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CHEROKEE REGIONAL LIBRARY SYSTEM
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
January 20, 2015 – 4:00 p.m.

Meeting Location: Rhyne Board Room. LaFayette-Walker County Library
305 South Duke Street, LaFayette

MINUTES

Attendees from the Cherokee Regional Library Board: Ellagene Baker, Tom Harrison, Ginnie Sams, Patti Nethery, William Back, Helen Oliver and Shannon Whitfield.

Not in attendance: Ann Russell

Attendees from the Cherokee Regional Library System: Lecia Eubanks, Misty Reyes and Chelsea Kovalevskiy

Chair, Tom Harrison called the meeting to order at 4:01pm and the agenda was modified to include the following under New Business:

- Appointment of Regional Board Officer Nominating Committee

Approval of Minutes—Helen Oliver offered a motion to accept the minutes from the October 20th Board Meeting with the following modification:

- Change the first action item to “Set new temperatures with *seasonal* weather at Dade and LaFayette Libraries.”

Ginnie Sams seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Chair Tom Harrison reminded the board that we will be expecting visitors from the Walker County Board of Education at 5pm to discuss recent changes in payment procedures. Superintendent Damon Raines and Board Chair Mike Carruth will be joining us for 20 minutes. Mr. Harrison said that we want to make sure Mr. Raines understands we would like one check, not three.

Financial Report – 2nd Qtr. FY 15 Budget (as of December 31, 2014)--

Ms. Eubanks took the board through each of the five budgets highlighting any aberrations.

Mr. Whitfield stated that the City of Chickamauga paid for and installed programmable thermostats in Chickamauga Library. Staff has been working on adjusting to the change. Mr. Whitfield reiterated that even though we don't see the power bill (City Pays) we need to keep in mind that it is real money.

Mr. Whitfield questioned the telecommunication line item for Dade County. Ms. Reyes explained that telecommunications is showing a credit because they received their e-rate reimbursement early.

Ms. Eubanks informed the board that the Dade HVAC system was evaluated and it was determined that it needs to be repaired. The Dade County Commission has taken over the maintenance and will ensure it is repaired. Mr. Harrison informed Ms. Eubanks that the board would like to see the Dade HVAC system repair report upon completion.

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Mr. Whitfield asked for clarification on the City of LaFayette Utility bill/credit. Ms. Reyes explained that in the past the city of LaFayette has paid half of the utility bill each month, up to \$24,000 for the whole year. The library only received the full \$24,000 credit in years where the total Utility cost was \$48,000 or higher. Beginning in October of 2014, the City of LaFayette agreed to credit the library the full \$24,000 before billing the library for utilities. Ms. Reyes said she expects that our \$24,000 credit will run out in May of 2015. Ms. Eubanks guessed that we will likely only go over budget about \$3000 in the electricity line item. Ms. Eubanks reminded the Board that \$6000 of revenue from the City of LaFayette has gone unassigned in preparation for this unknown overage. Mr. Whitfield reminded them that electricity will likely go up in the summer, and that December will likely not be our most expensive month in terms of power and to expect that the overage will be more than \$3000.

Mr. Whitfield asked why the gas bill in Rossville is so low? Ms. Eubanks explained that gas is turned off in the summer, and turned on for winter. It will likely balance out after winter is over. However, Carmella is turning heat down considerably when she leaves on Thursday and Rossville is now open only three days a week, so it could be that we come under our projected budgeted amount for the year.

Mr. Harrison pointed out the difference in Restricted Budgets amounts between Rossville Public Library and other branch libraries. Mr. Harrison asked if the Rossville Friends of the Library is still in existence? Ms. Eubanks stated in name only.

Mr. Whitfield motioned to accept the Financial Reports. The motion was seconded by Patti Nethery and passed unanimously.

FY 2016 Budget Requests (Dade and Walker County Boards of Education)

Mr. Harrison stated that we should make sure the Board of Education understands the maintenance of effort, and that we should continue to ask for restoration of funds.

Mr. Whitfield suggested that we should account for inflation when speaking of restoration of funds.

Guests Superintendent Raines and Board Chair Mike Carruth joined the meeting at 4:55 pm and the agenda was interrupted for the purpose of meeting with the two guests.

Mr. Harrison thanked the guests for coming and told them the Regional Board sincerely appreciated the \$10,000 increase and the increase specifically kept the Rossville Library doors open. Mr. Harrison stated the Library Board would like to understand the change in process for payment of the funding. Mr. Harrison didn't believe that the process fits within the hierarchy of our organization.

