

**FONTANA REGIONAL LIBRARY**

**Meeting of Board of Trustees**

**November 14, 2023 4:00p.m.**

**Marianna Black Library**

**Minutes**

**Board Members Present:** Margaret Carton, Debbie Tallent, Tony Monnat  
Cynthia Womble, Ellen Snodgrass, Boyd Sossamon, Ed Trask, Wood Lovell **Absent:** Rebekkah  
Watkins

**Others Present:** Tracy Fitzmaurice, - FRL Director; Lynn Cody-FRL Finance Officer; Jeff  
Delfield- Swain County Librarian; Serenity Richards- Albert Carlton Cashiers Community  
Library Librarian; Meredith Fortner- Finance Specialist.

**I. Call to order, Roll Call, and Welcome of New Board Member**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Carton at 4:00, followed by a re-introduction of new  
board member Tony Monnat.

**II. Approval of Minutes of July 11 and September 12, 2023, meetings**

Due to the lack of a quorum, the minutes from the July 11th meeting were not approved at the  
September 12th meeting. Debbie Tallent made a motion to accept the minutes as written.

Cynthia Womble seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Tony Monnat made a motion to accept the September 12th minutes as written. Debbie Tallent  
seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

**III. New Business**

**A. Presentation of the 2022-2023 Auditor's Report**

Lavonia Reese of Carter CPA of Asheville, NC, presented the audit report.

There were no disagreements with management, even with new staff doing the audit for the 1st  
time and a change in Financial software. The auditing firm offered unmodified opinions on the  
Government-Wide Financial Statement and the Fund statements.

This report highlighted increased pension liability, the financial state of FRL at the end of the  
22-23 fiscal year, under-budget expenditure totals, and clarification on two findings dealing with  
the budget. Ms. Reese expounded on her report by offering a broad 5-year look at FRL's net  
position and other financial measuring marks. Most notably, FRL has had a net position increase  
for all of the last 5 years.

Discussion points from the board included requesting clarification on the Difference in favorable outcomes.

**B. Acceptance of the Auditors Report FY22-23**

Ellen Snodgrass made a motion to accept the auditor's report as written. Boyd Sossaman offered a 2nd to the motion after no discussion; the motion carried unanimously.

**IV. Review of Correspondence and Communication**

Correspondence will be passed on to other staff members for research; others may be answered during the meeting. Repeated questions will not be re-answered.

**V. Director's Report**

See Report.

**Operational Excellence –**

Chair Carton stressed the importance of this operational policy and commended Director Fitzmaurice for initiating the process.

Points of Discussion included the cost of the checks, what items would be checked for, the length of time, and the geographic span these checks would cover.

Nearly 4.8 million was allocated for recurring increases to state aid for Public Libraries across the state. New state aid for the budget will be available in January. Questions were asked about the amount and who would receive the funding. Director Fitzmaurice agreed that HQ would receive the State Aid, however, there is no pre-determined amount at this time.

**VI. Financial Reports**

Lynn Cody offered a financial report, as well as a clarification of a few points made in the auditor's report. The Budget finding in the audit that showed the budget to be out of balance had been corrected in a budget amendment presented to the board at the September 12th meeting but could not be voted on due to no quorum and due to that copy of the budget not having been legally adopted the auditors were obligated to report the difference as a finding. Other discussion points included the justification of the other finding, The allocated funds that were rolled into the 23-24 budget, the positive change the software change has made, and the reduction of over \$400,000 in the budget with the approval of Budget Amendment #8.

**A. Approval of Budget Amendments FY2023-24**

Debbie Tallent made a motion to accept both amendments 2 and 8. Cynthia Womble seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Lynn Cody offered a recap of the September Financials for board members absent at the September meeting.

**B. Request for resolution**

Lynn Cody requested that the board consider a resolution for the Marianna Black BL ILibrary Bboard to have the authority to authorize contracts to seek contractors, grant writers, and other contracted services.

Ellen Snodgrass offered a comment about the transparency of the Marianna Black Planning Committee. The Marianna Black Bylaws do not include committee designations and any mention to the "Planning Committee" refers to the Board as a whole. MBL board.

Wood Lovell made a motion to give the Marianna Black Library Board MBL Expansion Board the authority to enter into contracts without the approval of the FRL Board. Debbie Tallent seconded the motion. As a point of discussion, Cynthia Womble clarified that Swain County is involved, and the building funds are always kept in a separate account than the operating funds. The motion carries unanimously.

**C. Approval of Additional Budget Amendments**

Cynthia Womble made a motion to approve Budget Amendment #3 as presented. Wood Lovell seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**VII. Report of Committees (if needed)**

No report

**VIII. Unfinished Business**

**A. Marianna Black Library Building Project Update**

E. Snodgrass thanked Representative. Clampitt and Senator Corbin for the 3.2 million added to the state budget over the next two years. Representative Clampitt was in attendance at the beginning of the Board meeting but had left by this agenda item. The MBL is currently at 4.8 million in raised and appropriated funding. The budget for the project is slated to be at least 5.3 million, with the thought that the budget may need to be increased due to current rising construction costs. The committee is continuing to work on applying for grants. The Dogwood grant was officially awarded to Swain County. Several grants are also in the works for the beginning of the year.

The committee followed the county manager's lead to request an RFP for an architect who has done work for Swain County.

Ellen Snodgrass also offered an update on the sewer issue for the construction project. The town and the county are working on an agreement, and the committee is looking at other footprint options.

