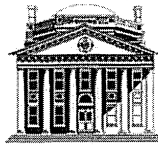


DAMON RAHN
Chairman At Large

STEPHANIE JOHNSON
County Clerk



TIMOTHY J. CALLANAN
County Manager

EDWARD L. NEWBERRY, JR.
County Attorney

Effingham County Board of Commissioners

FORREST FLOYD
District 1

ROGER BURDETTE
District 2

JAMIE DELOACH
Vice-Chairman District 3

BETH HELMLY
District 4

PHIL KIEFFER
District 5

September 25, 2025

Via Email: WHerring@HunterMaclean.com

Wade W. Herring, II, Esq.
Post Office Box 9848
Savannah, Georgia 1412

Attorney for: Erica Biezenbos

Dear Ms. Biezenbos:

A majority of individual members of the Board of Commissioners have informed me that they will hold a hearing regarding whether to remove you from your position on the Effingham County Library Board of Trustees, for cause.¹ The Board of Commissioners has the authority to remove you for cause pursuant to OCGA 20-5-42(d) and Sec. 2(b) of the Amended Intergovernmental Agreement Between Chatham County, Georgia, and Liberty County, Georgia, and Effingham County, Georgia, and Live Oak Public Libraries.

The hearing will be held on October 7, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. at the Effingham County Administrative Complex, 804 South Laurel Street, Springfield, Georgia 31329.

The allegations against you include:

- Failure to conduct Effingham County Library Board meeting in accordance with Article V of the Constitution of the Effingham County Library Board of Trustees. Specifically, allowing James Odum to attend the April 9, 2025 as a member of the Library Board which violates Article V of the Constitution. James Odum was not appointed by the Board of Commissioners of Effingham County or the City of Rincon.
- Failure to verify board membership to be in compliance with Article V of the Constitution of the Effingham County Library Board of Trustees. James Odum was not appointed by the Board of Commissioners of Effingham County or the City of Rincon.
- Failure to hold a proper meeting on July 10, 2024. According to the Minutes of the July 10, 2024 meeting, the Board Members in attendance were Erica Biezenbos, Dr. Brigid Nesmith, and James Odum. James Odum was not appointed by the Board of Commissioners of Effingham County or the City of Rincon. Therefore, there was not a quorum at that meeting.

¹ Since you are a volunteer member, you may lack a property interest sufficient to entitle you to a hearing. By providing you with a hearing, the Board of Commissioners is in no way conceding that you (or any volunteer member of any County-affiliated board or commission) possesses a constitutionally protected interest in their volunteer position.

Effingham County Board of Commissioners

- Failure to set local policies and procedures as required by Article I, Section 2 of the Bylaws of the Effingham County Library Board of Trustees. Specifically, failing to provide a policy to review and audit administrative costs associated with Live Oak Regional Library.
- Failure to review budget proposals and financial reports and to report to Board of Commissioners of Effingham County as required by Article I, Section 3 of the Bylaws of the Effingham County Library Board of Trustees.
- Failure to consult with the members of the Effingham County Library Board prior to attending the Statesboro Regional Public Library Board meeting on September 3, 2025 where you made comments in your capacity as Chairman of the Effingham County Library Board. There are no Effingham County Library Board meeting minutes or other evidence that show you were authorized to take a position and speak on behalf of the Effingham County Library Board.

Pertinent documentary evidence related to the allegations is enclosed. At the hearing, you are authorized to be represented by legal counsel of your choosing, and may respond to and present evidence on all issues involved. You are allowed to submit documentary evidence to the Clerk of the Board of Commissioners on or before 5:00 p.m. on October 6, 2025. The Board of Commissioners will not accept any documentary evidence after 5:00 p.m. on October 6, 2025. You will be allowed 30 minutes at the hearing to present your case (which may include addressing the documentary evidence of record). Please tailor your remarks to the allegations against you and avoid redundant or irrelevant remarks.

