

**Houston County Public Library System Constitution and Bylaws**  
Amended February 2019 ; Amended December 2022

**ARTICLE I - NAME**

The name of the system shall be the Houston County Public Library System.

**ARTICLE II - HEADQUARTERS**

The headquarters for the Houston County Public Library System shall be the Perry— Houston County Public Library, Perry, Georgia.

**ARTICLE III — PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Houston County Public Library shall be to offer a full program of library services to all citizens of the county to meet their informational, educational, and recreational needs; to acquire and purchase library materials; to circulate materials to the public from the headquarters library, and by other appropriate means of library extensions; to further develop the libraries in the cities of Warner Robins and Centerville as branches; to establish and develop other branch libraries, deposits, and bookmobile services as appropriate to the needs of the rest of the county; to build a reference collection which is adequate to provide current and reliable information of a reference nature as demanded by the needs of the communities of the area served; and to promote the use of libraries by means of instruction, library-centered programs, exhibits, and other public relations media. These library services will be furnished under the regulations governing public libraries as set forth by the State of Georgia.

**ARTICLE IV - CONSTITUENCY**

Any community or municipality within Houston County may become a part of the Houston County Public Library System, either by contract or agreement with the Board of Trustees of the Houston County Public Library System and by payment of an amount mutually agreeable to the Board of Trustees, the other contracting agencies, and the affiliate community or municipality. The contracting agency participating as of the effective date of this constitution is the Board of Commissioners of Houston County. The Houston County Library System will serve all citizens of the county through libraries located in Centerville, Perry and Warner Robins.

## **ARTICLE V - LEGAL AUTHORITY:**

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.

## **ARTICLE VI - GOVERNING BODY**

### **SECTION I**

The affairs of the Houston County Public Library System shall be entrusted to a Board of Trustees appointed by the funding agency, as specified in state law. Under the conditions set forth in the agreement establishing the Houston County Public Library System, the Board of Trustees shall be composed of 12 members. The Houston County Commissioners shall appoint twelve members from any area of Houston County. The operation of the County Library System is legally vested in the Board of Trustees under the provisions of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Article 2, Chapter 5, Title 20.

### **SECTION 2**

The term of office shall be four years with starting and ending dates corresponding to the library's fiscal year which shall start July 1. At the conclusion of each four year term, members may be reappointed by the County Board of Commissioners. If not reappointed, members shall serve until their successors are appointed.

### **SECTION 3**

The Board of Trustees members shall receive no compensation but may be reimbursed for any reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of library business, or if stipulated in the terms of any bequest or gift. Membership dues or fees for individual membership of the Board of Trustees in state, regional and national library associations may be paid from operating funds.

### **SECTION 4**

Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as appointments are made. If a vacancy occurs prior to the expiration of a trustee's term, the new appointee shall complete the unexpired term.

## **SECTION 5**

Additional Trustees shall be added from any governmental agencies which may, in the future, choose to financially support the library on a regular basis.

## **ARTICLE VII - OFFICERS**

### **SECTION 1**

The officers of the Board of Trustees shall be a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson, a Secretary and a Treasurer elected from those serving on the Board of Trustees. There shall be no limit to the number of terms officers serve in succession. These officers shall perform the duties prescribed by the Bylaws and by the parliamentary authority adopted by the Board of Trustees.

### **SECTION 2**

Nominations shall be made by either a nomination committee or nominations made from the floor. The Chairperson and/or the Library Director may serve as one of the members of the nominating committee.

### **SECTION 3**

The officers shall be elected at the March meeting to serve for one year or until their successors are elected, and their terms of office shall begin at the close of the meeting at which they are elected.

### **SECTION 4**

The Treasurer, the Library Director, and any members of the Library staff authorized to handle library funds shall be bonded for an amount commensurate with the amount of funds handled, determined by the Board of Trustees and entered in the minutes, and a copy of the bond filed with the Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS) a unit of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.

### **SECTION 5**

All federal, state and local funds used for the operation and improvement of the services and facilities of the County Library System shall be received by the Treasurer and shall be used in accordance with the budget approved by the Board.

## **ARTICLE VIII - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

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.

## **ARTICLE IX - STANDING COMMITTEES**

Standing Committees shall be the Finance Committee, the Personnel Committee, the Building and Grounds Committee, and the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws. Other special committees may be appointed by the Chairperson as needed. The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees shall be a member of all standing committees.

