

CATAWBA COUNTY LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Minutes of February 13th, 2024

The Catawba County Library Advisory Board met on Tuesday, February 13th, 2024, 12 noon, in the conference room of the Main Library in Newton.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Morgan Williams-Board Chair, Mary Canrobert-Vice Chair, Pam Cansler, Donna Reese, and Jeanne Lebens, Carmen Isenhower, Katie Perkins, Siobhan Loendorf, Library Director, Jenny Gerami-Markham, Assistant Library Director Candi Dula, Business Manager

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

CALL TO ORDER

Morgan Williams at 12:00 p.m.

Welcome New Board Member: Katie Perkins

PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public attended.

MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Staffing Update

We had filled the adult services position here at Newton with an internal candidate, however, that person has decided to accept a position in Nashville, TN. So the adult librarian role here at Newton has been reposted.

When we hire internally, it creates other open positions. As a result, we had an open position at the Conover library which we have filled with a person who worked hourly for the library. Alyssa Vang started last week.

At the Southwest Branch one of our part time library assistants retired and we are in the last stages of filling that position.

We had posted for a couple more hourly –on call staff –specifically to cover at Sherrills Ford-Terrell Branch and we are in the process of hiring two new hourly staff.

Programming - refer to the February Newsletter

New programs:

1. We just did the Take Your Child to the Library this past Saturday. We work with the schools to send information home to the students. The school with the highest number of students visiting a library wins a set of Percy Jackson books for their school library. And each library was also doing a drawing from the attendees to award one child at each branch a copy of the first book in the series.
2. Arts@ the Library Exhibit Opening Francis Simeni: Examining Self-Image and Identity from Feb 15- March 15 -. Exhibit opening will be this Thursday Feb 15th from 5:30 – 7:00 pm. Come in and meet this artist, originally born in Nigeria, raised in Poland and settling in America.
2. Monthly spot on the Hal Rowe show - we are doing 30 minutes and now we have added a trivia contest. Our next show is this Thursday, Feb 15th we go on at 7:30 to 8:30. Listen live or you can catch the recording on-demand from the WHKY website.
3. The library is still providing free coats and hats through a partnership with New Jerusalem Baptist Church and Highways

and Hedges. This is the second year we have partnered with them to provide warm clothing.

- I. Early Literacy Programming
 - a. The system offers 9 Every Child Ready to Read preschool programs including 1-Bilingual Storytime and 1- Tiny to Two program for a total of 10 preschool programs.
 - b. PAWS to READ with a certified therapy dog at the Sherrills Ford-Terrell or Maiden Branches.
 - c. Pre-K Stations is an early literacy program with sensory, craft and STEAM stations held at the Conover Branch.
 - d. Other programming for the younger ones includes Do Re Me and You Dance Party at St Stephens, Pre-K Play (fitness-based program) at Conover, and the Pearler Bead Club (great for fine motor skills, following directions, teambuilding) at Sherrills Ford-Terrell Branch.
- II. Children's programming- Thursday, Feb 29th from 4-6 at the Central Rec Center we will host an author visit with **Kwame Mbalia** – a middle grades author. He will visit Newton-Conover Middle School in the morning and then the general public that afternoon. At the Central Rec Center, we will provide a light supper to encourage families to come together. We are partnering with the Downtown Newton Development Association, they are going to provide the hotel stay for the author, pay for the author's mileage and help cover the cost of food for the evening. Friends of the Library provided the \$1000 fee for the author with grant from the Corning Foundation.
- III. Teen programming
 - a. Teen Tuesdays at the Main Library in Newton
 - b. Teen Advisory Board at St Stephens and Teen game night
 - c. Teen Dungeons and Dragons club at Sherrills Ford-Terrell.
- IV. Adult programming
 - a. Interplay Learning –not as many people using it as we had expected. We were able to get just 5 licenses or seats for this coming year so we will keep trying to get folks connected to this resource. When last checked we had 4 library patrons logged in as users and one person really participating earning lots of points.
 - b. Adult Steam & Crafts – needle felting, knitting and crocheting
 - c. Health and Wellness – Yoga, Zumba, Kinetic meditation, healthy lunch box options—Bone Broth class taught by Melissa Falcone from True Cut Ranch.
 - d. Community Navigator –Midori Gilesby has been working hard this semester. She is here evenings and Saturdays and does a great job of connecting with people to offer her assistance.
 - e. Book Clubs- five book clubs that meet at the library, online and out in the community.
- V. Technology – we have added 11 new hotspots into the inventory

