

**Northeast Regional Library Board of Trustee Meeting
Tuesday January 28, 2025, 10:00 AM - Cornelia-Habersham County Library**

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM by Chairman Linda Erbele.

Present: Rabun County: Jan Timms, Pat Stueck; Stephens County: Russell Walsh, Tim Martin; White County: Annette Dixon, Linda Erbele, Chairperson Northeast Georgia Regional System, Olav Buchel; Habersham County: Wanda Dunn, Secretary, Mel Vaillant; Delana Knight, Director Northeast Georgia Regional System.

Absent: Stephens County: Lynn Cox.

4. General reports and discussions:

- **Public Service Activity and Technical Services Report:** The chart shows the change in public service activity year-to-date, July 1 to December 31, 2024. New Wi-Fi data collection software has been updated to give us more accurate usage stats, but they are not comparable to FY24 stats. Due to this, FY24 wi-fi statistics are not included. Even excluding the FY2024 wi-fi statistics, the total measured usage for FY2025 has increased 4.8% over FY2024. The Technical Services Report shows a positive net change of 387 items to our FY2025 collections with a total of 3,947 additions and 3,560 deletions. Our system has processed 69 Interlibrary loans in FY2025 (loans to and from Non-PINES libraries).
- **Bookmobile:** Circulation, patron registrations and programming from the bookmobile are included in the Public Activity Report and account for 1,444 circulations, 13 new patrons, and 2,357 patrons attending programs in the second quarter. Additionally, 171 books have been added to the bookmobile collection this quarter. We will purchase new book carts for the bookmobile in the coming month that will be much more durable when being used outdoors than the current carts. The carts we're using are showing signs of wear, particularly the wheels. Jenny and the bookmobile participated in several holiday events in the second quarter including Christmas parades in each of our four counties.
- **Building fund updates –**
White: The library building fundraising committee's account balance was \$204,160.95 as of December 31, 2024.
- **Miscellaneous income** includes telecom reimbursement (VoIP, DeepFreeze, LibData), Toccoa partnership, Toccoa employee health insurance premium, materials and technology reimbursement, and Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS) broadband reimbursement.



- We are over budget for insurance expenses by \$2,245.00, however, the overage represents auto coverage for the Bookmobile in addition to building and liability insurance, Directors & Officers coverage, and workers' compensation coverage for the administrative offices. The auto insurance was budgeted for the bookmobile but paid from regular operational funds as a bundled insurance package.
- Other Expenses include costs of hosting Governor Deal in October and the region-wide staff day held in November.
- Jenny was awarded a \$2000 grant benefitting the bookmobile from the Lois Lenski Covey foundation for the purchase of children's books.
- The FY2026 budget proposal is being prepared for the Board to review and vote on in April. New budget items that I plan to add to the budget include \$11,000 for website design and accessibility compliance updates with the possibility of the regional website absorbing all local library websites. The purpose behind this is to prepare for the federal New Rules on the Accessibility of Web Content and Mobile Apps provided by State and Local Governments. Compliance is required by April 24, 2026, however, some Georgia library systems have already received official complaints from the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) alleging discrimination based on disability specifically with their website.
- In order to prepare for possible litigation on this topic or others in the future, I will increase the regional admin office's budgeted amount for legal expenses from \$4000 to \$10,000. Additionally, I will add \$12,000 for staff desktop computers in the regional administrative office. Our current computers were purchased in 2020.
- Governor Kemp's recommendation for the FY2026 state budget includes another increase in the employer's share of the State Health Benefits Plan (SHBP) for classified personnel, including library workers, from \$1,580 per member per month to \$1,885 pm/pm, effective July 1, 2025. Libraries were originally informed that we would face incremental increases to the employer's share of SHBP costs until we reached a rate of \$1,580 in FY2027. We were informed after the start of the current fiscal year that rates would increase to \$1,580 in January 2025 rather than the \$1,343 that our libraries anticipated and budgeted for. The FY26 increase to \$1,885 was not anticipated and will be a hardship on library budgets. We anticipate that the Governor will add the increased benefits costs to the state salary grant which will offer some help to the regional admin office, however, we pay 7 salaries with benefits and the state salary grant offers us five positions. So we will have to cover the increased costs for two salaries paid at the regional admin office.



- NEGRLS's Cash Balance as of December 31, 2024, is \$248,096.82 and the balance of the CD at Pinnacle Bank is \$211,194.58. The checking account at Traditions Bank for the Bookmobile had a balance of \$110,178.48 on December 31, 2024.

A. Unfinished Business = None

B. New Business

- Minutes from the October 22, 2024 regular meeting were approved (Timms, Stueck).
- Cumulative FY 2024 Report, July 1-December 31, 2024 was approved (Timms, Wash).
- Affiliate Library Quarter 2 Cash Fund Balance report was approved (Timms, Stueck).
- Proposed to revise Unattended Children Policy submitted by Helen Library Manager, Rebecca Grizzle was approved (Martin, Stueck).

E Strategic Planning

The strategic planning committee (Annette Dixon, Lynn Cox, Wanda Dunn, Pat Stueck) met on January 13, 2025 to discuss the method and timeline for creating an updated five-year strategic plan. Angela Stanley, one of the Assistant State Librarians at GPLS, has agreed to help us facilitate a community event in August 2025 and has provided resources for our committee to get started. Rather than reimagining the mission statement that came out of our last strategic plan, Angela suggested that we hone the values and goals needed to meet the mission. The mission statement says:

Northeast Georgia Regional Library System libraries strive to spark imaginations, create opportunities for life-long discovery, offer venues for sharing community experiences, and build collections, tools and teams to engage and connect our communities.

The committee will meet briefly following today's board meeting.

The Personnel Committee was appointed: Dunn, Erbele, Stueck. They will report at the next meeting.

Changes to the meeting schedule were made as follows: October 28, 2025 will be at the Rabun County Library and January 27, 2026 will be at the Helen Library.

Meeting adjourned at 11:25 AM.

A vote to approve the minutes will be taken at the April 22, 2025 Regional Library Board meeting.

