

**Meeting minutes of the Tazewell County Public Library Board of Trustees held at the Tazewell County Administration Building, 197 Main St., Tazewell, Va., March 18, 2021 at 3:30 p.m.**

**Present:** Karel Ryan, vice chair  
Michele Crigger, trustee  
Mary Sue Dean, trustee  
Connie Bailey, trustee  
Erica Hall, TCPL Director  
Cassie Ogle, TCPL Technical Services Librarian  
Chris Wilkes, TCPL Assistant Director

**Absent:** Regina Roberts, chair

**Public attendees:** Eric Young, Tazewell County Administrator

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Vice Chair Ryan called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

**2. CONSIDERATION OF APPROVING THE AGENDA FORMAT**

**ADDITIONS/DELETIONS:** Agenda accepted as submitted.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** A motion was made by Trustee Dean with a second by Trustee Crigger to accept the January meeting minutes with the edits suggested by Trustee Bailey. With all trustees present voting in favor of this and none opposed, the motion passed.

**4. DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Foundation: The feasibility study to be completed by Mr. Huber has been approved. Trustee Ryan has set up a video conference to discuss endowment options for the donated funds from the Leslie Estate.

Friends of the Library: The FOL will meet in April on the front porch at the Tazewell library. A new iPad was purchased for the Youth Services department for recording virtual programs. The FOL has approved funding for a magician to perform an outside program during the Summer Reading Program.

Programs: A new digital service, Hoopla, has been added. Digital magazine service has been moved from RB Digital to Libby. TCPL has seen a 33% increase in digital checkouts. Youth services is looking at ways to provide programming for the Summer Reading Program. Youth services celebrated Dr. Seuss's Birthday week with virtual programming and visits to Head Start by the Cat in The Hat. Other virtual programs include a virtual field trip to the animal shelter and unboxing videos. There have been several donations recently which include one donation that provided \$1500 of STEM activity items to the Bluefield Branch. TCPL has joined the Sustainable Shelves program through Baker & Taylor which allows us to send weeded books to them for credit toward purchasing new books. Books not accepted for credit are sent to be pulped by Baker & Taylor.

Staff: Darla Blackwell was hired to work at the Pocahontas Branch and has been working at Tazewell for training.

Building: The heat pump at Tazewell is being worked on by The Furnace Man to fix some issues that have been occurring. Director Hall is working on getting a new outdoor sign for Tazewell. Connie Allen is working on a grant for fixing the exterior of the Richlands branch building. A mural was painted in the hallway at Tazewell by Renee Wienecke. Two quotes have been received for replacing the carpet at Tazewell and a third is expected within the coming week.

## **5. FINANCIAL REPORT:**

- a. As of February 28, 2021, the library had spent 60.72% of the annual budget.
- b. As of February 28, 2021, the library had received \$5,202.99 in fines and fees.

## **6. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- a. Strategic Planning Committee – The strategic planning committee had a meeting on January 13, 2021 and a short finalizing meeting on February 4, 2021. The strategic plan is complete and ready for review by the Board of Trustees.

## 7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### COVID – Mask policy

- a. Director Hall requested clear guidance from the Board on how to proceed with mask-wearing in the libraries. Director Hall gave an overview of the staff's methods of abiding by and enforcing the mask mandate and stated that only one conflict had been reported since the mandate began. Vice Chair Ryan stated that policies approved by the board, consistent with executive orders, are not biased or based on personal opinions. Vice Chair Ryan read Virginia Executive Order 72 Section III – A – 1: "All individuals in the Commonwealth aged five and older must cover their mouth and nose with a face covering, as described and recommended by the CDC, if they are in an indoor setting shared by others. This requirement applies to state and local government settings, train stations, bus stations, and intrastate public transportation, including buses, rideshares, trains, taxis, and cars for hire, as well as any waiting or congregating areas associated with boarding public transportation. This requirement shall not apply in any area under federal jurisdiction or control."

A discussion followed regarding staff's obligation to abide by the mask mandate and maintain positive customer service. It was suggested during the discussion that having a policy in place supports the director and provides guidance to the staff. Director Hall discussed how enforcement of the mask mandate is similar to the enforcement of the conduct policy that TCPL already has in place. TCPL has been following the guidelines of the Infectious Disease Preparedness Plan that was developed as part of the Emergency Temporary Standard (now known as Emergency Permanent Standard) to stay in compliance with Virginia Executive Order 72. The Infectious Disease Preparedness Plan was provided to the Board of Trustees during the October

meeting, but it was determined at that time that it was not necessary for the Board of Trustees to vote to approve it as policy.

