Parton made a motion to switch Old Business 6a with New Business 7a on the agenda. Mr. Sams seconded the motion. Motion unanimously.

2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Miller led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Public Comments – Limit to (3) minutes each (Total 30 minutes)

1. Hannah Whitehead

Spoke about keeping explicit material out of the library. Mentioned and read aloud an excerpt from a book that was moved to the Adult Parenting section of the library.

2. Denise Davidson

Spoke about not seeing any America 250 displays and that the new director should plan out what the displays would be and get board approval.

3. Lou Kaye

Spoke about how not signing the state aid form due to prurient materials in the library is holding state aid hostage. Mentioned that the current policy is dangerous. Asked why the book Drama was moved and how can book moving be tracked for the public to see.

4. Jesse Henley

Spoke about leadership and that children are a gift from God. Mentioned that freedom without wisdom is not freedom at all and not everything that is legal is appropriate. Read scriptures from the Bible.

5. Johnnelle Raines

Spoke about how curation is not censorship and asked who sets the standards for curation for the library. Mentioned that libraries should only give age-appropriate materials and asked about how and if eBooks have limited access for minors.

6. Mae Anderson

Spoke about having attended library board meetings for 3 years, she is 16 years old and the library board meetings have aged her. Mentioned that limiting access to books is not protection and a few hours of reading should not undo years of good parenting.

7. Virginia King

Mentioned that she appreciates protecting children.

8. Meredith Burr

Spoke about South Carolina law says that the book should be taken as a whole and the reclassification process is being rushed. Submitted comments for the public record. (see attached comments)

9. Andi Hendricks

Spoke about the lies that board members have told on public record and requested those members removed. Submitted comments for the public record. (see attached comments)

10. Renee Gahan

Spoke about the qualities the next director should have. Mentioned that libraries are under attack and the programs for the community suffer due to the hours spent on book disputes. Requested that Shephanie Howard be rehired.

11. Rudolph Bell

Spoke about supporting the direction the board is going. Mentioned that this is a divided nation fighting a cultural war and the board has been dragged into it, but the board should not take sides.

4. Approval of Minutes

a. Special Called Meeting 2/12/26

Ms. Pinkerton made a motion to approve February 12, 2026, meeting minutes. Mr. Kilburn seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

b. Library Board Meeting 5/21/26

Ms. Pinkerton made a motion to approve May 21, 2026, meeting minutes. Mr. Aiken seconded the motion. Dr. Wheeler mentioned about correcting who presided over the meeting to Alesa Pinkerton and not Danny Parton because he was not there and that there are a few typos and we should run the spell check on Microsoft. Motion to accept the minutes with the corrections passed unanimously.

5. Library Director Report

a. Financial Report

The Board discussed the FY27 library budget. Mr. Heimbürger reported that the library's finances remain in good condition, noting that the FY27 budget includes a 2% increase, with most of the additional funding allocated to personnel costs. Although the overall budget increased, the operating budget was reduced, requiring careful management of the library's expenses.

Board members discussed concerns regarding the operating funds being reduced, including the elimination of the legal services budget, the repairs budget being reduced, and the impact these changes could have on library operations. Questions were also raised regarding funding for the planned library renovation and whether available funds would be sufficient to cover project costs.

Mr. Heimbürger stated that the total renovation cost will not be known until bids are received, with additional information expected by the end of August. The Assistant Director reported that the latest estimated budget available was \$1.9 million for the renovation. There was discussion about the library's end-of-the-year balance and the need to spend all funds since the library is no longer on milage and cannot save rollover amounts. There was concern over what to do about day-to-day expenses and building maintenance. Mr. Heimbürger mentioned that they will rely on the county to help with any major building expenses that come up.

b. Foundation Report

Mr. Heimbürger reported that the Foundation sold 2 more T-shirts and they are working on making new T-shirts. The board requested that the Foundation give a report at a future meeting and give the library board an updated copy of the Foundation Bylaws.

c. Statistical Report

The Assistant Director reported that overall number of visitors and card holders are trending up. eAudio, eMagazines and Kanopy numbers are way up, while physical items are slightly down, likely due to people preferring to listen to books over physical book reading. The number of events and meeting room reservations looks down but attendance is way up due to the events being better quality and popular. The same is true for

Outreach events. The expansion spaces having air-conditioning now have helped with Summer Reading Program performances. The number of participants in Summer Reading Program looks to be trending up, as well. The yearly totals have the same trends as the quarterly. There is a good ratio of card holders to the county population. eAudio is up, as well as meeting room attendance and programing attendance. United Way's Free File program was held at every branch 1,669 people got their taxes done for free. For early voting and runoffs we had 3,890 people vote at the Easley library, which is the most of any of the voting locations.

d. Hampton Library renovations

Topic was covered in the Financial Report.

e. Friends of the Library

Mr. Heimburger reported that at the Friends of the Library annual meeting Kelly Boland was made the new president and book sales will take place on the second and third Saturdays of September.

