



PCLS BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

6:00 PM March 20, 2025

Hampton Memorial Library

PRESIDING: Ms. Lori Osborn, Chair – At Large

Dr. Alfred Wheeler – District 1 (Clemson)

Ms. Nancy Miller – District 2 (Six Mile/Central)

Mr. Danny Parton – District 3 (Pickens)

Ms. Alesa Pinkerton – District 4 (Liberty)

Dr. Henry Wilson – District 5 (Easley)

Ms. Susan Childers – District 6 (Dacusville)

1. Moment of Silence and Pledge of Allegiance

Meeting called to order at 6:04 pm

2. Report from the Sarlin Library Manager – Beth Buchanan

We have had 17,572 visitors so far this year. Using last FY's fourth quarter numbers as a projection, we are on track to exceed our previous visitor numbers by 2000+ people. We have issued 217 passports this FY. In January 2025, we issued a record number of passports (58). We began offering notary services in September 2024. In 6 months, we have provided notary services to 35 community members. These numbers do not include documents we notarize as a part of the passport process, which has been streamlined for patrons thanks to the addition of the service. So far this year, we have hosted 122 programs (passive and active) that have been attended by 2,578 children and 2,457 adults. This is a dramatic increase over last year's number. With Summer Reading on the horizon, I anticipate that this could be our most successful programming year yet. Last year the Sarlin library fostered several community partnerships, and this year we watched those partnerships grow. Our partnership with Foodshare, which provides fresh locally sourced produce in areas of need, at a deeply discounted price, has continued to grow. We are serving between 20-40 community members a month. We have continued to work with BRIEF (Blue Ridge Innovation and Entrepreneurship Foundation) to bring free STEM education to children ages 6-11 in Liberty. This year, we started an after-school program that provides robotics and hands-on science education every other Tuesday during the school year. We worked with Dr. Haynes from Liberty Elementary School to absorb the goal post after school program. This goal post program provides free afterschool care for children from low-income children. We are currently running 2 programs at the elementary school and helping 70-75 children. We are planning to absorb the paid after school program after fall break. BRIEF has agreed to host the STEM summer camp again this summer. Since the theme is Art, we will be adding that element and piloting a STEAM camp. The Seed Library reopened in February 2025. So far, we have given out 5,375 packs of seeds and interacted with 795 people. We do not have a final total of seeds for this year. Volunteers are still repacking. However, we currently have 9,928. This year we have been able to offer more seeds than ever before. We have continued to see a rise in meeting space usage. Our largest meeting room has been reserved 142 times and used by 2,102 people this FY. Our smaller rooms have been used 369 times by 865 people. We expect to record numbers for these spaces by the end of the FY.

3. Public Comment

Comments are limited to three (3) minutes per participant and 30 minutes total.

Mr. Wilson made a motion to allow all 19 participants to speak, Ms. Childers seconded the motion. Mr. Wilson, Ms. Childers and Ms. Osborn are in favor and Mr. Parton, Ms. Miller and Ms. Pinkerton are opposed. Motion failed. Mr. Wilson made a motion to reduce the amount of time for each participant to two minutes each and give all 19 participants the opportunity to speak. Ms. Osborn seconded the motion. Mr. Wilson explained that this will give everyone a chance to speak, and it is not good government to silence 10 people in the room. This will make the public comment portion 38 minutes long. Mr. Wilson, Ms. Childers and Ms. Osborn are in favor and Mr. Parton, Ms. Miller and Ms. Pinkerton are opposed. Motion failed. Mr. Wilson made a motion to open the floor to allow everyone to speak on whatever subject they

want as long as it pertains to the issues on the agenda. Ms. Osborn seconded the motion. Mr. Wilson stands completely opposed to the idea of telling people they can't speak in front of a government entity. Mr. Parton explained that it has been our practice to have 10 people speak with a 3-minute limit. They can call the Monday before the meeting to get on the list and if they don't make the list they will have a turn at the next meeting. Ms. Osborn voiced her opinion that the board is here to listen to the community, and we should give them the time to speak. Mr. Wilson explained that the 9 people that would be excluded tonight spent the time writing a 3-minute speech and felt it was important enough to come to us with an issue. This is part of our role as government representatives of the people and if we turn them away it would validate the argument that we want to censor people's beliefs and take information away from them. Ms. Miller stated that we have already wasted 20 minutes discussing this, let's go ahead and have everyone speak. Ms. Osborn clarified that it is not a waste of time to discuss the freedoms of people. Mr. Wilson stated that this is America, people deserve the right to speak about the issue. Ms. Miller made the motion to have all 19 participants speak. Mr. Wilson seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

1. Jennifer Whitlock - South Carolina State Legislature passed Proviso 27.1 which went into effect July 1, 2024, stating that prior to receiving state funds county libraries must certify that they do not offer any books or materials that appeal to the prurient interest of children under the age of 17 in children's youth or teen book sections of the library. The Director and the Library Board Chair signed the certification that the county library is compliant with state regulations. Falsifying documents to receive state funding is fraud in South Carolina.