Sincerely,



Timothy Callanan

County Manager

Enclosures

CONSTITUTION OF THE EFFINGHAM COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ARTICLE I. NAME

Section 1. The name of this Library Board shall be the Effingham County Library Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

Section 1. These Constitution and Bylaws are companion documents to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Live Oak Public Libraries System (hereinafter Regional Library) and are intended to clarify local practices and the relationship of the Effingham County Library to the Regional Library. There is to be no conflict between provisions of these Constitution and Bylaws and those of the Regional Library System. If inadvertent conflict occurs, the Regional Constitution and Bylaws shall govern.

Section 2. The Effingham County Libraries shall furnish library service to the people of Effingham County as set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws of the Regional Library, and under the regulations governing public libraries as set forth by the State of Georgia. The County Libraries shall offer a full program of library service to all citizens of Effingham County to meet their informational, educational, and recreational needs.

ARTICLE III. CONSTITUENCY

Section 1. The Effingham County Libraries are fully participating members of the Live Oak Public Libraries System. Membership in the Regional Library System provides the citizens of Chatham, Effingham and Liberty counties with reciprocal borrowing privileges in all libraries in the system.

ARTICLE IV. LEGAL AUTHORITY

Section 1. The legal authority for public libraries and boards of trustees is described in Title 20, Chapter 5, Article 2 of the Official Code of Georgia, Annotated, amended March 26, 1984.

ARTICLE V. EFFINGHAM COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Section 1. The Effingham County Library Board of Trustees shall be composed of six members, appointed by the Effingham County Board of Commissioners and governmental agencies financially supporting the library on a regular basis. The members to be appointed. The names of appointees and terms of appointments shall be sent, in writing, to the - Library Executive Director.

Section 2. The term of appointment shall be three years, with starting and ending dates corresponding to the state fiscal year. It is recommended that no member serve on the Effingham County Library Board for more than two successive three-year terms of office (six years).

Section 3. Any person appointed to the Effingham County Library Board must be a resident of Effingham County. If he or she moves his or her legal residence outside the county, he or she shall be replaced on the Effingham County Library Board.

Section 4. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as appointments are made. If a vacancy occurs prior to the expiration of an Effingham County Library Board member's term, the new appointee shall complete the unexpired term. This unexpired term shall be considered the first term of the new appointee.

Section 5. Board members shall receive no compensation but may be reimbursed for any reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of library business. Membership dues or fees for individual membership of board members in state, regional, and national library associations may be paid from operating funds.

ARTICLE VI. OFFICERS

Section 1. The officers of the Effingham County Library Board of Trustees shall be a Chair, a Vice Chair, and a Secretary elected from those serving on the Board. These officers shall perform the duties prescribed by the Bylaws and by Robert's Rules of Order (Revised). The duties of Treasurer shall be performed by the Library Executive Director. The Board, at its discretion, may appoint the Effingham County Librarian to serve as the Secretary.

Section 2. The officers are to be elected at the July meeting and their terms of office shall begin immediately upon election.

ARTICLE VII. COMMITTEES

Section 1. An Executive Committee, composed of the officers of the Board, shall be entrusted to govern in the name of the Board of Trustees between meetings of the Board.

Section 2. The Executive Committee shall also serve as the Personnel Committee in matters involving library staff paid with funds provided by the local funding agencies.

ARTICLE VIII. AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

Section 1. This Constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Effingham County Library Board of Trustees by a three-fifths vote of the total membership,

provided that notice is made in writing at least thirty days prior to the meeting, and provided that a quorum is present. All amendments to the Constitution shall be filed with the Library Executive Director, who shall file amendments with the Georgia Public Library Service, Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, immediately upon adoption.

BYLAWS OF THE EFFINGHAM COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ARTICLE I. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MEMBERS

Section 1. The County Library Boards of Trustees are the organizations from which the members of the Live Oak Public Libraries Board of Trustees, the governing body of the Live Oak Public Libraries System, are drawn.

Section 2. The Effingham County Library Board of Trustees shall set local policies and practices in matters on which Regional Library Board policy is silent, and in matters delegated to County Boards by the Regional Board.

Section 3. The Effingham County Library Board of Trustees shall review Effingham County Library budgets prepared by the Library Executive Director, shall approve and adopt budget proposals, and shall present budget proposals and the libraries' fiscal needs to the supporting agencies.