## **ARTICLE X - INTERLIBRARY COOPERATION**

The Houston County Public Library may enter into cooperative endeavors with other library systems for the purpose of sharing personnel, materials, and services by confederation or by merger as seen fit by the governing bodies of the library systems. Such cooperative endeavors must be within the limits of funds available to the Boards of Trustees, conducive to mutual growth and development of library services, and not in violation of state and federal laws, regulations, or other agreements, contracts, or Library Board policies.

## **ARTICLE XI - CONTRACTS**

The Houston County Library System is authorized to make and enter into such contracts or agreements, for all or any part of the County Library System as are deemed necessary and desirable under the provisions of Article 2, Chapter 5, Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. (20-5-49)

## **ARTICLE XII - AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION**

This constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Board of Trustees by a two-thirds vote of the members present, provided that notice is made in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting, and provided that a quorum is present. However, this constitution may not be amended to change the headquarters for the Houston County Public Library System from the Perry—Houston County Public Library, Perry, Georgia, without affirmative vote of at least 5/6 of the Board of Trustees. Further, this Constitution may not be amended to change this 5/6 affirmative vote requirement without the affirmative vote of at

least 5/6 of the Board of Trustees. Further, notice for either such change must be given as hereinabove set forth. All amendments to the Constitution will be filed with the Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS) a unit of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia immediately upon adoption.

# **HOUSTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM BYLAWS**

## **ARTICLE I. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARD TRUSTEES MEMBERS**

The Houston County Library System Board of Trustees is the legal government of Houston County Library System. It shall be the duty and responsibility of members of the Board of Trustees:

- (a) To employ a Director for the County Library System who meets state certification requirements and to appoint such other employees necessary upon the recommendation of the County Library System Director. Authority for the technical administration and supervision of the libraries in the system shall be vested in the County Library System Director.
- (b) To approve budgets prepared by the County Library System Director and to assume responsibility for the presentation of the library system's fiscal needs to the supporting agencies.
- (c) To attend board meetings.
- (d) To establish policies governing library programs.
- (e) To set policy for the receipt and administration of gifts, money and property.
- (f) To present financial and progress reports to governing officials and to the public.
- (g) To notify the County Library System Director in advance of all meetings of the Board or Committees.
- (h) The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees may designate 1 or more standing, special or ad hoc committee as necessary to fulfill the role of the Board of Trustees or to further the business of the Library System.

## **ARTICLE II. DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS**

### **SECTION 1**

The Chairperson shall preside at all regular or called board meetings, shall appoint all committees and shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.

## **SECTION 2**

The Vice Chairperson shall preside in the absence of the Chairperson. All other duties of the Vice Chairperson shall be assigned by the chairperson.

## **SECTION 3**

The Secretary shall ensure that the official actions of the Board of Trustees are recorded, that a record is kept of the attendance at Board meetings, and shall be the custodian of the official books, which shall be housed in the County Library headquarters. He or she shall notify the proper appointing authorities of vacancies which may occur on the County Library Board. He or she shall report changes of membership to the Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS) a unit of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. The secretary shall send copies of the annual report of activities, income, and expenditures to each funding agency.

## **SECTION 4**

The Treasurer, or such other individual as agreed to and designated by the Board of Trustees, shall have the following responsibilities: He or she shall deposit all monies received in a bank or banks approved by the Board of Trustees. He or she shall notify, in writing, any supporting agency whose appropriations are not paid promptly and in full. He or she shall pay all bills which have been approved by the Director who shall make all purchases and who shall countersign all checks. An account of all receipts and expenditures must be kept and a report made at each board meeting. The accounts shall be audited at the direction of the Board of Trustees according to State Aid Criteria and other state regulations. Official copies of all financial reports and the Treasurer's books shall be kept in the County Library headquarters at all times.

## **ARTICLE III. DUTIES OF THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR**

### **SECTION 1**

The Director of the County Library System must hold at least a Grade 5(b) Librarians Professional Graduate Certificate as defined by the State Board of the Certification of Librarians.

### **SECTION 2**

The Director shall be the administrative head of the library system under the direction and review of the Board of Trustees.