2. Johnnelle Raines – If a book is not appropriate for school libraries it also shouldn't be appropriate for minors in public libraries. The state library director was clear, there are two sections of the library, children's and adult's, you're ignoring her. Read excerpt from *Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison.

3. Brigit Greenberger - Read excerpt from *Bluest Eye*. It is shocking that intelligent adults have debated this for the past two years; it has to stop. We have standards of conduct and decorum required in the boardroom which prohibit the use of language found in the books which you have been asked to remove. How is it allowed for adults in this boardroom but it's okay for kids to be exposed to this trash?

4. Cathy Travers – Many are worried that our country, counties and cities are not as safe as they once were. Human trafficking and sexual exploitation are money makers in our country and desensitization to porn is very risky. The library has available wholesome activities like fishing poles, telescopes, and steel drums; kudos to whoever in the library thought of that. My desire is for all our county's choices to make the children smile and nurture their dreams for their future.

5. Mae Anderson – Fighting to protect the freedom to read. When I was 13 my parents gave me permission to visit the young adult section of the library, my parents knew what I was reading. Every time a book is taken out of the young adult section, I lose the opportunity to find my new favorite book. The teen patrons need a voice. Many people are trying to claim that they're trying to make the library safer for teens, the only time I've ever felt unsafe at the library is in one of these meetings.

6. Deborah Hudson – Submitted a reconsideration request for *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison on March 21, 2024, and did not receive a response until December 30, 2024. I disagree with the decision to keep the book in the young adult section and made my appeal to the board on December 30, 2024. In July of 2024 proviso 27.1 was put in place by the South Carolina legislature to protect the minds of minors from inappropriate material by specifically linking state library funds to certain requirements. I would argue that keeping *The Bluest Eye* in the young adult section would be enough evidence to stop funding.

7. Brittany Fowler – In Pickens County we are lucky to have an outstanding library system because of dedicated hardworking librarians and library staff that believe in the power of knowledge and access for all. Never forget a strong thriving library is never an accident, it is a choice, community investment and the result of committed professionals who believe that knowledge, literacy, and opportunity should not be left to chance.

8. Mark Kilburn – These books contain vulgar inappropriate language and are aimed at young readers. The ALA published a paper in the library quarterly entitled “Queering the Catalog: Queer Theory and the Politics of Correction.” When people come and look for a book that they’re interested in they can find themselves in the card catalog. The budget proviso that the library must adhere to is being ignored. Why have the renovations been taking so long to get done? Where’s the money been spent on these projects so far? The Director of the library, has she ever had an employment evaluation? The Library Board needs to act like a board that represents all patrons.

9. Abi Clark – In my research I found that 40 arrest cases of abuse were perpetrated by youth pastors in South Carolina. Imagine for a moment that if because of the abusive actions of these people we decided to relegate church services, so they were only accessible to adults even when the parents disagreed. It would seem wrong to assume that every church member is somehow complicit in committing those crimes. It is equally wrong to assume that every person of the global community of LGBTQ+ that write books is actively trying to corrupt our youth. To remove those books based on a preconceived fear of stereotypes is robbing children, adults and the community.

10. Kathleen Campbell – Our society only functions when we all agree on a standard of morality. Morality is set by God. In the library, books are being accepted and promoted that are in clear violation of God’s morality and the South Carolina law. For over a year this board has been presented with facts from medical journals on how young minds cannot process or discern this material. There is no doubt that this board is breaking the law.

11. Debra Sole – I have a book I love dearly that has been scrutinized, burned, destroyed, hated, translated, smuggled, and forbidden. Why would such a controversial book survive? Because it is a book for all people. My book says children should be protected. Instead of being a society hellbent on sexualizing children, let us instead direct their hearts and their minds to the wonderful milestones they will achieve. Can we please clean up our library, our children’s section, our young adult section; move or remove the sexual content because it is the right thing to do.