Dr. Wheeler discussed posting a list of all books that have been relocated, along with the reasons for their relocation, as well as all submitted reconsideration requests, on the library's website to promote transparency.

6. New Business

a. Report of Library Director Search Committee

Mr. Kilburn reported that they came up with a timeline and a standardized way to go through all the applications. There are about 20 applications and only 5 meet the requirements of having a master's degree in library science. The committee will meet again next week.

7. Old Business

No old business to discuss.

8. Meeting Adjourn

Mr. Kilburn made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Sams seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Mr. Parton announced that the next board meeting will be held September 17, 2026, at the Village Library in Pickens at 6 pm.

email this
to board clerk

Remarks for Thursday, July 16, 2026 Library Board Meeting

Hi, my name is Meredith Burr and I am a resident of Pickens County, a parent, and a regular patron of the library. I am submitting these comments for the public record.

I want to first respond to board member Mark Kilburn's comments at the May board meeting.

Mark stated that "The collection policy is not trying to address whether or not [a work]... has prurient interest" and expressed frustration at "prurient interest" continuing to be brought up. Yet this board insisted that the recent changes to the collection policy were necessary specifically because of Proviso 27.1 which required libraries to certify that they did not "offer any books or materials that appeal to the prurient interest of children". This board also specifically included in the updated collection policies that "prurient interest material" be moved from teen to adult. So the collection policies are trying to address whether or not a work has prurient interest.

Mark also expressed frustration at those insisting that we need to consider the work "as a whole" in making collection decisions, but this comes from SC law. According to the state library, "for material to be considered "prurient" the dominant theme of the material must be taken as a whole, and cannot be parsed out in sections." Collection policies regarding the teen collection state that they use the state obscenity law for guidance (SC Code § 16-15-305 (2023)). But this law also emphasizes that the work needs to "as a whole" appeal to "prurient interest" *and* lack any "serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value" to be considered obscene.

So it is clear that the terms prurient interest, obscenity, and work as whole keep coming up because they are part of the law and integral to the recent discussions on collection policies.

The problematic new collection policies now allow any book to be removed from the teen section based not on the work as a whole, but on objectionable excerpts. This is an unreasonable standard and restricts books that are

relevant and valuable to teens. Mark stated that the new collection policy is only trying to ensure collections are "age appropriate". But "age appropriateness" is subjective and can depend on personal values. This is why the previous collection policy referred to "age relevant" materials. The library placed materials in categories relevant to different age groups and allowed parents and individuals to determine what was appropriate for them.

When we compare Pickens to other SC libraries, we see that Pickens is now an outlier because of its extreme collection policies. I checked SC LENDS, a consortium of 22 SC county libraries, including Anderson County, for the location of 85 titles that our system recently moved from teen to adult. 90% of these titles had 60% or more of the SC LENDS copies in YA or Teen. Over 30 titles had copies only in YA or Teen. Only 1 title was available only in adult.

Lastly, I strongly disagree with the current collection policy, but since it is currently in place, I ask that the board encourage slow, careful review and not push for books to be moved as quickly as possible. In a recent review, 14 books, including Drama, were determined to have been moved to adult incorrectly or to need further review because it was not clear why they were moved. While Drama has been returned to juvenile, other books are stuck in adult while further review occurs. P.S. I still love you, for example, is still classified as adult, despite a second review finding it complied with teen policy. These errors demonstrate that this re-classifying process is being rushed. It is not right that books likely in compliance ^{with the board's policy} have been quickly moved to adult and are stuck there while more careful review occurs. The slow, careful review always needs to come first.

Thank you for your time.

Andi Hendricks

July 16, 2026

Pickens County, South Carolina

Submitted to: Pickens County Library Board of Trustees

Re: Public Comment-Regular Board Meeting March 19, 2026

Submitted for Inclusion in the Official Minutes

From the moment you were placed on the board, you have been on a mission to force your views and beliefs on everyone and continue to expect the public library to act as the parent to a child.