Section 4. The Effingham County Library Board of Trustees shall discharge those duties delegated to it by the Regional Library Board of Trustees. All formal actions of the Effingham County Library Board of Trustees taken in discharging those duties shall be reported to the Regional Board of Trustees for approval and recording at their next meeting.

Section 5. Staff of the Effingham County Libraries shall be considered an integral part of the Regional Library staff, subject to the same policies and line of supervision as all Regional Library Staff.

ARTICLE II. DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

Section 1. The Chair shall preside at all regular or called meetings of the Effingham County Library Board. He or she shall appoint all committees and shall be an ex officio member of all committees.

Section 2. The Vice Chair shall preside in the absence of the Chair. All other duties of the Vice Chair shall be assigned by the Chair.

Section 3. The Secretary shall record the official actions of the Effingham County Library Board, keep a record of attendance at Board meetings, and have the custody of the official minutes, which shall be housed at the Regional Library administrative offices. The Secretary shall send copies of the minutes of all meetings to the Director of the Live Oak Public Libraries System. The Secretary shall notify the proper appointing authorities of vacancies which may occur on the Effingham County Library Board. The Secretary shall report changes of membership to the Regional Library Director.

Section 4. In addition to the local officers, two Regional Library Board Member shall be elected from among the members. A member may hold a local office and serve as the Regional Library Board Member. The Regional Library Board Member must not miss three consecutive meetings of the Live Oak Public Libraries Board of Trustees in order for Effingham County to remain a member of the Live Oak Public Libraries System.

Article II, Section 4/DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS: Amendment approved by Effingham County Library Board of Trustee on Jan.17, 2018

In addition to the local officers, two Regional Library Board Member shall be elected from among the members

ARTICLE III. MEETINGS

Section 1. The Effingham County Library Board shall hold four regular meetings during each fiscal year, including no less than one each calendar quarter. Meetings shall be held on the second Wednesday in the months of January, April, July, and October at 5:00p.m.. at the Springfield Library or at some other location as designated by the Chair.

Article III, Section 1/MEETINGS: Amendment approved by Effingham County Library Board of Trustee on Jan.17, 2018

Meetings shall be held on the second Wednesday in the months of January, April, July, and October at 5:00p.m. at the Springfield Library or at some other location as designated by the Chair.

Section 2. Special meetings may be called by the Chair, or, in the Chair's absence, by the Vice Chair, for the transaction of business stated in the call for the meeting. No business other than that for which the meeting was called may be discussed or conducted at a called meeting.

Section 3. Prior to each regular or called meeting the Library Executive Director, or his or her designee, shall notify each member and appropriate staff of the date, time, and place of the Effingham County Library Board meeting.

Section 4. Meetings of the Executive Committee may be called by the Chair to transact any business requiring attention between regular meetings of the Effingham County Board.

Section 5. All meetings must be open to the public and the news media, in accordance with the Official Code of Georgia, Annotated 50-14-1 et seq.

Section 6. The latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order (Revised), when not in conflict with these Constitution and Bylaws, shall govern the proceedings of the Effingham County Library Board.

Section 7. Each member of the Board shall have one vote.

Section 8. Three members of the Board of Trustees shall constitute a quorum. No official business may be conducted without a quorum. Except as stated elsewhere in these Constitution and Bylaws, a simple majority affirmative vote of the quorum present and voting shall be necessary to approve any action before the Board. Only those members present may vote.

Section 9. The Library Executive Director shall be notified in advance of all meetings of the Effingham County Library Board, its Executive Committee, or any of its committees. The Library Executive Director, or a representative appointed by the Library Executive Director shall be present at all meetings of the Effingham County Library Board, its Executive Committee, or any of its committees.

ARTICLE IV. REPORTS

Section 1. The Effingham County Library Board and/or staff shall submit all reports requested by the Regional Library System to provide the information necessary to complete reports required by state, federal, or local laws or regulations, or to manage the Regional Library System in an efficient and business-like manner.

ARTICLE V. ATTENDANCE

Section 1. A Board member shall be removed for cause or for failure to attend three, consecutive regularly- scheduled meetings.