12. Denise Davidson – Nobody is looking to ban books or remove books from the library. The only thing that is being asked repeatedly is to have these books removed from the juvenile young adult section and placed in the adult section. You are promoting access to pornography. Comply with the proviso that was signed by the governor. As a board member it’s your job to fix this, you are responsible for protecting the children.

13. Tom Geistler – Georgia Senate bill passes, removing legal protection to librarians. South Carolina legislator is still working on moving the proviso into a law. Children in South Carolina from 3rd to 8th grade, 50% are reading at grade level and 45% are doing math at grade level. What are we doing to solve this problem? I think the library should find some kind of program to help get kids reading. We’re spending our time arguing about pornography in books. I want to know if you’re buying this stuff or if it’s given to you by publishers to promote their stuff. I want to see an audit.

14. Ann Kaiser – I’d like to pause the conversation and elevate this to the level and the role and the responsibility of the library. There is no promotion of porn. There is no promotion of inappropriate content. Libraries were established as a precedent for democracy and for the importance of accessible community learning. One of the founding principles for libraries is access for all. Let us not deny access to heartfelt stories, that at a maximum, could save lives, and at a minimum, teach us a deeper understanding of and empathy for others. We are not to be told by an outside national organization how to run our libraries.

15. Crystal Chappell – Not present.

16. Skyler Shepard – Not present.

17. Renee Gahan – The Bluest Eye is by a Nobel Prizewinning writer. She was a black woman that wrote about what she knew and potentially things that she experienced herself. She was able to place that experience into a larger story of common issues of that time, not just for black girls but also white girls. What if there is a young girl that is continuously harassed or sexually abused by someone in her family or close family friend, and doesn't know where to go and is considering ending her life? And this book is banned or removed from the young adult section. The definition of "young adult" needs to be clarified. Let's make a definition distinction between pornography and prurient interest.

18. Samantha Brown (statement read by Brigit Greenberger) – My 12-year-old daughter checked out books from the library and took one of them to school for a book report. The teacher marked pages throughout the book with her concerns that the book was questionable age appropriate. I no longer trust what's in the library. There are books with nudity, sexual abuse in detail, rape, drugs and LGBTQ books. I am asking that you allow parents to put restrictions on their children's library cards, so they don't have access to those types of books and to put those age-inappropriate books in the adult section.

19. Craig Holcombe – Not present.

4. Approval of Minutes

a. Library Board Meeting January 16, 2025

Mr. Wilson made a motion to approve all the minutes. Mr. Wheeler seconded. Mr. Wheeler mentioned a typo in the February 18th minutes "Mr. Parton made the motion." Ms. Miller explained that she would like the January 16th Board Meeting Minutes amended under Old Business point a. to explain why she wanted to table any changes to the collection development policy for now, it's because we have not settled the teen versus young adult issue and she did not see any point in going through the collection policy until we know what we're doing about that issue. She did not just want to end the meeting; she had a reason, and she wanted that reflected in the minutes. Ms. Miller made a motion to approve the minutes with corrections and amendments. Ms. Childers seconded. Unanimously approved.

b. Special Called Meeting February 4, 2025

c. Special Called Meeting February 18, 2025

d. Budget Committee Meeting February 24, 2025

e. Renovation Committee Meeting February 24, 2025

5. Library Director's Report

a. Library Information

Events Coming up involving the library include the Liberty Waffle Festival on March 29th. The Harlan Coben author talk on March 31 (tickets are still available but going fast), and I am excited about one of our April programs with Georgia Mountain Falconry on April 12th. They will have two programs, one for children and one for adults. The Children's program is more about seeing the birds and learning about them. They will have a Eurasian Eagle Owl, a Golden Eagle, and other hawks and falcons. The adult program is geared toward those who would have an interest in Falconry and hunting with hawks and falcons. Mr. Wilson mentioned that there was a public comment earlier he wanted to address, that the library needs to participate in the education process because the education system seems to be struggling. Mr. Wilson asked the Director if the library system has programs that focus on education. The Director replied that yes, we do. She would say that almost every program focuses on some kind of education with different programs for different ages. Ms. Childers commented that the Sarlin Library branch manager pointed out the STEAM program that teamed with the Liberty Elementary School, which is an excellent example of an educational program by the library.

b. Financial Report

The Director explained that we currently have 1 FT position open for our Historical Room.