As I said I would do, I have reached out to County Council about the actions of some. I am providing that statement and this statement tonight for the public record.

I don't believe for one second that 3 of you should have the honor and privilege of serving on this board for another minute. I will continue to report my concerns over the egregious lies and actions taken. Pickens County Council seems to be okay with turning a blind eye. I am not. This is an unpaid volunteer position that will not impact any of your lives or families whether you serve on this board or not. I do imagine that the lies told that will be made part of a public record will be difficult to face.

I have no issue at all with the very different viewpoints that all of you bring to the Board. I think if everyone is speaking truthfully, it allows for far better decisions to be made if you are hearing from as many sides/views as possible. The problem is that some have been very untruthful and are now boldly lying about others saying things that they did not. When it was stated that the State Director had said she had a paralegal review what was sent and the Paralegal said that it was 'legal', I knew that there was no chance of this Board being able to act in the Library's best interest or in the County's best interest.

Who I am and what I stand for matters. I do not and will not ever stand for or tolerate anyone that lies. Lies were stated on the record and in complete disregard for the impact those words have on anyone. Lies that in the above instance could have had real world impacts with a referral to the office of disciplinary counsel for an attorney, when it was stated that a Paralegal said your policy was "legal". That did not happen and I know it didn't happen before the FOIA I have submitted is even returned. I am a Paralegal for the past 26 years. I take my job seriously. I know the seriousness of everything that I say and do. I will not let that lie go unchecked and it is now part of the public record for all to know.

I have more to share with Council and HR. While it seems they are not going to take any action, the public record and County records will be clear as to what was said and done until you are either removed or your term has expired. We all know that you have not and will not do the right thing.

At the last meeting it was stated that the Interim Director may have moved books against Board Policy. If that is true, I anticipate his firing by the end of the week since you already fired an award winning Director that was taking the necessary steps to implement your policy.

Andrea Hendricks

123 Thames Valley Drive, Easley, SC 29640 | 864-906-0516 | andrea.sillyhop.com

June 3, 2026

Pickens County Council

I was present at the Council Meeting Monday night (June 1, 2026) to support Mr. Gus Edmundson. I had intended to also speak but did not have a chance to finalize what I wanted to say. The concerns that I bring to you about several members of the board are not made lightly and I want to ensure that what I am relaying to you is accurate and reflects the facts of the situations that have caused me concern.

I was able to speak at the May 21, 2026 Library Board Meeting and I am attaching that statement here, which includes my handwritten edits shortly before the meeting commenced that evening. I wanted to speak at the March 19, 2026 Library Board Meeting; however, I was number 14 and the Library Board very rarely has allowed anything over 10 speakers.

My concerns that I intended to bring to the council's attention, as I indicated to the Library Board that I would do when I spoke, were different than what Mr. Edmundson had found through his FOIA request. While it does not make any difference as to my concerns, I feel I should note that I am only aware of Mr. Edmundson from the Library Board Meetings.

To be very direct, the overall concern I have is that several members of the board have taken actions that are in direct violation of their own policies and have outright lied about certain events. There was clear tension between the board members from 2024 forward. They ALL spoke to each other at times that is best described as shameful. They were able to make some needed changes despite it all and the library is only better for that.

You currently have 4 board members, Danny Parton, Alesha Pinkerton, Nancy Miller, and Mark Kilburn, who by all accounts believe that they are far more knowledgeable of the library than the very Librarians and Staff that have built the Pickens County Library System into an award winning library that the community LOVES and visits frequently with zero complaint or concern.

I watched the State Library Director, Senator Rex Rice, Stephanie Howard and Bruce Heimburger all explain to them more than once that the library is in compliance with the intent of Proviso 27.1. They are not capable of leaving their personal beliefs at the door when they take a seat at the table as the Library Board and their actions jeopardize funding for the library and already cost Stephanie Howard her job.

Mark Kilburn, who spoke at almost every board meeting prior to his appointment to the Board, consistently made inaccurate statements or statements that show his inability to be impartial when it comes to anything associated with the Library.

Danny Parton

My issues with him are addressed in my attachment statement made to the Library Board.

Alesha Pinkerton

I have the audio of each of the meetings discussed below and will share them in a separate email with a Dropbox link.