Career and Workforce Development – Goodwill Career specialist comes to Newton once a month to provide one-on-one help to people needing assistance with job search and applications. We are already partnering with NCWorks to provide online workforce development classes and we will introduce some in person career counseling this Fall.

Grants

2023-24 Grant LSTA application – We were awarded the grant to add 5 soundproof office pods at the Main Library, perfect for making phone calls, video conferencing, meetings, work sessions or performing focused tasks. The office spaces have been delivered. We are still waiting on the seating that comes with the units and working out some little kinks but we have outfitted the larger units with a TV monitor, computer, and camera so the spaces can be used now for telehealth, job interviews, or continuing education. Along with this project the library purchased a new software to manage all of the library's meeting rooms to make it much more efficient. Now all library staff can see at a glance what is available and book rooms for people.

We were awarded \$2,200 from the Kenneth K and Suzanne G Millholland endowment to purchase a collection of STEAM interactives to be used with preschoolers. This includes little bee bots that preschoolers can use to begin learning basics of coding. Also a light table and a wind tunnel.

The library has applied for the Digital Champion Grant with the NC Dept. of Instruction Technology to hire two full time digital navigators to conduct outreach throughout Catawba County with a focus on teaching digital literacy to seniors, veterans, those for whom English is a second language, less advantaged people, and recently incarcerated individuals. We should hear back sometime in May.

We are currently working on a grant application to update the children's area at the Main library to be more inclusive for neurodivergent children and adding a special sensory story time to the regular slate of programs offered here at Newton. We are partnering with the Early Childhood Support Team at the Catawba County Partnership for Children to help us select items for the space. Most importantly they will help train our youth services staff in how to effectively deliver a sensory storytime program. As part of this project we will be asking all staff to take some online training about how to provide the best customer service to individuals who are neurodivergent. This will help our entire system become more inclusive.

Board Member Advocacy / Input

The 2024 State Budget includes a **\$3,817,869 Recurring increase** to State Aid bringing the annual appropriation to \$18 million. A special shout out to Representative Jason Saine who has helped to increase our funding for ten years.

Past State Aid Amounts

2020 - 14,732,141

2019 – 14,682,131

2018 – 14,790,131

Library Endowment

Current balance at NC Community Foundation \$95,968.51 in PayPal \$291.79 and in donations through the library we have \$541.77 for a total of \$96,802.02

Other Business

National Library week is April 7-13 the theme is Ready, Set, Library!

National Ambassador for Young People's Literature and Newbery and Pura Belpré-award winning author Meg Medina is the Honorary Chair

- Monday, April 8th is Right to Read Day is a National Day of Action in support of the right to read.
- Tuesday, April 9: National Library Workers Day, a day for everyone to recognize the valuable contributions made by library workers.
- Wednesday, April 10: National Library Outreach Day – We will be hosting a Day in the District from 10-1 pm. This is where we invite our elected officials to join us for library tours and lunch. Stay tuned for invites to that event as we would like to have as many board members present as possible.
- Thursday, April 11: Take Action for Libraries Day, a day to rally advocates to urge members of Congress to protect the freedom to read.

Presentation: Candi Dula – Juneteenth

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1pm.

Next Regular Scheduled Library Board Meeting: Tuesday, May 14th, 2024 at the Newton Library at 12 noon.

Respectfully submitted,
Candi Dula, Business Manager