Section 2. A letter reporting removal and specifying the cause shall be sent by the Secretary to the affected Board member and to the appointing authority responsible for his or her appointment. The appointing authority shall be asked to appoint another representative to fill that member's unexpired term, notifying the Library Executive

Director in writing of action taken.

ARTICLE VI. AMENDMENTS

Section 1. These Bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Effingham County Library Board of Trustees by a three-fifths vote of the total membership, provided that notice is made in writing at least thirty days prior to the meeting, and provided that a quorum is present. All amendments to these Bylaws shall be filed with the Library Executive Director, who shall file amendments with the Georgia Public Library Service, Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia immediately upon adoption.

Adopted: November 28, 1989

Amended: May 29, 1996; October 7, 1997; April 11, 2018; January 2024



LIVE OAK
Public Libraries

Live Oak Public Libraries participates in this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Boards of Commissioners for the three counties that Live Oak Public Libraries serves, namely Chatham, Effingham, and Liberty Counties.

The MOU agreement was approved by the three Boards of County Commissioners and the Library Regional Board of Trustees in December 2017. The document was signed by the respective Chairpersons of each County Commission and the Chair of Live Oak Public Libraries Board of Trustees. The document was updated and approved by the Regional Board of Trustees in November 20023, and accepted by the three Boards of Commissioners in December 2023.

The intent of the MOU is to coordinate the work and mission of Live Oak Public Libraries with the agreement for delivery of service with the three counties. As funding agencies, the Counties directly support the Library's mission to deliver quality library services to the citizens of our region. Addressed in the MOU are matters of funding, financial, and other reporting, the formation of an Advisory Board representing members from all four parties, and related subjects.

Live Oak Public Libraries and its staff are dedicated to serving our library patrons and maintaining the trust of the community and our funding agencies.

The following pages contain the Memorandum of Understanding, with signatures omitted.

**AMENDED INTERGOVERNMENTAL
AGREEMENT BETWEEN
CHATHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA,
AND
LIBERTY COUNTY, GEORGIA,
AND
EFFINGHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA, AND
LIVE OAK PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

WHEREAS, in 1903, the City of Savannah formed a public library for the use and enjoyment of the citizens of that city; and,

WHEREAS, 1945 Effingham County joined the City of Savannah's library system that was not yet associated with other regional library systems;

WHEREAS, in 1945, Chatham County joined the City of Savannah and Effingham County libraries to form the Chatham-Effingham Regional Library; and,

WHEREAS, in 1956 Liberty County further join this regional operation that was then so named the Chatham-Effingham-Liberty Library; and,

WHEREAS, in 1963 the Library for the Colored Citizens of Savannah came under the regional umbrella system of the Chatham-Effingham-Liberty Library; and,

WHEREAS, in November 18, 1966 there was an agreement made transferring the responsibility to maintain and support the public libraries to Chatham County from the City of Savannah in order to establish a county-wide library system;

WHEREAS, in 2002, the regional library system formally changed its name to the Live Oak Public Libraries to reflect the growth of the entire system and the character of the lands it serves; and,

WHEREAS, Live Oak Public Libraries is the regional library board that shall be known as the Board of Trustees of the Live Oak Public Libraries ("regional board");

WHEREAS, the regional board and counties acknowledge their fiduciary duty to citizens to provide top quality library services within the limits of available resources and in compliance with State laws, rules and regulations; and to ensure that the LOPL is operated in an efficient and effective manner.

Therefore, now the parties agree as follows:

Section 1. Regional Board Membership

- a. All members of the Chatham County library board shall serve as regional members of the regional library board (8 members).
- b. The Effingham County library board shall appoint two members to serve on the regional library board.
- c. The Liberty County library board shall appoint two members serve on the regional library board.
- d. The regional library board acts as the governing body or Board of Trustees for the LOPL.