On January 22, 2026 there was a Policy Committee Meeting. Alesha Pinkerton led the meeting. I would refer you to page 2 of the attached minutes which note that Mrs. Pinkerton states that she had the State Librarian look at what she had prepared and that the State Director told her that it was legal and that she had a paralegal look at it and she said it was legal too. This is a lie for a few reasons. The State Director provides only guidance to the library board. There is no staff attorney nor paralegal at the State Library. It is against the law for any Paralegal to offer any such advice under any circumstance. These minutes were approved as written at the March 19, 2026 Library Board meeting.

Due to Mrs. Pinkerton's failure to make the appropriate Motions at the January 22, 2026 meeting, what the board termed a 'Re-Do' meeting was scheduled for January 28, 2026. The minutes of this meeting have not yet been approved as Mrs. Pinkerton stated that the minutes needed to be corrected to include that the Librarian said to her prior to the start of the meeting that "a statement before the meeting started that uh, the director stated that she wasn't sure why this meeting was even necessary. And I stated because I was told that the January 22nd meeting was against FOIA and Mr. Wheeler was there at the table and that made a quorum which means that the meeting should have been labeled a board meeting instead of a committee meeting. And the director stated whoever told you that was a lie. We have always done committee meetings like this and I stated, Mrs. Pinkerton stated, that I can send you the information that was sent and I wrote it down for you. So, and I'd like to amend....".

The audio from the January 28, 2026 immediately prior to the meeting starts midsentence.

AP-Alesha Pinkerton L-Stephanie Howard L2-I do not know her name

AP:"We are taking action.

L: You're not as a board. You're not.

(Illegible from Mrs. Pinkerton)

L: As a committee you are, not as a board. Right.

L2- Taking action as a board would be like formally adopting these policies and like just forgetting about the other meeting. All you are doing is voting to take this to the Board.

L-This library system has always invited any board members to sit and be part of the discussion in committee meetings but you do not have to do that if you do not want to.

AP-Oh okay, well I was told by several people that it was not recommended.

L-Well they are wrong and I don't know what else to tell you.

Laughter. Meeting starts at 3:01.

Mrs. Pinkerton failed to make appropriate motions at any point during the January 22, 2026 meeting. The same people present on January 22, 2026 are present on January 28, 2026. Rather than simply hold the meeting with the proper motions made, she made a public comment

on March 19, 2026 about the already terminated Librarian that was an outright lie. This is beyond unacceptable and is cause for immediate removal in my opinion. She cannot be trusted. She cannot have it both ways. She cannot state that the meeting is being redone because it was a quorum and then go on to have the exact same people in the room and the only change to the meeting is that she makes the appropriate motions.

This is not the first time Mrs. Pinkerton has stated something happened in a prior meeting that in fact did not happen and requested that it be included in the minutes. At the July 18, 2024 Board Meeting, the now approved minutes reflect that **"Ms. Pinkerton asked about a document that the Director passed out to the Board prior to the meeting. The Director let the Board know that it was a copy of the memo from the State Librarian that she had forwarded to the Board via email concerning the library's compliance with Proviso 27.1."**

At the next Board Meeting (August 15, 2024) when voting to approve the minutes for the July 18, 2024 meeting, "Ms. Pinkerton asked to clarify that she did not receive an email of the proviso beforehand, but only got the press release one. Director clarifies that the email was the press release. Ms. Pinkerton wants the minutes to clarify that she did not receive the memo beforehand, just the press release email."

Nancy Miller

In this same January 28 meeting, the Librarian is trying to explain the proposed policy as written is vague. Ms. Miller says policy is similar to many many policies in South Carolina except Greenville. Ms. Miller seems to think that the Librarian is trying to say she will not do what they want, she is asking for them to help her. Nancy says we are the majority and this is the policy we want. She says they were not allowed to give input and it was rushed and this is why we are taking our time. (Board Meetings and approved Meetings show this is not accurate, not only did they participate, Ms. Miller tabled the discussion during one meeting). The Librarian again tries to explain the process and what was done. Alesha interrupts and says Ok let's move on so that we are not here forever. Librarian requests that it be noted that she was trying to advise you and I was cut off.

Because Ms. Miller has made comments before that are not truthful, I looked up the Library Board policies for every County in this state. There is no other policy similar to what they have drafted to be found. The closest this policy comes to is Greenville County and York County. Greenville County was sued and has settled. I imagine York and Pickens County are next.

During the same January 28, 2026 meeting Ms. Miller tells the Librarian that she admires her putting the policies they want into place. Time and time again, the Director tells them she will implement what they want, she just needs to tell them her concerns and ask for some clarification.