Eric Young, Tazewell County Administrator provided insight as to how other county agencies are handling enforcement of Executive Order 72 and as to when the Virginia General Assembly may amend or establish a new executive order to replace Virginia Executive Order 72.

A motion was made by Trustee Dean for the board to move to adopt as its policy to direct the director to comply with Virginia Executive Order 72, specifically Section III – A – 1, as amended from time to time. Second by Trustee Crigger. With all trustees present in favor and none opposed, motion carries.

A motion was made by Trustee Bailey, with a second by Vice Chair Ryan, to include a written statement submitted by Wendy Brady in the meeting minutes (see Appendix).

Pocahontas:

- a. Progress update: Items from the former Emma Yates Memorial Library collection have been assessed and some items were removed due to mold or other damage. The space has been cleaned thoroughly and rearranged to utilize the space effectively. Networking equipment, a new phone, and a new circulation computer have been ordered. Planning a soft opening during April with an official ribbon cutting opening during May.
- b. Name for new branch: Vice Chair Ryan suggested to call the new branch the Pocahontas Branch to maintain naming continuity with the other branches. Trustee Dean suggested the name to be hyphenated as Pocahontas – Emma Yates Branch. Trustee Crigger discussed keeping Emma Yates as part of the name due to the VDOT signs that are already installed at both the town of Pocahontas entry points. Vice Chair Ryan suggested installing a plaque on the building indicating

that it is the Home of Emma Yates in lieu of using the name for the branch so that the VDOT signs would still be accurate. Trustee Bailey was in support of using both Pocahontas and Emma Yates. Director Hall suggested that a special collection within the library be named the Emma Yates Memorial Collection. Decision on the name for the new location tabled until next meeting.

**8. NEW BUSINESS:**

- a. 2021-2026 Strategic Plan – Discussion postponed until next meeting due to time.

**9. PUBLIC COMMENT:** Public comments were made within the discussion of the COVID Mask Policy.

**10. EXECUTIVE/CLOSED MEETING – PURSUANT TO VIRGINIA CODE, SECTION 2.2-3711**

- a. Personnel matter regarding Library Director – Executive session began at 5:11 and ended at 5:32.

**11. RETURN, CERTIFICATION, REPORT OF ACTION**

- a. The Library Board of Trustees certified that only matters identified beforehand as lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the executive/closed meeting.
- b. The Chairman called for a roll call vote on the certification with the following vote recorded.

Michelle Crigger - yes  
Mary Sue Dean - yes  
Connie Bailey Kitts – yes  
Karel Ryan – yes

**12. ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Vice Chair Ryan at 5:34 pm.

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The next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 15, 2021 at 3:30 pm at the Tazewell County Administration Building.

**Respectfully submitted,**

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**Cassie Ogle, Technical Services Librarian**

**Tazewell County Public Library Board of Trustees**

**Regular Meeting**

**March 18, 2021**

**Tazewell County Administration Building**

**Tazewell, Va.**

**3:30 p.m.**

**MEETING MATERIALS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

- 1. Agenda**
- 2. DRAFT Minutes of January 21, 2021**
- 3. Director's Report**
- 4. Statement from Wendy Brady**

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**Appendix:**

**Statement submitted by Wendy Brady:**

My name is Wendy Brady, and I am a member of the Tazewell County Friends of the Library, as well as a frequent library visitor.

I do not want to get COVID. I will not go places where I feel I am at risk. I have learned which stores and institutions in Tazewell follow the state mask mandate and which do not, and I do not go into establishments where people are not wearing masks. So far, the library has been a place where I have felt safe. They have abided by health mandates and recommendations such as disinfecting areas and materials, maintaining social distancing, and urging patrons to wear masks and wash their hands. This makes me feel that the library cares for me and for all its patrons.

According to the Virginia Department of Health, new variants of COVID have appeared around the globe and been found in Virginia. At least one of these, the UK variant, spreads more quickly and is more deadly than previous variants. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the spread of all variants of COVID-19 can be significantly reduced by mask-wearing.

The CDC states, "Masks work best when everyone wears one." A mask does not only, or even primarily, protect the person who is wearing it, but those around them. Although individuals will soon be able to choose to get vaccinated to protect themselves, Virginia is currently in phase 1b of COVID vaccination, which means only around 50% of Virginians are eligible to receive a vaccination. Right now, we have to count on each other for our own protection, and we have to sacrifice comfort to protect those around us.

The library has been a place where staff and patrons having been taking care of each other by wearing masks. I hope that it remains a place where I and other patrons can feel safe.