We are working to purchase two vehicles with our state aid money in this FY25 budget. When we were looking at that fund and the need for reliable vehicles this would be our best option. These vehicles would be maintained by the county but would need to stay with the Library System for the duration of their service. We currently have a 2005 Courier van with 172,376 miles that has become too small for our courier needs, and a 1999 county van for staff travel (mainly Youth Services) that has 104,315 miles. Both vans have problems and are starting to break down frequently.

We will also be replacing the carpeting for the entire Liberty Library, replacing some flooring on the first floor, the elevator, and the meeting room at the Hampton Library in Easley, replacing the meeting room flooring and chairs in the Central-Clemson Library and if the budget permits replace the flooring in the meeting room at the Village Library in

Pickens. We are also working with an arborist to prune and stabilize the old "homeplace" trees in front of the Hampton library. We hope to have most of these projects completed before Summer Reading starts in June.

Library Renovation:

Dirk (County Project Manager) emailed me today to let me know that they have selected an HVAC contractor, and it will cost 1.85 million dollars. His explanation as I understand it would be a 1:1 replacement like the system we currently have. I asked if this would also include heating and cooling the expansion spaces as large open rooms and he thought so but he is double checking. We do not have any further details or a timeline. Dirk will be managing this project. Mr. Wheeler asked the Director to clarify if the anticipation is that the HVAC will accommodate the entire library, including the unrenovated space. The Director expressed that she believes so, given the cost of the project, but Dirk is planning on double checking on that. Mr. Wilson stated that the assigned building committee for the renovation can meet with Dirk and go through the quote to calculate and determine if the capacity of the HVAC unit will work for the whole building.

c. Foundation Report

The Director reported that we took in \$195 and now we are at \$77,093.02. Ms. Pinkerton asked if we sold any T-shirts at the Library Anniversary Party. The Director reported that we sold one T-shirt that day and later we sold a Foundation Leaf.

6. Motion Period and New Business

Matters can be added to the agenda by appropriate motion, second, and majority vote of the Board.

a. Update to Library Bylaws

Mr. Wheeler proposed a change to article VI to eliminate the nominating committee, since there are only 7 board members and 4 positions. Article VI would read "Nominations for Board offices of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer shall be made at the March Meeting of the Board. Elections of these officers shall occur at the May meeting of the Board and their term will begin in July." Mr. Wheeler made a motion that we accept these changes to article VI in the Bylaws. Mr. Wilson seconded the motion. Unanimous approval. Mr. Parton made a motion to invite the South Carolina State Library Director Leesa Aiken to have another workshop to clarify the proviso. Ms. Miller seconded the motion. Mr. Wheeler stated that once we get into a discussion of the collection development policy, it will be clear that we have followed the state librarian's recommendations, so he's not sure a workshop would be necessary. Mr. Parton explains that he would like to hear the state librarian clarify the proviso. Mr. Wilson, Ms. Osborn, Mr. Parton, Ms. Childers, Ms. Miller, and Ms. Pinkerton are in favor of the workshop. Mr. Wheeler is opposed. Motion carried.

b. Library Board officer nominations

Chairman nominations – Mr. Wheeler nominated Ms. Osborn. Ms. Miller nominated Mr. Parton. Both Ms. Osborn and Mr. Parton accepted their nominations.

Vice Chair nominations – Ms. Osborn nominated Mr. Wheeler. Mr. Parton nominated Ms. Pinkerton. Both Mr. Wheeler and Ms. Pinkerton accepted their nominations.

Treasurer nominations – Ms. Osborn nominated Ms. Pinkerton. She does not accept due to being the Foundation Treasurer already. Ms. Osborn nominated Ms. Childers. Ms. Childers accepted her nomination.

Secretary nomination – Ms. Pinkerton nominated Ms. Miller. Ms. Miller accepted her nomination.

Mr. Wheeler asked why the election of officers is not synchronized with the terms of the board. Mr. Wilson made a motion to amend the bylaws to have the terms start in January. Ms. Pinkerton seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

c. Reconsideration appeal for *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison

Ms. Osborn reminded everyone that the review of materials policy the board adopted in August states in the section guiding principles that "board members voting on an appeal must have read the entire book or examined an entire resource or recuse themselves from voting."

