

DURHAM COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Thursday, August 21, 2025

6:00 p.m.

Main Library

Call to Order

Chair Ann McLain called the meeting to order at 6:02.

Present: Ann McLain, Carl Newman, Tracy Jackson, Ericka Patillo, Tal Matalon, Aquaris Anderson, kynita stringer-stanbeck

Absent: Leah Josephson

Friend Liaison: none

Library Staff: Stephanie Fennell, Kathy Makens, Leah Tietje-Davis

Members of the Public: Candace Long

Public Comments

None

Ann McLain introduced new Board member Ericka Patillo; all present introduced themselves.

Approval of June Minutes

The June minutes were approved with no changes.

Location Report: Leah Tietje-Davis, Southwest Library

Leah Tietje-Davis gave a report on the Southwest location:

- Unsure of expectations from Board on what to report, so put together fact sheet for last fiscal year (FY25).
- Southwest has the highest door count and circulation numbers after Main Library.
- June was their busiest month.
- Highest circulation is in adult fiction.
- Challenges include present vacancies, including two pages and circulation manager, though they have interviewed and made an offer for the circ manager position; a heavy workload at circulation is result and other staff have been jumping in to help; have used substitutes but current system uses 11-month contracts that require them to restart entire application and interview process at end of contract, rather than ability to renew. Was able to post circ manager position by requesting exemption from county hiring freeze; process took months, even with early posting, as previous circ manager retired in February.
- There have been building issues, but the repair of the ceiling leak is almost finished.

The Board briefly discussed staff uncertainty about what to include in location support, with staff mentioning that different expectations have been communicated at different times. Ann McLain shares the Board is currently more detail oriented, and we need to work on clarifying what we would like to hear from locations reports.

Library Report: Stephanie Fennell

Based on hearing that ACM Hall is no longer the interim director, the agenda was changed to get the library update from Stephanie Fennell next.

Stephanie Fennell, Interim Library Director, shared a Library Report.

- As of two weeks ago, due to changes and movement within county manager's office, Assistant County Manager Tammie Hall is no longer the Interim Library Director, and Stephanie Fennell is now in that role.
- Summer reading program is now concluded; some locations have taken a programming break for about two weeks after that, and are now preparing for fall.
- Sunday hours will be starting September 7. Main Library only will be open 10-6 on Sundays. In order to staff Sunday hours, all staff from all locations will rotate scheduling to include roughly 4-5 Sundays per year per person.
- There followed a discussion of staff reaction to the announcement of Sunday hours, including reactions communicated via social media, and further details about the decision-making that went into deciding on the opening hours.
 - Pre-covid, DCL was open on Sundays 2-6, and by opening now from 10-6, it is the equivalent of a full day and should make it easier to switch days without staff having to make up any additional hours.
 - Not all service points at Main will be open on Sunday and there will not be programming, reducing the number of staff needed to 13.
 - Trainings will be provided for staff from other locations.
 - Library leadership is not aware of staff members who have objections coming to Leadership to discuss or presenting alternatives.
 - Each week, every full-time staff member will work five full days and have two days off, but they might not be consecutive.
- The Director search is now in the screening process, but when the next stage happens is uncertain. Assistant County Manager Joann Pierce is now the person communicating about the search.
- In response to a question, the library has spent all Federal money received this year.

Board Business

Old Business: none at this time.

New Business:

Ivan Francis is leaving the Board, so there is now another opening for a Board member. The county still has applications from the recent opening. Stephanie will communicate with the County Clerk, who will check if the people who recently applied still want to be considered.

Chairperson Ann McLain will leave committees mostly as is, but will appoint someone to replace Ivan on the Development Committee.

Committee Reports

Advocacy: kynita stringer-stanback

The committee met after the last Board meeting. They discussed security and how people are engaging with it, and how the Library could engage with the community differently about security or other issues. Ideas discussed included a post from the Director on Facebook, possibly a video; a Director's quarterly update on Facebook; a Board member interviewing the Director every quarter, increasing visibility of all; post videos on Facebook, Instagram, Reels, etc. Topics could include presence of security guards, Sunday opening hours, etc.

In discussing security, staff present said they feel incident reports have gone down and confirmed door counts have gone down, possibly 10%.

In response to a question from staff, the Advocacy Breakfast is still being postponed until a new Director is hired. Discussion over timing of breakfast, with suggestion that budget approval time would be good, and what food to provide.

Development: Tracy Jackson

The committee had shared before the meeting a slide outlining the work done towards a strategic plan for the Board so far. That work has included establishing goals, collecting data, and meeting as a group to develop a strategy for drafting the plan. The committee is presently working on a draft which should be shared with the Board ahead of the next meeting. At the next meeting, the committee would like to discuss that draft, revise, and finalize for adoption.

Policy: Tal Matalon and Stephanie Fennell

The committee is currently stalled, waiting to head back from county legal department. The county lawyers are currently reviewing many policies county-wide and some library policies are implicated in that review. They are not sure when legal may get back to them, but it may be a while yet.

Friends Update: none**Foundation Report: Carl Newman**

The Foundation recently announced grants given out to the Library for this coming fiscal year, adding up to \$177,000. The seed library is currently funded by the Foundation, but they would like the Library to take it over at some point. They haven't met since June, and the first meeting of the new FY will be in September.

Action Items:

Stephanie Fennell will contact the County Clerk about the vacancy on the Board.

Hopefully before next meeting, all will review applications.

Ann McLain will send a copy of the posting to Stephanie Fennell to post physically in branch locations.

kynita stringer-stanbeck will contact Stephanie Fennell about scheduling the first video interview with her as Interim Director.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25.