

FONTANA REGIONAL LIBRARY
Meeting of Board of Trustees - Agenda
July 8, 2025 4:00p.m.
Nantahala Community Library

Attendance:

Board Members Present: Cynthia Womble (Vice Chair, Acting Chair), Tony Monnat, Lori Richards, Marva Jennings, Deborah Smith, Bill McGaha, Marsha Moxley, Kathy Smith, Cheryl Taylor

Others Present: Tracy Fitzmaurice-FRL Regional Director; Lynn Cody- FRL Finance Officer; Meredith Fortner (Recording Secretary), Finance Specialist, Abby Hardison, Macon County Librarian.

I. Call to order, Roll Call & Determination of a Quorum

The meeting was called to order by Acting Chair Womble at 4:00 PM on Tuesday, July 8, 2025, at the Nantahala Community Library. Roll was called, all nine members were present, and a quorum was established.

II. Revision and Approval of the July 8, 2025 Agenda

Deborah Smith requested moving the Financial Reports under Introduction of New Board Members and adding a New Business item regarding written reports. Marva Jennings requested adding a motion on public comment procedures under Public Comment and Correspondence. The motion was seconded by Marsha Moxley. Kathy Smith requested a New Business item to discuss amending the FRL Board By-Laws. Marsha Moxley moved to approve the revised agenda, seconded by Kathy Smith. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Introduction to new Board members

Acting Chair Womble introduced the two new board members, Kathy Smith from Macon County, and Cheryl Taylor from Swain County.

IV. Financial Reports

Finance Officer Lynn Cody reported that the FY 2024–2025 closeout is ongoing and the current report does not reflect final statistics. Preparations for the annual audit are underway, with auditors scheduled for on-site fieldwork in October. Cody also explained the structure of financial approvals within the library system, noting that many originate at the local level. Acting Chair Womble requested clarification on local procedures, and Cody confirmed that policies are in place and enforced, with corrective action taken as needed.

A. Approval of Amendments of FY 2025-2026 Budget

Budget Adjustment #1, increasing the total budget by \$66,233, was presented to allow for employee Cost of Living increases and reflect lower projected health insurance premiums, resulting in a balanced budget. The Finance Officer also addressed Accounts Payable logistics for the fiscal year start.

Tony Monnat moved to approve the amendment; seconded by Marsha Moxley. The Board discussed specific lines, including Marketing, Outreach, and Dues. It was clarified that the amendment must be voted on as presented. Acting Chair Womble confirmed this with the FRL attorney.

The motion passed: 5 yes, 3 no, 1 abstention.

B. Digital Champion Grant Update

The Finance Officer provided an update on the grant supporting computer training across the three counties. Two Digital Navigators currently serve in the libraries, with one position still open.

C. Vehicle Purchase for Macon County

The Finance Officer requested direction to proceed with purchasing a replacement vehicle for Macon County, as approved and budgeted. Marsha Moxley moved to allow the Finance Officer to continue the process and report back to the Board; seconded by Bill McGaha. Motion passed unanimously.

The Board discussed Professional Organization dues and reconciliation reports for the FRL Operating Checking Account. The Finance Officer explained fund balance requirements and addressed questions on year-end County Appropriations and investment possibilities. Acting Chair Womble recommended such questions be directed to the Finance Officer or a Finance Committee outside of meetings.

V. Approval of the Minutes of Past Meetings

Deborah Smith moved to approve the minutes from the March 11 (revised), May 13, and special called meetings from June 10, and June 19, 2025 meetings as presented. Marva Jennings seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

VI. Public comment and correspondence

A. Proposal to Change Public Comment Procedures

Marva Jennings moved to amend the public comment procedures as outlined in the version she submitted to the Board; seconded by Marsha Moxley. The proposal aimed to formalize decorum expectations and allow trustees to respond to public comments. Concerns were raised about vague terms like “attacks” and “respectful,” which the Board attorney noted could pose legal risks. Trustees were also cautioned against engaging in dialogue, per prior commissioner advice. The attorney recommended consulting the NC School of Government and including clearer definitions in future revisions.