Mr. Wheeler made the following statement about *The Bluest Eye*:

"The petitioner chose this book for reconsideration as an example of the kind of library material she describes as "pornographic" which she witnessed being addressed at County Counsel. She claims the content throughout the book is not suitable for minors, and cites numerous examples of sexually explicit material, cursing, including using the name of Jesus or Christ in a non-religious context, racial epithets, rape, prostitution, adultery, etc. She claims that exposure of children to such material strips them of their innocence. She also claims that the content violates the SC distribution of pornography law and the current Proviso 27.1. The requested action is to restrict minors from having access to this book in the library and not to allow them to check it out.

Indeed, there are numerous examples throughout the book of the kind of statements and behaviors to which the petitioner alludes. However, any objective reading would reveal that these behaviors are, in most cases, a result of the kind of conditions to which the main characters have been exposed throughout their lives. In fact, Morrison reveals accurately what life was like for many African American families, especially in the pre-Civil Rights era. Her main character (Pecola) has to deal with several demons, such as being black in a society that still had strong racial biases and being not pretty in a society that glorifies beauty, especially Shirley Temple-type white beauty, including blue eyes, which she prays for as a panacea to her physical condition. Further, she is burdened with a dysfunctional family, including an alcoholic father who rapes her. Absorbing all these circumstances, she collapses. The author, instead of simply dehumanizing racist whites, her parents, a deviant border, prostitutes, and others, provides us with their back stories so we may see how each came to their status in life. There is no attempt to “normalize” their behaviors, much less to use them to stimulate the prurient interest of the reader.

As for restricting access of youth to this book in the library, the petitioner assumes that there is consensus that no parent would want their minor children to have access to it. This is undoubtedly patently false, and thus such a restriction would be a violation of patron’s rights. There is case law that explicitly states this. Further, the board has reasonably stated in the reconsideration policy that they would not move books to areas that do not exist. As for limiting a youth from checking this book out, with the new Youth Library Card, parents will have that authority.

The petitioner’s reference to SC Law and the Proviso takes a limited view. SC Law, while it does at length define what constitutes pornographic material and makes it illegal to disseminate it, it also embeds the Federal standards of the Miller test as the guiding principles as to how to apply the characterization of pornography. The basis of many complaints we have heard rests on the leg of the test that states community standards be applied in determining whether material depicts sexual conduct in an offensive way. However, the other two legs point to taking the work as a whole in order to determine if it appeals to prurient interest and lacks serious literary merit. As the test is normally applied, a work must meet all three legs to be considered obscene. As I mentioned above, there is virtually no way that the sex as presented in this book could be interpreted as being written to elicit the prurient interests of anyone, and equally so, one cannot claim that this Nobel Laureate in Literature would have achieved such acclaim for producing a work of poor literary merit. Therefore, it is clear to me that the book is not obscene by SC Law.

The Proviso makes library funding contingent on not having obscene material or any material that appeals to prurient interests of those under 17. This book by a reasonable reading of the law is not obscene, and as I mentioned, would not appeal to the prurient nature of anyone, including those under 17. Thus, it would not be in violation of the Proviso. Finally, the petitioner feels that this book will strip their children of their innocence. Again, if she and others feel that way, then they can restrict their children’s access to it. That is their prerogative, and the library will give them the tools to do so through the youth application card. Also, they can accompany their youth to the library. But I wonder, when should young people be exposed to a well-thought out and well-presented representation of the caste systems set forth in this book and all their consequences? I would argue the process of true social awareness should start in this age group—and even then, it may be too late. I would move that a copy of this book be retained in the YA section.”

Mr. Wilson clarified that he has not read the book and will recuse himself from voting. He also mentioned that Ms. Davidson lied to us when she said that no one has asked us to ban or take books out of the library, that is not true. He stated that he has had people call him and ask to remove any books with sex and kissing in them. He does not want to participate in anything that’s going to violate people’s constitutional rights. Mr. Wilson went on to explain that moving items from one section to another doesn’t prevent anyone from having access to it. Mr. Wilson made a motion to table the reconsideration appeals for *The Bluest Eye* and *Brave Face*, so he can have a chance to read the books, they can settle the age range issue and get staffing in place to manage the reconsideration request process and the public reading committee to keep everyone in the community involved. Ms. Osborn seconded the motion. Ms. Osborn mentioned that at the last meeting it was brought to our attention that some on the board had not read the book, but voted on it and according to our rules it says you “must have read the entire book or examined an entire resource or recuse themselves from voting.” The Director explained that “an entire resource” means if it is a DVD or another form and not a book, viewing or examining that item. Mr. Wilson agreed that it is a sensible rule and that we should wait to vote until we have a system in place to make this a fair hearing, so we don’t end up with a lawsuit that costs a million dollars. Ms. Miller stated that the lawsuits are about transgender issues, it’s not about pornography in the libraries. Ms. Miller expressed that the state librarian said that she could imagine no instance where we would be sued for moving a book in the library from one section to another.