Section 2. Duties of each parties' Board of Commissioners:

Each County Board of Commissioners is responsible for:

- a. Appointing members to the Board of Trustees and to the County library boards as stated in the LOPL Constitution.
- b. Reconsidering or removing a Library Board member for cause or other reason per OCGA 20-5-42. Includes removal for failure to comply with duties and responsibilities.
- c. Ensuring that the County Manager works with the Library Executive Director and provides support for daily operations.
- d. Ensuring that the County Manager participates on the Advisory Committee.
- e. Acting as a fiscal agent for the Library within its County, and County will receive and distribute any funds from its municipalities for the Library.
- f. Providing sufficient and adequate financial support to the Library, subject to annual appropriation and review of any targeted performance outcomes as determined by each Commission.
- g. Providing capital funding and other funding outside of the Library's regular operating budget. Counties reserve the right to control construction of any capital project and disburse all capital funding proceeds as determined by each Commission.
- h. Providing at least one vehicle for LOPL operations, title retained by the County, and will provide legal representation for LOPL as necessary.

Section 3. Duties of the Chatham County Board of Commissioners

Chatham County Board of Commissioners agrees to:

- a. Disburse funds in advance to the LOPL in not less than quarterly installments based on approved annual budget. Chatham County can adjust the appropriation and budget during the course of the current or next fiscal year if agreed-upon service levels are not met or LOPL fails to expend funds for stated purposes.
- b. Provide administrative services to LOPL upon approval of County Manager to include County Attorney, Human Resources, Internal Audit, Finance and Purchasing. Such

support will include title research on LOPL facilities with the intent of transferring title for facilities to the LOPL.

- c. Provide operational support to LOPL upon approval of County Manager to include Facilities Maintenance and Fleet. Facilities maintenance will be provided to assist LOPL in repairs of its facilities but not for daily maintenance functions. County Manager may invoice LOPL for operational support.
- d. Provide retirement and health benefits for individuals not eligible for State benefits - Green.
- e. Transfer title of library facilities to LOPL who will maintain insurance coverage thereon. Chatham will maintain a reversionary interest.
- f. Categorize the LOPL as a department within the Culture and Recreation function.

Section 4. Duties of the Liberty County Board of Commissioners

The Liberty County Board of Commissioners agrees to:

- a. Provide facilities for operations which are suitable to meet the needs of LOPL and patrons of the service, and maintain and insure facilities and grounds.
- b. Perform repairs to major infrastructure items when said repairs exceed \$5,000 and to keep insurance on such buildings in a sufficient amount to replace or repair the facility should it be destroyed.
- c. Assist LOPL staff with any expertise or guidance needed to perform normal maintenance activities or repairs under \$5,000.
- d. Provide maintenance/ repair of security and HVAC systems.
- e. Provide annual fire inspections and maintenance of fire extinguishers. LOPL will provide maintenance and repair for fire detection systems.
- f. Provide annual termite inspections/warranty.

Section S. Duties of the Effingham County Board of Commissioners

The Effingham County Board of Commissioners agrees to:

- a. Provide facilities approved by Effingham County for operations.
- b. Maintain and insure facilities and grounds.
- c. Provide for custodial services, janitorial supplies and routine maintenance and repairs to include major infrastructure and mechanical systems.
- d. Pay electric, telecommunications, gas and water utility costs to operate the facilities provided pursuant to this agreement.
- e. Provide lawn care services at the facilities provided pursuant to this agreement.
- f. Provide monthly pest control services.
- g. Provide annual fire inspections and maintenance of fire extinguishers.

Section 6. Duties of the LOPL

The LOPL is responsible for:

- a. Regional board and County library board will submit budget requests in detail under each County Manager's procedures through the Library Executive Director.
- b. LOPL shall provide monthly and fiscal year-to-date financial reports to the County Manager or an approved designee that show budgetary status and use of funds within each County and for its overall operations. Financial reports will provide a narrative to explain significant budget variances. LOPL shall provide information on significant capital asset purchases to impacted jurisdictions prior to expenditure (cost greater than \$100,000) to include ongoing maintenance costs and operating budget impacts.
- c. LOPL shall provide information to each County Manager or an approved designee about the calculation and allocation of administrative cost centers to each county's cost center. Activities of the LOPL Foundation shall not be commingled with the LOPL's accounts or management.
- d. LOPL shall provide audited financial statements within four months of the end of its fiscal year. Such audited statements will include a schedule showing the revenues and expenditures from and for each County within the Library system. LOPL will also submit any Single Audit report or Management Letter from the independent auditors to the County Manager of each supporting county.
- e. Upon request, LOPL will provide representatives to present financial reports and respond to inquiries of the Board of Commissioners.
- f. LOPL will disburse County funds per approved budget and will provide any requested performance measures or benchmarks to support its use of funds.
- g. LOPL will participate fully in all County CIP budgeting including Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST).
- h. LOPL will align Purchasing policies and procedures to Chatham County policies, except as modified by the Advisory Committee.
- i. Board of Trustees Chair, one other member of the Board of Trustees and the Library Executive Director will participate on the Advisory Committee.
- j. LOPL will adopt separate personnel policies that ensure equitable hiring practices and an objective employee grievance process.
- k. LOPL agrees to assume title for its facilities wherein deeds will be transferred within six months of the agreement date.
- l. LOPL will assume responsibility for property insurance coverage on its facilities and contents and will also maintain workers compensation insurance through its own policies.
- m. LOPL will maintain its facilities on a day-to-day basis and not utilize County staff for daily maintenance functions.
- n. LOPL will amend its constitution and bylaws to reflect the role of the Advisory Committee.

Section 7. Advisory Committee

An Advisory Committee shall be formed to provide operational guidance to LOPL. Actions of the Committee shall be by majority vote, and the Committee may be convened upon request of any member.

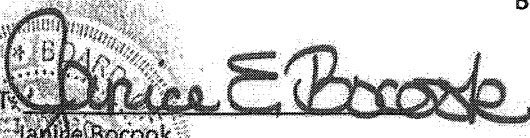
- a. Membership of the Advisory Committee shall consist of:
 - i. The County Manager or his/her designee of each supporting county
 - ii. The Chair of the Regional Board
 - iii. One other Regional Board member, as appointed by the Chair
 - iv. The Library Executive Director will participate on the Committee as an ad hoc (non-voting) member.
- b. The Advisory Committee shall review and approve LOPL Administrative Policies and Procedures, and shall forward their actions to the Board of Trustees for subsequent affirmation. Administrative policies and procedures include but are not limited to Purchasing Policies, Human Resource Policies (including General Hiring Processes and Grievance Processes), and Financial Policies.
- c. The Advisory Committee shall assist the Library Executive Director with the development of long-term strategic, capital and financial plans.
- d. The Advisory Committee shall review interim financial information as well as proposed budgets as provided by the Director. The Director shall formally notify committee members when actual expenditures are projected to exceed budgeted amounts, identify the reasons for such variance, and outline a plan of corrective action. The Director shall notify the committee members of significant staff increases/decreases impacting service levels and budgeted expenditures within each locality.
 - i. Under no circumstances shall any County be obligated to share in cost increases not formally approved by that County during the annual budget process.
- e. The Advisory Committee shall perform any other tasks assigned by the Constitution of the LOPL; the by-laws of the LOPL, or by any other law.


Section 8. Other Inquiries

- a. The County Managers may make other inquiries about the management of the LOPL outside of the Advisory Committee, and the Library Executive Director shall provide prompt responses. Such inquiries may include citizen comments and complaints as well as general operational questions.
 - i. Any County has the right to audit books and records of LOPL.
 - ii. Modifications to the agreement require unanimous support from all parties.
 - iii. Any party may provide 6 month's written notice to terminate the Agreement.

CHATHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA

BY: 
Chester A. Ellis, Chairman
Board of Commissioners

ATTEST: 
Janice Bocook
Clerk of Commission (SEAL)
DATE: 12/11/2023



EFFINGHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA

BY: Wesley M. Corbitt
Wesley Corbitt, Chairman
Board of Commissioners

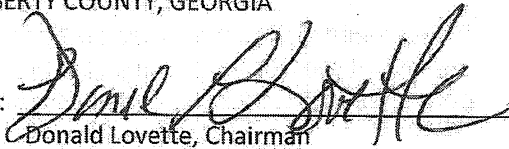
ATTEST: S. Johnson
Stephanie Johnson
County Clerk (SEAL)

DATE: 12/05/2023



LIBERTY COUNTY, GEORGIA

BY:



Donald Lovette, Chairman
Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:



Joseph W. Brown
County Administrator

DATE:

11-16-2023

MINUTES

Live Oak Public Libraries
Effingham Board of Trustees Meeting
5:00p.m.
Wednesday, April 9, 2025
Springfield Library
810 Hwy 119 S, Springfield, GA 31329

Board Members in attendance: Dr. Brigid Nesmith, Becky Long, Hank Heller, James Odum, Katie Fuller, Erica Biezenbos

Staff: Lola DeWitt, Doug Bailey, Betsy McCullar, Alissa Landram, Melissa Nicolaus, Cathy Driggers, Shelia Fears, Kelli Owens, Micheal Summers

Public: none

1. Call to Order

A meeting of the Live Oak Public Libraries Effingham County Library Board was called to order at 5:08 pm by Chair Erica Biezenbos.

2. Adoption of Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Hank Heller and seconded by Becky Long; there being no opposition, motion carried.

APPROVED

3. Adoption of Minutes

A motion to adopt the minutes of the January 8, 2025 meeting as presented was made by Hank Heller and seconded by Katie Fuller; there being no opposition, motion carried.

APPROVED

4. Public Comments

none

5. Executive Director Update (attached) - Lola DeWitt

6. Finance Update – Doug Bailey

a. Year-to-Date Financials through February 28, 2025 were presented.

- Overall revenues are on target at 98%, and overall expenditures are 93% which is close to budget.
- Effingham County Fund revenues are on target at 66.67% and expenditures are slightly under budget at 63.5%.
- The Effingham County fund balance is \$392,572 which is over the required balance amount. Effingham County is in good shape to end FY25 and begin FY26.
- Discussion included an explanation of Regional Support Fees, which are calculated as 10% of the actual Regional expenses. It was also noted that per library policy, the minimum required fund balance is 33% of the anticipated expenditures.

b. A motion to approve the finance report was made by Dr. Brigid Nesmith, and seconded by James Odum; no opposition so motion carried.

APPROVED

7. Construction and Facilities Update (in packet) – Micheal Summers

8. HR Update (in packet) – Shelia Fears

Active Shooter Training is facilitated by Chatham County Sherriff's Office, and is mandatory for all employees.

9. IT Update (in packet) – Mike Fullerton

10. Library Reports

a. Rincon Library report (attached) given by Cathy Driggers.

11. New Business

a. Board Officer Nominations

Nominations for board officers for FY26 were presented as follows:

- Chair – Erica Biezenbos, Becky Long
- Vice Chair – Hank Heller, Brigid Nesmith, Katie Fuller
- Secretary – Brigid Nesmith, Katie Fuller

Becky Long removed herself from the Board Chair nomination. The election for board officers will take place at the next meeting on July 9, 2025.

12. Open Discussion

a. Commissioners Discussion

Board members discussed recent developments with Effingham County, including concerns about the County's decision to hire a consultant, Nate Ball, without prior communication or clarification of his role. The lack of transparency surrounding the consultant's contract, particularly regarding qualifications, scope of work, and compensation, was noted as a continuing challenge.

It was shared that many of the consultant's questions relate to areas already addressed through the Library's strategic planning process or are answered in publicly available reports. Several requests were also identified as inconsistent with standard public library practices or not feasible to fulfill due to patron privacy laws and policies.

Board members expressed concern over the time and staff resources required to respond to repeated, detailed inquiries, particularly during the summer season when service demands are high. The Board also discussed ongoing efforts to maintain a collaborative relationship with Effingham County, including participating in meetings, offering library tours, attending community events, and sharing information about library services and operations. While some commissioners have shown interest and engaged in productive conversations, these efforts have not yet resulted in sustained, long-term partnership or clarity.

The Board agreed to send a letter to the Effingham County Commissioners formally requesting additional information regarding the consultant's engagement.

A motion to approve sending a letter to the Effingham County Commissioners was made by Becky Long and seconded by Jim Odum; there being no opposition, motion carried.