The motion failed with a vote of 3 yes, 5 no, and 1 abstention.

Deborah Smith then moved to form a committee to review and revise the proposal; seconded by Kathy Smith. The motion passed with 8 yes, 1 no.

B. Public Correspondence and Public Comment

The Chair reported receiving 43 pieces of public correspondence, primarily from May and June, with most expressing concern over Jackson County’s decision to withdraw from FRL—a decision made by the County Commissioners, not the FRL Board. Other messages included appreciation for library staff, general feedback, and two letters addressing ethics and conflict of interest statements tied to the new fiscal year. All board members confirmed receipt and review of the correspondence.

Five individuals gave public comment, expressing appreciation for the Board and library staff—particularly Regional Director Tracy—while voicing concern over rumors of her dismissal. Speakers also criticized perceived efforts to alter ethics, public comment, and collection policies, warning against politically motivated changes and further instability following Jackson County’s withdrawal.

VII. Director’s report

The Director confirmed all board members had received and reviewed the written report. Supplemental NC Cardinal circulation statistics were distributed, including interlibrary loan and branch activity data. The Director reported that the U.S. Supreme Court upheld an FCC rule enabling continued hotspot lending, protecting FRL’s digital inclusion initiatives. Updates included the launch of the new website through Civic Plus and the Jackson County Commissioners’ June 24 decision to withdraw from the FRL system, noted for later discussion. Three staff positions remain open: part-time and full-time and a branch librarian in Highlands,

VIII. Report of committees

A. Circulation Policy ad hoc committee

Lori Richards reported that the committee's revised circulation policy was returned from staff with unauthorized changes, preventing a board vote. The committee will compare the original and altered versions and present a corrected draft at the next meeting. The committee is also reviewing compliance with the Student Access Program and the Parents' Bill of Rights. Two related motions were withdrawn to allow further review in light of new legislation (House Bill 959).

IX. Unfinished business

A. Update of Marianna Black Library building project

Tony Monnat reported that Swain County Commissioners unanimously approved a contract with the selected contractor. Construction preparations are underway, public fundraising will launch soon, and construction is expected to begin this fall.

B. Update on MCPL building repairs

Bill MaGaha reported on ongoing repairs, previously detailed in an email to the board. No questions or concerns were raised.

C. Board retreat

Acting Chair Womble revisited plans for an FRL Board Retreat to support orientation and training for new members. The director was instructed to send poll to determine a September date, and members will be asked to submit topic suggestions.

X. New business

A. Election of Officers

On a motion by Lori Richards, seconded by Marva Jennings, the board unanimously approved the officer slate presented in May: Cynthia Womble as Chair, Tony Monnat as Vice Chair, and Bill McGaha as Secretary.

B. Annual Conflict of Interest Policy Disclosure Statements

Conflict of Interest disclosure forms, required annually by the North Carolina State Library, were distributed. Board members were instructed to review,

complete, and submit them at the conclusion of the meeting. These forms confirm understanding of FRL's policy and disclose any potential conflicts, such as Friends of the Library membership or county employment.

C. Annual Ethics Statements

Ethics forms were also distributed and discussed. It was noted that while not required by FRL bylaws, signing the current ethics statement is a standing board requirement.

D. Ethics Statement Ad Hoc Committee

Kathy Smith moved to form an Ad Hoc Ethics Statement Review Committee; Marva Jennings seconded. The motion carried (Yes: 6, No: 1, Abstain: 1). Members appointed: Marsha Moxley (Chair), Lori Richards, Kathy Smith, and Cynthia Womble.

E. Circulation Policy Approval

Previously addressed under Committee Reports; no further action taken at this time.