Ms. Pinkerton said that since these people have been waiting for a long time we should vote on these two books and put a halt on the others until we know if our budget is approved by the county council to staff a position that will manage these requests. Mr. Wheeler clarified that the minutes state “Discussion of the reconsideration process for challenged books, including the possibility of creating a community review committee to assist in placement decisions.” Mr. Wheeler

explained that this was just one of the possibilities, we did not vote in favor of definitely having such a committee. Mr. Wilson disagrees and feels that we voted to have a community review committee, and he will make a motion to have that amended. Mr. Wheeler stated that is not what he agreed to. The Director clarified that the board did vote on adding a position and there was discussion about part of that position being able to manage and coordinate community involvement at some point. The Director stated that the one thing we can all agree on is that the State Library Director is expecting movement on those policies, so I don't think we need to table it tonight. I think you can vote on it and then when we do get this position you can always amend it to include that position and what the position does. Mr. Wilson retracted his motion.

Ms. Osborn explained that is a sad book that discusses some very serious situations and common issues for a young black girl living in the 1940s. While the book may not be for everyone, this is not a book that should be put back on the taboo list just because you don't want to discuss these topics. She feels it would be going back in time for women's rights, and it should stay in the young adult section.

Mr. Parton stated that this book goes against the proviso. What he looks at is if the book is age appropriate and the publisher, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, says the book is intended for mature adult readers. The Director clarified that this book is very old and has been published by many different publishers that give multiple opinions about the age range. Mr. Parton admits that he found other publishers that said the age range is 14 to 19 and 15 to 19, but they intended it for mature readers and his vote is for this book to go to the adult section. The Director pointed out that this and other books like *The Scarlet Letter*, are used as reading assignments in high school curriculum so a copy of it will be placed in YA. This is something to consider when we discuss the Youth Card Application tonight, because guardians can restrict what their minors can check out and this would limit their access to materials they are reading for school.

Ms. Childers mentioned that she read that the suggested age is 17, which is within our library card YA section. She felt it was a difficult and sad story to read, and she can understand why the suggested age is 17, but she recommends that parents supervise what their children read. That is the parent's responsibility. Ms. Pinkerton explained that she disagrees that this book is appropriate for 13, 14, and 15-year-olds. She feels that parents should be given the tools they need to make decisions about what their children can check out and what types of books are in every section of the library. Mr. Parton said that we should put these books in a safe place until we get a safety net in place. The Director stated that we can educate the parents and help them to a certain degree to know what is in the collection, but we can't expect the library staff to parent their child. If a parent is highly concerned about what their child is reading, then they need to be with them when they're checking out books and when they are in the library. Mr. Wheeler made a motion to retain a copy of *The Bluest Eye* in the young adult section. Ms. Osborn seconded the motion. Ms. Osborn, Mr. Wheeler and Ms. Childers are in favor. Mr. Parton, Ms. Miller and Ms. Pinkerton are opposed. Mr. Wilson recused himself from the vote. Motion fails. *The Bluest Eye* will remain in the young adult section.

d. Reconsideration appeal for Brave Face by Shaun David Hutchinson

Mr. Wheeler made the following statement about *Brave Face*:

"The petitioner claims that this book will psychologically damage a child because it contains vulgarity, and gives multiple examples extracted from sections of the book. The petitioner further claims that because, in the author's disclaimer about content, he states that "those are just the hundred million pieces that make up a life, and I am not ashamed of them", that there is nothing wrong with his behavior, or its okay to be like him. The petitioner further states that if the petitioner had read this book in 6th grade, the petitioner would have questioned having a lack of experience with sex, drugs, alcohol and pornography or the use of self-harm to manage stress. The petitioner asserts that the library is pushing vulgarity and implies that doing so is a violation of SC laws. Her revised requested action accompanying her appeal is to move the book to the adult section.