Mr. Raines stated that the Board of Educated met July 23rd and July 30th. The Board of Education sent a letter on August 18th giving rationale as to how they would like the money to be divided. The board received a letter back saying that the suggested increments were not acceptable for the library system as a whole. The School Board sent a letter in return expressing their disappointment. The School Board was interested in making a public statement. Mr. Raines stated they were not going to tell the library how to spend its money. Mr. Raines explained that a lot of politics are involved, and that we don't want to be a part of it. Mr. Harrison asked Mr. Rains what amounts the three checks were made out for. Mr. Raines replied that his Board chose Option #1 from the August 18th letter in the amounts of \$15,750, \$12,250 and \$7000. Mr. Raines stated that Susan (Wells) and Karen (Stoker) had the desire to make a statement to the public so that the public would know where the money was going. This is how the Board of

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Education would like the money to be spent. Mr. Raines emphasized the checks would all be made out to Cherokee Regional Library and the Cherokee Regional Library would still be receiving \$35,000. They wanted to make sure the public understood where the Board of Education wanted the money to go.

Mr. Harrison stated he understood, but he was afraid the action would open wounds. Mr. Harrison stated the previous Board of Education chair was less than forthright on the Judy O'Neal TV Show. Mr. Harrison would like for us to be candid with each other. Mr. Harrison stated the Regional Board would have liked to know about changes to payment procedures, rather than having had Branch Managers addressed with financial concerns. Mr. Harrison added that though the gesture honored them, they were confused and had many questions over the matter.

Mr. Raines said that the Regional Board had the opportunity to address the issues, and chose not to consider them. Ms. Nethery stated that the Regional Board did consider the request.

Ms. Eubanks explained that the Board of Education request would not have added more hours to the Rossville Library. Ms. Eubanks stated that even if the entirety of the \$10,000 addition had gone directly to Rossville, the amount would only have been able to pay the benefits of the Rossville Manager who is a 27 year veteran. Currently, that money is being supplied by the LaFayette branch and the Regional Library budgets which allows us to keep the Rossville Manager on the payroll and ready at a moment's notice to reestablish Rossville Library as a branch when funding returns.

Mr. Whitfield stated that if the Board of Education did not tell the Regional Board where to apply the \$34,000 cut how can they now tell the Regional Library Board where to put the increase? Mr. Whitfield stated that he struggles with Mr. Raines' comment that the Board of Education doesn't want to play politics. Mr. Whitfield stated that making a statement is politics. Mr. Whitfield stated the two Boards are more closely aligned than we know— we ALL want more service hours in Rossville. Mr. Whitfield explained the Regional Library Board is at a disadvantage because they are not a taxing authority and have no control over the amount of revenue they receive. Mr. Whitfield stated we need to work together to address the issue collectively, with all the funding agencies. Mr. Whitfield stated the Regional Library Board would like to see the Board of Education lead the charge with the other funders, to ask how we collectively get these libraries back open. Mr. Whitfield expressed a desire to mend fences.

Mr. Raines referred back to the year before the original cut, stating that the library sent a letter asking the Board of Education to address the percentage of contribution going to each library.

Ms. Eubanks stated that we have always honored those percentages until the cut. Ms. Eubanks added that her predecessor allowed the Board of Education to dictate those percentages, but that with the present financial circumstances keeping those percentages is no longer an option.

Mr. Carruth stated that the Board of Education did not realize cutting the Regional Library System \$34,000 invalidated their ability to have a say in where their contribution would go.

Mr. Harrison stated that it was clear the two Boards needed to spend more time together.

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Ms. Oliver stated what has happened is not profitable. The Board of Education has made an offer and we need that money. Obviously we haven't communicated well. Ms. Oliver stated she didn't think it would be right to hand out the checks tonight, without your board knowing what it means to our organization.

Mr. Harrison asked to please remember that we are professionals. Mr. Harrison made the analogy that he voted members to the Board of Education because they understand education, and that he does not expect them to understand public libraries. Mr. Harrison pointed out that the Regional Library Board knows libraries. He asked that the Board of Education let us do our job, without heavy handedness, that they do not have the same access to detail that the Regional Library Board has.

Mr. Raines stated that he has fifteen libraries in his system, but that he agreed we need to communicate better.

The guests left at 5:33pm.

