

Pulaski County Library System

Library Board of Trustees

Minutes

April 28, 2009

Board Room of the Pulaski County Administration Building

Trustees Present: John Freeman, Chair; Mason Vaughan, Jr., Vice-Chair; Elinor Farmer; Marva Hickman; Nancy Hudson; Martha Jackson; and Joseph Slaughter

Staff Present: Sally Warburton, Director; Mia Catron, Dublin Branch Manager; Lucy Glenn, Library Public Services Coordinator; Courtney Price, Library Assistant; Carol Smith, Technology Coordinator

Guest: Robert Hiss, Assistant County Administrator

Citizens: 19 citizens attended: Janie Hurd Akers (Pulaski), Donna Bobbett (Pulaski), Shirley Bransen (Pulaski), Bill Bryant (Pulaski), Rebecca English (Pulaski), Jackie Freeman (Dublin), Dorothy Gooch (Dublin), Jena Hardy (Southwest Times Reporter), Audrey Kurtesz (Dublin), Lynn Loftus (Pulaski), Sheila Nelson, Linda Nisbet (Hiwassee), Elmer & Tammy Roush (Dublin), Carroll Stone (Draper), D.F. & Judy Taylor (Dublin), Jennifer & Haley Wharton (Dublin)

Trustees Absent: Danny Collins and Dr. Don Stowers

- I. Call to Order & Welcome: Chair John Freeman called the Pulaski County Library Board of Trustees meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 28, 2009 in the Board Room of the Pulaski County Administration Building, Pulaski, Virginia. He welcomed those present to the meeting. Mr. Freeman introduced Mrs. Nancy Hudson, who has been appointed by the Pulaski County Board of Supervisors to fill the seat of Philip Baker. Mrs. Hudson will serve for a term ending December 31, 2012.
- II. Approval of Minutes – March 24, 2009. The Board reviewed the minutes of March 24, 2009. A motion was made by Elinor Farmer, seconded by Martha Jackson, to approve the minutes of March 24, 2009 as written. Motion was unanimously passed by Trustees present.
- III. Library Reports: The following reports were reviewed by Trustees present. A copy of each report is filed with the records of this meeting at the Pulaski County Library:
 - A. Expenditures
 - B. Statistics

- C. Dublin Library Report
 - D. Technology Report
 - E. Children & Youth Services Report
 - F. Library Director's Report
- IV. Follow-up from Previous Meeting:
- A. Belle, the cat residing at the Charles and Ona B. Free Memorial Library: Knowing that guests at the meeting were interested in this topic, Chair John Freeman moved this issue to the top of the agenda to allow citizens to express their opinions.
 1. Mr. Elmer Roush of Dublin, VA spoke in favor of allowing the cat to remain at the Dublin Library. He presented a petition to the Board that was circulated in Dublin and Pulaski and questioned why the cat may have to be relocated now after living happily at the library for several years. He hoped that his petitions are not ignored.
 2. Bill Bryant, President of the Pulaski County Humane Society, presented articles about library cats and spoke in favor of allowing the cat to remain at the Dublin Library. He introduced statistics about the Humane Society and expressed his hope that the cat would not be returned to the society for placement.
 3. Donna Bobbitt of Pulaski, Virginia spoke in favor of allowing the cat to remain at the Dublin Library. She stated that Belle is taken care of and loved and is a good cat, helping relieve stress.
 4. Dorothy Gooch of Dublin, Virginia spoke in favor of allowing the cat to remain at the Dublin Library. She quoted an article entitled, "The Latest Stop-Smoking Aid: Your Pet" from the April 20, 2009 issue of *Woman's World*. Citing the benefits of pets for health issues. She also suggested that citizens could help pay for a rider to the insurance policy if that should become necessary.
 5. Linda Nisbet of Hiwassee, Virginia spoke in favor of allowing the cat to remain at the Dublin Library. Ms. Nisbet was attracted to the individuality of a small town and stated that the attraction of the Dublin Library is Belle. She suggested that there should be alternatives for those with allergies and requested that gentler rules and common sense prevail.
 6. Judy Taylor of Dublin, Virginia spoke in favor of allowing the cat to remain at the Dublin Library. Ms. Taylor stated that Belle is an intelligent cat who chooses to befriend only those who love cats and can be used to teach children.

7. Carroll Stone of Draper, Virginia spoke in favor of allowing the cat to remain at the Dublin Library. As the owner of Sunshine Tours, Mr. Stone has cats in his office and sees the benefit of allowing cats in the workplace. He visited the library for the first time today.
8. Jennifer Wharton of Dublin, Virginia spoke in favor of allowing the cat to remain at the Dublin Library. She and her family moved to the area this week from Missouri and are residing in a recreational vehicle at this time while looking for housing. They chose to visit Dublin Library because Belle is there and her children can get books and visit a pet at the same time. She expressed the opinion that Belle gives the library a personality.
9. Haley Wharton of Dublin, Virginia and the daughter of Jennifer Wharton spoke in favor of allowing the cat to remain at the Dublin Library. She stated that it makes her feel good to be around animals. That she loves to read and she loves cats and having both together is wonderful.
10. D.F. Taylor of Dublin, Virginia spoke in favor of allowing the cat to remain at the Dublin Library. Mr. Taylor stated that all animals have feelings and a move to a new home will traumatize the cat.
11. Sheila Nelson stated that she is an active member of the Friends of the Library and a long-time library user. She asked to pose a few questions of the board: Why is this question surfacing at this time? Is there a deeper issue? Various library board members responded.