APPROVED

b. Community Discussion of Effingham County

Board members discussed a recent Reddit thread about Effingham County, which included concerns about the county being unwelcoming. In contrast, several comments highlighted Live Oak Public Libraries, particularly the Springfield Library, as a safe and inclusive space. The children's librarian was specifically praised for being inclusive, and others noted the overall friendliness of the staff. Board members shared that they've heard similar positive feedback and have not received any complaints about the library. Lola also shared that she praised the staff during the Town Hall for doing an outstanding job and providing excellent customer service.

13. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Jim Odum and seconded by Hank Heller; there being no opposition, motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 6:40pm.

APPROVED

Respectfully submitted by Kelli Owens on behalf of Lola DeWitt.

MINUTES
Live Oak Public Libraries
Effingham Board of Trustees Meeting
5:00p.m.
Wednesday, July 10, 2024
Springfield Library
810 Hwy 119 S, Springfield, GA 31329

Board Members in attendance: Erica Biezenbos, Dr. Brigid Nesmith, James Odum

Staff: Lola Shelton-Council, Doug Bailey, Ted Goudeau, Mike Fullerton, Betsy McCullar, Sarah Zeigler, Alissa Landram, Cathy Driggers, Melissa Nicolaus, Kelli Owens

Public: n/a

1. Call to Order

A meeting of the Live Oak Public Libraries Effingham County Library Board was called to order at 5:04 pm by Chair Erica Biezenbos.

2. Board Officer Elections

A motion to elect Erica Biezenbos as Chair, James Odum as Vice Chair, and Dr. Brigid Nesmith as Secretary was made by James Odum, and seconded by Dr. Brigid Nesmith; there being no opposition, motion carried.

APPROVED

3. Adoption of Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Dr. Brigid Nesmith and seconded by James Odum; there being no opposition, motion carried.

APPROVED

4. Adoption of Minutes

A motion to adopt the minutes of the April 10, 2024 meeting as presented was made by James Odum and seconded by Brigid Nesmith; there being no opposition, motion carried.

APPROVED

5. Public Comments

N/A

6. Executive Director Update (attached) - Lola Shelton Council

The following was also noted:

- LOPL is looking to invest in mobile libraries in the future. There is a 2-year waitlist once ordered.
- Staff has already received ACES training. As staff come onboard, there will be designated trainings depending on positions. LETRS, Language as a Missing Link, and ACES are trainings for youth services staff.

7. Finance Update – Doug Bailey

- a. Year-to-Date Financials through May 31, 2024 were presented.

- Overall revenues are 96.54%, and overall expenditures are 93.14%. We will end the year very close to budget, but still slightly under.
- Effingham County Fund revenues are on target at 91.67%, and expenditures are 87.04%. We will end the year at about 95% in total, which will be a little under budget.
- The Effingham County fund balance is \$409,133.89, which is above the required amount, and Effingham is in good financial shape to end the FY2024 and begin FY2025.

b. A motion to approve the finance report was made by James Odum, and seconded by Dr. Brigid Nesmith; no opposition so motion carried.

APPROVED

8. Facilities Update (in packet) – Ted Goudeau

9. HR Update (in packet) – Lola Shelton-Council

10. IT Update (in packet) – Mike Fullerton

11. Library Reports

- a. Rincon Library report (in packet) given by Cathy Driggers.
- b. Springfield Library report (in packet) given by Melissa Nicolaus.

12. New Business

N/A

13. Open Discussion

a. Library Licensing

Removing certification from librarianship requirements in Georgia has become a topic of discussion again. Lola Shelton Council has shared further information to all board members, including an email that can be sent to elected officials. Any advocacy from board members on behalf of LOPL is greatly appreciated.

b. Erica Biezenbos shared her appreciation for LOPL staff throughout the Summer Reading Challenge, and the excitement for the challenge that has been created within the community.

14. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by James Odum and seconded by Dr. Brigid Nesmith; there being no opposition, motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 5:54pm.

APPROVED

Respectfully submitted by Kelli Owens on behalf of Lola Shelton Council