

DURHAM COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2025
MAIN LIBRARY
6:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Judge Whichard called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Attendees: Ivan Francis, Tracy Jackson, Tal Matalon, Ann McLain, Carl Newman, Willis Whichard

Absent: Aquaris Anderson, Leah Josephson, kynita stringer-stanback

Friend Liaison: Monika Tillman-DeWitt

Library Staff: ACM Tammie Hall, Stephanie Fennell

County: Commissioner Michelle Burton

Guest: Candace Long

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Candace Long, resident of Durham, attended the meeting to voice her support for the library. She is active in reaching out to elected representatives in the state and offered to make calls in support of the library.

The following comment was received via email and shared by Judge Whichard:

Dear Members of the Durham County Library Board of Trustees,

Unfortunately, caregiving responsibilities will keep me from being able to attend this week's meeting and giving a public comment, but I wanted to reach out to you in response to the recent Executive Order targeting the funding of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, which provides so much support for libraries in Durham and across the country.

The Durham County Library has been my home library since I moved to Durham at the age of 8 in January 1990. For over 35 years, I have benefited from the library's reading materials, digital resources, and programming. The library gave me a place to build experience volunteering as a middle school student and library staff have assisted me both as a taxpayer and as a student pursuing my own library degree by sharing their expertise and experiences. I've attended concerts sponsored by the library and since my son was born in 2016, have brought him to the library regularly for both materials and programming.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to document in writing how important the library's work has been to me. If you have time to read this email aloud during the public comment portion of the meeting, please do so.

Thank you for your work to support the library and especially thank you to all of the wonderful Durham County Library staff.

Kimberly Hirsh, MAT, MSLS, PhD

November Minutes

The November Minutes were ratified with one amendment: the phrase “Board Development & Evaluation” has an ampersand (&) in the caption but not in the text. Subject to adding it in the text, the minutes were approved as submitted.

Library Update: Kathleen Hayes, North Regional

Ms. Hayes gave an informative presentation about the various programs at North Regional, highlighting several programs, including some funded by the Friends. In addition, Ms. Hayes distributed handouts, including a Black History Month quiz, Black History Month trading cards, and packets of seeds from the seed library.

Old Business

None at this time.

New Business

The Board reviewed a policy challenge from a student who could not renew her library card because she is attending college out-of-state and was therefore unable to check eBooks out from the library. The Board agreed that the policy pertaining to out-of-county library cards should be upheld; the student will need to renew her card in person. Ms. Fennell took action to inform the student and her mother.

Committee Updates

Advocacy: Carl Newman

The advocacy committee is still planning to hold an event later in the year.

Board Development: Ann McLain

The committee is still working on the strategic plan. Results from the Board Retreat survey were generally quite positive: respondents were very interested in continuing discussions about best practices and budgets, and interested in continuing discussions about strategic planning.

Friends Update: Monika Tillman-DeWitt

The Friends are having a 50% off sale on Tuesday, April 1.

There are three seats open on the Friends Board; they are looking for IT and Marketing expertise. The Friends are marketing in several new media, including some local magazines.

The Friends will be providing staff appreciation treats for Staff Development Day in June.

Foundation Update: Carl Newman

- There is a fundraising event to mark the Foundation’s 25th anniversary on April 10 at the Cookery. Another event will be held later in the year.
- Karen Wells, long-term Executive Director of the Foundation, has retired. Her position has been filled by Kara Nunnally.
- The Foundation has one empty space on the Board; no formal application but tell Carl if you know a good candidate.
- Library Fest is coming up in early April.

Library Update: ACM Tammie Hall

The County is low on sales tax revenue, so budgets will be tighter. Additionally, Durham County lost \$2.4M in funding from the latest Federal Budget. Travel and hiring have both been paused; if there is a pressing need it will be evaluated by the Assistant County Managers.

A consultant has completed a listening tour of libraries, using interviews and focus groups to gather feedback, and a report has been completed. ACM Hall has been giving feedback to the libraries about things that bubbled up, and County Manager Hager has already began putting actions in place. One notable change has been to put dedicated HR resources in place for the libraries.

ACM Hall also provided an update on the Library Director vacancy; the County Manager has made a decision to use a 3rd party search firm to vet candidates. That firm has not yet been selected. The Board had questions about the role of the Board in the selection process; County Commissioner Burton took action to ask County Manager Hager, and report back to the Board [Action completed].

The library rated the highest among county departments in a recent survey!

Judge Whichard adjourned the meeting at 6:56 pm.