The book is patently written for a teen audience, based on both reading level and style and the fact that it is set almost entirely in his teen years. The story does contain all the components the petitioner alludes to and that are included in the author's disclaimer. However, as far as I can tell, the author is not promoting any behavior but simply telling what happened to him. Various parts of his experience will resonate with many teens who struggle with "coming out" or the very high percentage that consider suicide these days, which is especially high for LGBTQ youth. He explicitly states those as principal reasons for writing this book by saying, "I hope some small part of my story will reach someone who needs it." The book may make other teens more aware and of how destructive struggling with homosexuality and depression can be for many of their peers and how such struggles can lead to some bad choices, including self-destructive behavior or suicide ideation and attempt. Although the author has not completely mastered depression, he can control it. Further, he has realized that the stereotypical view of homosexuals is not accurate and does not have to apply to him. In

short, to teens who are struggling with these issues, he gives a message of hope: “things will get better.” I might add that if he were not honest about his experiences, what impact would his story have and what teens would take him seriously. Teens can detect disingenuity as well or even better than most age groups.

My comments about legal issues this petitioner makes related to SC law are similar to those I made about the Bluest Eye. It is hard to imagine anyone’s prurient interests being stimulated by the mostly tortuous sex scenes in the book. And second, to claim this book has no literary value is just not consistent with the overall message of the book taken as a whole. Further, to state that the Librarians are pushing pornography by displaying this book, is insulting to their integrity and potentially dangerous for them.

For parents who are worried about psychological damage from such a book, his warning at the beginning of the book and before the chapter on suicide, not to mention the extended title “How I survived growing up, coming out and depression”, should be enough to make an individual assessment in this regard. In any case, because of the book’s notoriety, its content should not come as a surprise, so it would be easy enough to single out for restriction on an individual basis. As further safeguards, parents will have control over check-out access through the new youth application card, or they can accompany their kids to the library. I move that this book remain in the YA section of the library.”

Ms. Osborn seconded the motion. Ms. Miller stated that she has no problem with this young man being gay. What she has a problem with is when he is describing his promiscuity and he’s worried about AIDS, there is no mention of any protection. That is a bad role model for young homosexual men. This book needs to be in the adult section. She has no problem with the coming out part of the book, but the promiscuity and the unprotected sex has no place in a book for young adults or teenagers.

Ms. Osborn stated that when she read the book, she did not focus on the fact that the character was gay, but on the fact that he committed self-harm and suffered from depression. He wanted a normal loving relationship, and his parents and friends should have been more aware of the signs of his depression and self-harm. She feels there was nothing very graphic in this book and agrees with Mr. Wheeler that the book should remain in the young adult section.

Mr. Parton stated that sometimes we count on these books to be the psychologist, or therapist to our kids. We’ve had some say that they have gotten help to sort things out in their lives, but it can also work in the reverse. He thinks it should be in the adult section. Mr. Wheeler made a motion to retain a copy of *Brave Face* in the young adult section. Ms. Osborn seconded the motion. Ms. Osborn, Mr. Wheeler and Ms. Childers are in favor. Mr. Parton, Ms. Miller and Ms. Pinkerton are opposed. Mr. Wilson recused himself from the vote. Motion fails. *Brave Face* will remain in the young adult section.

e. Appoint Library Director Evaluation Committee

Ms. Osborn stated that as chairperson, she will choose the Evaluation Committee members. Ms. Pinkerton asked for clarification on what this committee will do. Mr. Wilson made a motion to have the board, as a whole, do the evaluation and eliminate the need for a committee. Mr. Parton seconded the motion. Mr. Wilson explained that this will allow the board to give the Director professional constructive feedback. Unanimously approved.

f. Library Budget FY26

The Director explained that Budget Option 1 does not include the proposed position of a full-time Adult Community Liaison Librarian, and Budget Option 2 does include the new position. Both options include two part-time positions that we have been asking for and a reassessment of a position that would give that position a \$3,000 increase. The Director mentions she was able to cut some things in the budget, but some things have gone up like travel expenses, credit card fees, fire extinguisher contract, copier contract, cleaning and sanitation and permit fees. She added money to furniture and equipment to replace furniture at all the branches. Mr. Wheeler stated that the salary increase in the budget is mandated by the county council. The library’s operation expense only increased by \$13,000 or \$14,000, that’s not even inflation, so this is a very modest proposal. Ms. Miller asked why the electricity went down \$8,000 and Cleaning and sanitation went up \$6,000. The Director explained that cleaning and sanitation materials have been going up in price for a couple of years, so we added it to make it accurate. The electricity and heating the past few years has always had extra money there, so we can conservatively take money from there without cutting it too low. Ms. Miller asked why postage went down by half. The Director explained that we used to send out postcards every summer, especially during COVID, to advertise summer reading and it also served as a way to participate in summer reading. We have stopped that because we looked at our response rate and we were not getting enough response to justify the cost, so we cut back while still leaving enough for passports. Mr. Wheeler talked about going to the chairman of the County Council in advance and discuss this budget, so we don’t run into unnecessary controversies like last time we proposed a budget and to see what their expectations are. The Director asked if we would send in both budgets or just one, and if just one, which one? Ms. Pinkerton suggested that we send the one with the Community Liaison position and it will be clear and concise about how things are moving around here. Mr. Wilson agreed that you aren’t going to get money for something if you don’t ask for it and we should send in only one budget option. Ms. Osborn made a motion to send Budget Option 2 with the full-time Adult Community Liaison Librarian position. Ms. Childers seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