Ms. Oliver stated the Regional Board has work to do. The Rossville Board is upset, but we cannot have them circumventing our authority. Mr. Harrison expressed we should have said we are the governing board. Individual library boards are advisory boards. Ms. Nethery asked what can we do about the issue between us and the Rossville Library Board? Mr. Harrison expressed that the Rossville Board doesn't seem to realize the leverage they have with the city and wonders how to get them to harness the energy they have been applying to the Board of Education to the city of Rossville.

Ms. Eubanks stated that the Board of Rossville did an excellent job getting results from the city on several building maintenance items this past fall.

Mr. Harrison said that we need charts comparing all the libraries with the financial report from their individual cities. That it would show that the City of Rossville is deficient.

Mr. Back made the comparison that Trenton and Rossville are equally destitute and that Trenton has fewer people, and yet they are able to give a significantly more money to their library. Mr. Back stated that the City of Trenton is hopeful they will be doubling their appropriation from \$2000 to \$4000 monthly very soon.

Mr. Whitfield asked whether someone from the state could come in and at the very least, offer board training. Mr. Harrison agreed and added that it could start with training and end in break-out rooms where the individual groups could address: What are the problems, issues and how do we deal with them? Mr. Back asked if it would be appropriate to give them tips? Ms. Eubanks suggested that the entire Rossville Board is new, and it is possible that they just need some history. They were not here when we received our initial cuts.

Ms. Eubanks proposed having local boards meet first, then advise their regional representatives for the Regional Board Meeting. This would give the local boards a better advisory capacity.

Ms. Oliver motioned that beginning with April meetings, we have Local Board Meetings first and the Regional Board Meeting at the end, with the emphasis that we value the fact that they are advisory boards, and we need to utilize their advice. The motion is seconded by Ms. Sams and passed unanimously.

FY 2016 Budget Requests (continued) Mr. Harrison suggested we ask to meet with Walker BOE to talk to them about FY16. Two representatives each, nothing official, almost like a subcommittee. Ms. Sams suggested that Tom and Shannon should be our two. Mr. Whitfield suggested that since Tom has been on the board for so long, and that he is getting ready to step down that perhaps Ms. Oliver would be a better choice. Mr. Harrison agreed.

Ms. Sams stated that in the past Dade County Board of Education has paid \$5 per student, but with the addition of city funds, the Dade Board needs to see how those funds will affect hours before they decide how much to ask from Dade Board of Education.

Policy Work (Meeting Room Policy)

Ms. Nethery asks if groups should have to provide liability insurance? Mr. Back said that we need to talk to our insurance company and see how much our insurance will increase if we allow after-hours events with alcohol and charge accordingly. He also asked to which libraries the policy in regards to alcohol would apply? He suggested that alcohol is fine in Walker, but would not go over well in Dade County. He asked how we make that flexibility apparent in the policy. Should we add an addendum?

Mr. Harrison stated that adding addendums to policy makes the entire policy irrelevant. Mr. Back asked if we could write different policies for each library, or perhaps allow the Managers to allow alcohol on a case by case basis. Ms. Kovalevskiy stated that this would put too much control in the hands of the Managers, and that it could be uncomfortable for those who have personal or religious morals against alcohol. Ms. Kovalevskiy added that the policy needs to apply to all four branches equally.

Ms. Eubanks stated that alcohol is only allowed for after hour events, and that Dade County does not have the current set-up to allow for after hour, non-staff regulated events so that is how the issue would be addressed.

Mr. Harrison asked what the Board would need to know to say yes to alcohol?

The board decided that they needed to:

- Find out what the insurance company recommends? What is the cost? What are the requirements?
- Talk to the mayors (building Insurance holders) of each city.

Mr. Whitfield motioned that the board accept the policy with the following changes:

- Remove “of \$25 or more” after “outstanding bill” on top of page 2
- On page 2 D, after “reservations may be on the calendar at one time “ add the words “unless events are outside of library hours”
- Remove all references to alcohol for now.
- Add refundable deposit to policy and change amount to \$100.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Oliver and passed unanimously.

Nominating Committee—Ms. Russell, Ms. Sams and Ms. Oliver were appointed to the nominating committee. Officers will be presented at the April Meeting and will take charge at the July Meeting.

Information Items

Attendees received both reports and said they will review for their local board meetings. There is no discussion.

LaFayette Construction

Ms. Eubanks stated there will be one more Construction Meeting, and that things are wrapping up nicely.

Mr. Back motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:22pm.
The motion was seconded by Ms. Sams and carried unanimously.

Submitted by Chelsea J. Kovalevskiy