Chair John Freeman read letters from Kathy Jo Sledd and Vickie Kidd, both in favor of allowing the cat to remain at the Dublin Library. He added that Joey Rash, author of a letter in the Southwest Times, and T. Crawford, author of a letter sent to both the Southwest Times and the Roanoke Times Current section are not registered library patrons.

Mr. Freeman commented that:

- The Library Board must act as good stewards of library funds
- The Library Board must be concerned about people who do not use common sense and may be “sue crazy” and feels that the board must err on the side of caution
- The Library Board must consider the staff and their best use of time
- The Library Board must consider people who have allergies to cats
- Mr. Tom McCarthy, Pulaski County Attorney, has informed him that the Trustees cannot be sued as individuals in the event of a liability issue

- Mr. Freeman requested the inoculation schedule for the cat which shows that shots were updated on September 17, 2008
- Mr. Freeman stated his concerns about someone tripping over the cat which could lead to a lawsuit
- Mr. Freeman expressed concerns that Belle is left by herself every weekend and up to three or four days on holiday weekends

Mr. Robert Hiss, Assistant County Administrator, reported that the insurance carrier stated that it is a local decision and if the cat is permitted to stay the library can limit liability by keeping the vaccinations current, declawing the cat, removing the cat from the library when requested to do so, etc. Mr. Hiss also reported that according to the Department of Justice and citing the Americans with Disabilities Act, allergies are not a covered disability.

Mr. Vaughan questioned if it is a good use of staff time to be watching the cat, keeping it out of the water fountain, etc.

Ms. Hickman – no comment

Ms. Jackson stated her commitment to animals and expressed that it is difficult to take emotion out of an emotional situation. She cannot advocate declawing which was met by general agreement. She further commented that it is a public building, an animal is a liability, and it is an issue of safety. If the library is sued and the insurance company settles, the cost of insurance will increase. She suggested several options such as giving the cat a new home, but the cat could visit the library weekly. The fact that this has been in the newspaper and made such an issue will require the Library Board to respond to the majority but also protect the rights of the minority.

Ms. Farmer reminded everyone that the library is funded by taxes paid by all of the citizens of Pulaski County.

Mr. Slaughter stated that his perspective is different from others in that he has worked as a safety inspector. He continued that in his experience, animals should not to be allowed in the workplace

After discussion from the floor Ms. Farmer moved for a vote and Mr. Slaughter seconded the motion. Mr. Vaughan requested that the issue be studied a little longer and the motion was withdrawn by Ms. Farmer.

The motion was made to table the issue by Mr. Vaughan and seconded by Ms. Jackson. The motion was carried with five votes in favor, one against, and one abstained.

Ms. Jackson then made the motion to put together a packet of information that has been provided by the public in favor of keeping the cat and that all of the Trustees will then be asked to study this information prior to the next scheduled meeting of the Board. Sally Warburton, Director, will compile such a packet for the Trustees to peruse. Mr. Vaughan seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.

Robert Hiss advised the Board that they are not obligated to provide another public comment session. Therefore, Ms. Jackson moved that the next meeting of the Board will return to the Pulaski Library. The motion was seconded by Mr. Vaughan and the vote in favor was unanimous.

- B. FY 2010 Budget – neither the county budget nor state aid have been finalized but they look to remain about the same as FY 2009.
- C. Naming of the Virginia Kelly McNeil Room – the Friends of the Library will design and purchase a plaque and frame a short history of her service to the community to hang in the meeting room of the Pulaski Library.
- D. The Smith Endowment invested with the Community Foundation – Mr. Andy Morikawa of the Community Foundation stated in an email to Nancy Burchett that the Library's funds are maintained in a cash account (money market fund) and the principal is not at risk. The total donations to the fund equal \$93,726 and the administrative fee is 1% of the year-end fund balance. In an email dated April 5, 2009 Mr. Joe Morgan, Consultant with Springsted Incorporated and past Pulaski County Administrator, stated that "the Foundation provides a useful service for bequests such as the Smith endowment. The annual fee seems reasonable. The Foundation assumes responsibility for accounting and compliance with regulations governing such endowments." He continued by recommending that "the Library Board establish a policy for use of the endowment. My experience with such endowments is that either the principal is reserved and the earnings are used for small ongoing projects or the principal is dedicated to a one-time expense." He goes on to explain these suggestions (see attached email)
- E. SESCO Management Consultants – in a letter to Mr. John Freeman, Board Chair, dated April 8, 2009, Mr. William E. Ford, President & CEO of SESCO Management Consultants states that "we are committed to seeing through the employee

handbook/policies and procedures manual at no additional charge.” They will “process requested revisions ...until you are satisfied....We can assist in reproducing the manual at our cost as a value-added service.” (see attached letter)

- F. Other Informational Matters: Lucy Glenn, Public Services Coordinator, has been approved for membership in the Academy of Health Information Professionals at the Distinguished Member level.
- V. Business:
- A. Applications are being gathered for the position of Bookkeeper/Acquisitions Clerk at this time and Robert Hiss, Assistant County Administrator is preparing to advertise for the Youth Services Coordinator.
 - B. Sally Warburton, Director, requested permission from the Library Board to close the libraries for one morning for a staff workshop. Permission was granted with the request that it take place prior to the next board meeting so a report can be made at that time.
- VI. Adjournment: Chair Freeman entertained a motion to adjourn the Library Board of Trustees at approximately 7:30 p.m. Elinor Farmer made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mason Vaughan, Jr. and was unanimously approved by the Trustees present.

The next scheduled meeting of the Library Board is Tuesday, May 26, 2009 5:00 p.m. at the Pulaski Library.

Respectfully submitted,

John Freeman, Chair

Sally A. Warburton, Recorder

Approved: _____