While I understand that the Library Board was within their full authority to terminate her employment, what these Board Members said when the public was not present versus when they are present, are polar opposites. I have no idea how they can even look at themselves in the mirror. Time and time again the Board was told exactly what would happen once the policy was enacted. Rather than figure out how to make it work and keep programs running for the children, you had Danny Parton give a news interview that he had no idea that was being done. To then

turnaround and immediately pause the policy because the Interim Director tells them the very same thing Mrs Howard did is infuriating

Mark Kilburn

While I cannot make Mark Kilburn believe that there is not anything of prurient interest in the library, as a board member he has to trust those that tell him there is not. I have full faith in everyone up until this moment that has told him just that. If he cannot trust the Library Director or the State Director, he has to be removed. He cannot based on his statements at the May 21, 2026 meeting. State Law is what it is and none of us, whether we like it or not, can decide that we want it to mean something else and act accordingly.

I do not believe that a Motion was made during part of the May 21, 2026 meeting when approving the minutes for the March 19, 2026 meeting after rewatching the recorded meeting. There was a second but it was not clear that a first was made. Those minutes unanimously passed with no requested changes. This is another example of this Board's refusal to ensure they are doing the minimum with following their own policies and procedures

I want to be clear that I actually applaud the ones who have voiced their concerns at every meeting for the prior 2 years. That is part of what makes our Country the absolute greatest. However, no matter how many times that a lie is repeated, it is still a lie. I applaud every past and current member of the Library Board who has listened to them and has made necessary changes.

These Board Members are determined to take actions that will result in lawsuits and will cost the taxpayers. It is time for the Council to step in and remove them before they cause further harm.

Sincerely,



Andrea Hendricks

#14
on 3/19

Statement made for public record

#8
on 5/21

My name is Andi Hendricks. I am a resident of Pickens County.

I have watched every available board meeting online. I have struggled with what to actually say tonight. At this point, I fear that the damage is done. Your agenda is clear. ~~It appears that there is one lawsuit forthcoming, and I believe that more will follow.~~ I have no doubt that a portion of this Board firmly believes that they are doing the right thing. I also have no doubt that their very convictions and beliefs have been their own worst enemy.

I can say with certainty that I experienced more emotions than one should when watching a Library Board meeting. I have watched people speak to or about others in ways that can only be described as shameful. I have watched time and time again certain Board members refuse to listen to experts and refuse the seriousness of the lawsuits they ~~have opened~~ ^{can} the County up to with their actions. Not just the lawsuits, but to ~~have~~ ^{refuse} the basic knowledge needed to fulfill their duties. ~~THIS is the work I have put into just these words over the last two weeks.~~ This Board has done nothing but rush unnecessary changes and failed to even act on time sensitive documents which will ~~most likely~~ ^{could} cost the library with the loss of much needed funding. Never mind what the termination of the librarian and the additional lawsuits will cost. The only losers in your agenda are the actual library patrons.

~~Sen Rice even stood before you in this very room and told you that each library certifies that they have met the intent of the Proviso. No one in this audience or on this board or past boards has any right to tell any librarian in this state what their intent is when that document is signed. Our librarian told you time and time again that no book has ever been purchased for this library with prurient intent. End of discussion.~~

I am here tonight to tell you that your actions are harmful and the only losers are the library patrons, not any of you. I would argue you do not frequent any of our library branches because all of the information that you need to educate yourselves is found here, ^{yet willful ignorance}

The library is here to serve **ALL** of the community and not to adapt to your misguided ^{abounds} opinions. ^{nor act as a parent}

The sitting chairman has acted in ways in prior years that create a real problem with trust as of this moment and going forward. Knowing that one was not allowed to vote on moving a book without having read it per board policy on reconsideration, he did just that as he stated at the February 24, 2025 Budget Committee Meeting. This is not just a violation of Board Policy, it is a willful violation of Board Policy each time it was done.

The smirks of the current chair and vice chair and their comments when discussing Johnny the Walrus showed clearly that the intent was not to protect children as you claim. You were given examples of how books get into the children's section that are not age appropriate and how our librarian with her knowledge and expertise, knew the book should be moved. *and wanted to move the book*

At this point, I believe that in order to best serve this Library, those that violated Board Policy or undermined the Board, should resign.

Pickens County deserves better than they are currently getting. I intend to follow up with County Council regarding my concerns. Your opinions MUST be left at the door when you are serving on any Board. Who you are and what you stand for matters.