### **SECTION 3**

It is the duty and responsibility of the Director:

- (a) To employ or terminate other staff members, as necessary, in accordance with applicable laws, Library System Policies, and the availability of funds.
- (b) To attend all meetings called by the Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS) a unit of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia or send a substitute the Director may authorize.
- (c) To prepare any local, state, or federal annual budgets.
- (d) To notify the Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS) a unit of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia of any failure to comply with:
  - (1) Policies of the Board of Trustees
  - (2) Criteria for State Aid
  - (3) State and Federal rules and regulations
  - (4) All applicable local, state or federal laws
- (e) To administer the total library program, including all affiliated libraries, in accordance with policies adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Houston County Library System.
- (f) To attend all meetings of the Board of Trustees of the County Library, or any affiliated Boards, or to designate a person to attend in his place.
- (g) To perform such other tasks as may be necessary to fulfill his or her role as Director.

### **ARTICLE IV. MEETINGS**

#### **SECTION 1**

The Houston County Library Board of Trustees shall hold monthly meetings on the second Thursday of each month at 6:00 P.M. These meetings will be rotated among the three libraries in the county. The Board of Trustees shall hold a minimum of 8 meetings per year.



## **SECTION 2**

Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson or upon the written request of three Board of Trustees members, 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 Director of the County Library System shall notify each member and the public of the date, time, and place of the County Library Board meeting, in accordance with the open meeting requirements of the laws of the State of Georgia.

## **SECTION 4**

Meetings of the Executive Committee may be called by the Chairperson to transact any business requiring attention between regular meetings of the full County Library Board.

## **SECTION 5**

All meetings must be open to the public and the news media, in accordance with 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 Board of Trustees of the Houston County Library.

## **SECTION 7**

Each member of the County Library Board of Trustees shall have one vote. The use of proxies by board members is not permitted. The chairperson shall not vote except in the case of a tie vote, at which time the Chairperson shall vote to break the tie.

## **SECTION 8**

A majority of the members serving on the Board of Trustees, accounting for periodic vacancies, shall constitute a quorum. No official business may be conducted without a quorum. Except as stated in Article VIII of this document, a simple majority

affirmative vote of the quorum present and voting shall be necessary to approve any action before the Board.

## **SECTION 9**

Meetings of the HOUPL Board of Trustees are held to conduct the business of the library. Visitors may address the Board following the procedures outlined below.

Only residents of Houston County, employees, and representatives of businesses or organizations may address the Board during public participation. Visitors will be asked to state their name, address and purpose for speaking.

A speaker shall be allowed ten (10) minutes for presentation, but when an issue is going to be addressed by several speakers, this time may be limited to five (5) minutes.

Items which are excluded from the Open Meetings Act will not be discussed in public during open session. This includes matters such as real estate and personnel items.

Members of the public shall conduct themselves in a respectful manner that is not disruptive to the conduct of the Board's business. Citizens may not bring signs, flags, banners, and similar items inside the Board meeting or on Board property. Loud and boisterous conduct or comments by speakers or members of the audience are not allowed.

## **ARTICLE V. REPORTS**

The County Library System is responsible for all reports as deemed necessary by local, state and federal funding agencies. An annual report of activities, income and expenditures, and any other reports necessary to obtain funds or meet requirements of the law or the Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS) a unit of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, shall be filed with each funding agency.

## **ARTICLE VI. ATTENDANCE**

### **SECTION 1**

A Board member shall be removed for cause or for failure to attend three consecutive regularly scheduled monthly meetings, or failure to attend an aggregate of 5 regular scheduled monthly meetings, during any consecutive 12 month period. The Board may grant exceptions to this attendance requirement at its discretion, for good cause shown.

## **SECTION 2**

A letter reporting the removal of a Board of Trustees member and specifying the cause of removal shall be sent by the Secretary of the Board of Trustees, or other member as designated by the Board of Trustees, to the member and to the Chairperson of the Houston County Board of Commissioners. The Houston County Board of Commissioners shall be asked to appoint another representative to fill that member's unexpired term.

## **ARTICLE VII. PENALTIES**

Employees or agents of the Houston County Library may cause the arrest, fine, and imprisonment of persons who borrow, and fail to return, books and other property owned by the Houston County Library; deface, damage, steal, or otherwise improperly use and/or abuse library property; or commit other violations as described in the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Title 20, Chapter 5, Article 2.

## **ARTICLE VIII. AMENDMENTS**

These Bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Board of Trustees by a two-thirds vote of the members present, provided that notice is made in writing at

least two weeks prior to the meeting, and provided that a quorum is present. All amendments to these Bylaws shall be filed with the Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS) a unit of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia immediately upon adoption.

**Amended February 2019**