7. Old Business

a. Collection Development Policy

Ms. Pinkerton wanted to know what happened to the Collection Development Policy she sent to the Director. The Director explained that she spoke with the State Library Director, and she said to send in what we have so far for the Collection Development Policy (board not voted on yet), the Reconsideration Policy (board approved) and the Youth Card Application (board not voted on yet). The State Library Director sent them back with corrections. We accepted all but a few of those corrections, one of which was leaving out the word “mature” because it is a vague term, and a parent should be the one to decide what is too mature for their child. Mr. Wheeler stated that he felt if we followed through with her edits and comments about clarification that we would be aligned with her guidance. Ms. Pinkerton stated that she made compromises in the policies and sent them to the director, but they were not included in the policy. Mr. Wilson clarified that individual board members cannot direct the Director; it must be done by the board as a group. If Ms. Pinkerton has edits, she can start making suggestions or edits right now in the presence of the board. Ms. Osborn stated that the State Library Director said that we need to get moving with our policies, because she is getting reports that we’re not acting on anything. Ms. Pinkerton stated that this policy is not far enough. Ms. Osborn clarified that the State Library Director says it is. Ms. Miller asked if we are just ignoring the proviso and the chance of losing state funding, because the proviso says that there cannot be any prurient interest of children in the library. Mr. Wilson made a motion to edit the fourth bullet in the Collection Development Policy that says, “Library material will not be excluded because of the race, nationality, sex, sexual preference or identity, or the political, social, or religious views of its author or its intended audience.” And change it to say, “Library material will not be excluded *or included solely* because of the race, nationality, sex, sexual preference or identity, or the political, social, or religious views of its author or its intended audience.” Mr. Wilson made the point that we protect people by saying that we’re not putting material in here just because people have told us to. Ms. Osborn seconded the motion. Ms. Pinkerton will submit her edits to the State Library Director and revisit her suggestions on the Collection Development Policy at a future meeting. Unanimously approved.

b. Youth (Under 18) Library Card Application

The Director explained that this youth application allows parents to decide which collections their child can check out material from or to give them full access to all collections. Parents can also decide to be notified of what their child is checking out. While in the library, children 13 years old and under will still need to have a parent, guardian or responsible caregiver with them at all times in the library. Mr. Wilson pointed out that parents should be the ultimate decider for access and information for their children. Ms. Childers made a motion to approve the Youth Library Card Application. Mr. Wheeler seconded the motion. Ms. Miller stated that the State Library Director said in November that “young adult is adult” and she could never consider a 13-year-old an adult. Why are we avoiding the discussion that we need a teen section and a young adult section in the adult section? Ms. Osborn said that we sent this application to the State Library Director, and she said it was fine, she approved of it. Mr. Wheeler stated that we are adopting the terminology that’s very common among all libraries, that the young adult section is 13 to 17 years old. The Director clarified that we could implement the new application as soon as possible, so any new applicants will start off with the new application and for 6 months publicize the changes and update any youth account that comes in. Then, after six months it will be the parent’s responsibility to update their child’s card. Mr. Parton opposed, everyone else in favor. Motion carried with 6 to 1 vote.

c. Review of Materials Policy

The Director explained that the board already approved of this policy, but we sent it to the State Library Director, and she made some editions and suggestions that I added. Mr. Wheeler made a motion to accept the Materials Policy with the State Library Director’s edits. Mr. Wilson seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned at 9:23 pm.

Next Meeting: Thursday, May 15th, 2025, 6:00pm at the Hampton Memorial Library, Easley