F. Naming of Collection Development Ad Hoc Committee

Kathy Smith moved, seconded by Bill McGaha, to form an Ad Hoc Committee to review the Collection Development Policy in response to concerns from the Jackson County Commissioners. The motion carried (Yes: 5, No: 3, Abstain: 1). Members appointed: Kathy Smith (Chair), Marva Jennings, and Cheryl Taylor.

G. Naming of Finance Ad Hoc Committee:

Bill McGaha moved, seconded by Deborah Smith, to form a Finance Ad Hoc Committee to review budget policies and prepare for the two-county transition. The motion carried unanimously. Members appointed: Bill McGaha (Chair), Tony Monnat, and Cheryl Taylor.

H. Naming of personnel ad hoc committee

Deborah Smith moved, seconded by Marva Jennings, to form a Personnel Ad Hoc Committee to review staffing, position descriptions, and HR transitions related to Jackson County's withdrawal. The motion carried unanimously. Members appointed: Deborah Smith (Chair), Cynthia Womble and Bill McGaha

I. Jackson County Commissioners' withdrawal from FRL Interlocal Agreement

The Chair and Director acknowledged receipt of Jackson County's official withdrawal notice from the FRL Interlocal Agreement, effective June 30, 2026. Follow-up actions include seeking legal counsel for a new two-county agreement, personnel and finance planning for staff separation and liabilities, and meeting state aid deadlines. Additional concerns included staff retention, summer 2026 programming, and lease renewals. The board affirmed its commitment to FRL's mission and a stable transition to a two-county system.

J. Overture from the Macon County Library Board

Kathy Smith presented an overture from the Macon County Library Advisory Board requesting FRL guidance on compliance with NC Senate Bill 49 and Federal Executive Order 14038. The board clarified that overtures may be referred but not amended. The matter was referred to the committee for further review and discussion, especially in relation to policy updates and potential grant implications. No action was taken; the item was tabled pending further review.

K. Written Reports Proposal

Deborah Smith moved to require all reports be submitted by the Thursday before each regular Tuesday meeting, this would include all reports from committees etc. Then only key items would be highlighted during the meeting, and time allowed for questions, with the exception of the director's report, which would allow for additional time. and all reports would be posted publicly with the meeting video to improve transparency. The motion was seconded by Marva Jennings.

After discussion about clarity, document labeling, and potential public confusion, Lori Richards proposed an amendment limiting public posting to the Director's report, financial report, county library board reports, and the final approved agenda. Committee reports will still be submitted in advance but not posted. The amendment passed (Yes: 8, No: 1), and the amended motion was adopted unanimously. This new process will begin with the September meeting.

L. Proposed Bylaws Amendment


Kathy Smith proposed a bylaws amendment to include a written attorney's report in the meeting agenda. Legal counsel advised against public reporting due to confidentiality concerns. As FRL currently lacks retained counsel, Kathy Smith withdrew the motion following discussion.

M. Public Comment Procedure Ad Hoc Committee

Marva Jennings moved, seconded by Lori Richards, to form an ad hoc committee to review public comment procedures. The motion passed 8 yes, 1 no. Marva Jennings will chair, with Lori Richards and Kathy Smith as members. The board agreed this review should remain separate from policy changes. The Director will email a list of all six ad hoc committees and their chairs. All committees are expected to submit written reports before the next meeting

.X. Adjournment

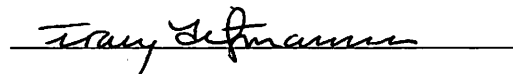
The next regular meeting of the Fontana Regional Library Board is scheduled for Tuesday, September 9, at 4:00 PM at the Macon County Public Library. With no further business to discuss, Marsha Moxley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bill McGaha seconded, and the motion was unanimous. The meeting was officially adjourned at 7:10 pm.



WILLIAM R. MCGAHA
Cynthia Womble (Chair)

9/9/25

Date



Tracy Fitzmaurice (FRL Director)

9/9/25

Date