Discussion points included clarification on the funding amounts.

675,000 individuals and businesses.

414,000 Dogwood Grant, as well as to fund the acquisition of a grant writer.

500,000 allocated from Swain County.

3.2 million in funding from the budget of the State of NC.

## **B. Nantahala Community Library facility**

Ed Trask offered an update on the NCL; the construction material delays have been exhausted. There has yet to be a project completion date, a projection for the end of December, or, more likely, early 2024.

Discussion points included Internet Coverage to the new location and how that is being pushed back.

## **C. Safe Child Policy**

The policy was discussed at the September meeting but could not be approved due to a lack of a quorum. Director Fitzmaurice updated on the changes requested by the board.

Changes drafted included

- Unattended child under the age of 12 cannot be left alone
- Under 8 cannot be left without direct supervision
- For ages 9-11, a child can be in a different library section while a parent or guardian is physical.

Discussion included comments that were points of opposition to the ages of the new proposed revisions. Also, questions of how staff would know the children's age or if parental consent had been given.

Wood Lovell made a motion to accept the policy as written. Tony Monnat seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

## **IX. New Business**

**A. Code of Ethics** - Chair Carton requested that the board entertain discussion of the draft of the Code of Ethics for the Fontana Regional Library Board of Trustees as proposed. The distributed copy is a standard Code of Ethics used by many regional boards for the state of NC. Director Fitzmaurice explained that this draft was a library-specific version and again stated that it was used as written by multiple boards across the state. There is currently no Code of Ethics in place for the FRL Board. This document would be signed and re-affirmed annually. Discussion

points centered around the idea of personal vs. board decisions. Ed Trask suggested changing the wording to state that a disagreeing board member should not undermine the board's decision. No formal motion was made. Wood Lovell made a motion to table this draft in concept to allow the board members more time to view and contemplate the wording of the Code of Ethics. Cynthia Womble seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

### **B. Collection Development Policy and Request for Review**

Chair Carton reviewed the discussion from the September meeting on the collection development policy. A draft of suggested changes has been updated and offered to the board by Director Fitzmaurice.

Discussion included mentioning the affiliation of the ALA in the current policy. Ed Trask made a motion to remove the wording regarding the affiliation with the ALA from page 1 and other locations, including on page 8 in the current collection development policy. Ellen Snodgrass seconded the motion. Discussion points included that this needed to remove all references to the ALA affiliation and a historical summary of the ALA Bill of Rights and its original purpose. The motion carried with six votes for and one opposed.

The board continued to discuss that substantial changes had been made to this draft copy that had been presented to the board. Other discussion points included that this policy is the guiding policy of acquisition and refreshing maintenance of the collection, the importance of the changes being suggested, and the affiliations and qualifications of the FRL Lawyer.

### **B. Child Card – For discussion**

The policy was discussed at the September meeting, and the circulation policy will inform the policy for the child card.

### **C. 2024 Board of Trustees Meeting Dates / FRL Holiday Dates**

A draft copy of the Board of Trustee Meeting dates was presented to the FRL Board. Debbie Tallent made a motion to accept the meeting dates as presented. Wood Lovell seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

The 2024 FRL Holiday schedule, showing closures of all locations, was presented to the board for informational purposes.

### **X. Other Business**

No other business.

### **XI. Executive Session (if needed)**

The FRL Board was called into Executive Session to discuss personnel issues.

A motion was made by Debbie Tallent and seconded by T. Monnat. Carried unanimously.

The Board reconvened at 6:25 p.m. The members discussed personnel issues and agreed on a statement that should be released to all staff. When the Board reconvened, the Chair asked if any board member would make a motion to vote on the statement of support. Cynthia Womble made the motion, and Tony Monnat seconded. The board voted unanimously to share the statement. The chair told Director Fitzmaurice to share it with all staff, upload it to the FRL website on the Board webpage, and give it to any media or patrons that asked. This was the result of the closed session.

A copy of the statement is included below:

**STATEMENT FROM THE FONTANA  
REGIONAL LIBRARY BOARD**

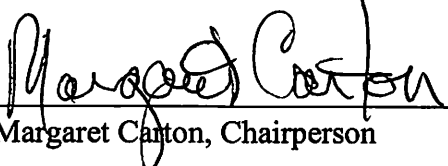
On Tuesday, November 14, 2023, the Fontana Regional Library (FRL) Board unanimously passed a motion of support that fully endorses the FRL Executive Director, County Librarians, Branch Librarians and all of the library staff members.

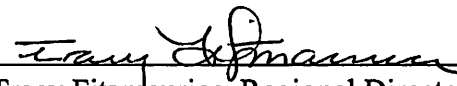
The FRL Board commends the FRL Executive Director and her staff for their commitment to effectively operating libraries that represent vital resources for our varied communities, their professionalism, and their creative energy that produces a wealth of programming for all our constituencies. We thank them for their service through these challenging times for libraries in the United States and assure them that the FRL Board supports their efforts to serve our mission of "providing the public of Jackson, Macon, and Swain counties with excellent service and convenient access to resources for their educational, informational, and recreational needs."

**XII. Adjournment**

Wood Lovell seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting by Debbie Tallent, and the meeting Adjourned at 6: 40 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

  
Margaret Canton, Chairperson

  
Tracy Fitzmaurice, Regional Director

Date: 1/9/2024

Date: 1/9/24