



PCLS BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

6:00 PM November 20, 2025

Central-Clemson 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**

2. **Branch Manager Presentation – Jennifer Crenshaw, Manager Central-Clemson**

Study Rooms - Our study rooms are used heavily. This quarter has seen a 20% increase in usage over the same quarter last year. Most of that usage comes from our college students and grade school tutors.

Exam Week - For the past 10 years, we have hosted our college students after hours for exam week. We are open until midnight on Sunday - Thursday of each exam week. The Friends of the Library provide refreshments. We average 100 students each semester.

Book Club - Central Clemson has the longest running book club in the system. Rebooted in 2010, the group has discussed over 200 books, building community and common ground. While many come and go, we have a strong core group of 25 or so. In 2026 we are launching a new off-site book club after hours at the recently renovated Central Roller Mills at Jitters Brewery on the third Friday of each month featuring Sci-Fi and Fantasy titles.

Ballerinas - We are excited to continue our partnership with Foothills Dance Conservatory. They presented a story time preview of Sleeping Beauty in February and will return November 26th to showcase The Nutcracker. We are hoping to offer new Storytime opportunities in the evenings and weekends to families who are unable to attend traditional mid-week programs.

Highlights - Self Defense class with Clemson Martial Arts.

Author events include Caroline Rash and Ron Rash.

SC Humanities partnership with Dr. Skip Eisiminger.

The Bee Project Grant, to fund a new pollinator garden partnering with local experts and Clemson HGIC to install in Spring 2026.

VITA Free Income Tax Preparation (10 hours a week) will return the beginning in January.

Christmas Parade - The Central Clemson branch staff are currently planning our entry for this year's parade. It has become a highlight of our year to participate and win in one of the categories.

Quilt Raffle – The Quilt for the Friends of the Library Raffle will be on display at Central Clemson Library next week.

3. **Public Comment**

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

1. **Mae Anderson**

She is with the Students Against Book Banning organization at Daniel High School. She spoke about wanting trust, transparency and boundaries in the community and in local government. Parents and teens should decide what is best for them to read. Teens are not included as valued members of the community.

2. Kate Byrd

She congratulated the library director, Stephanie Howard, on receiving the SCLA Intellectual Freedom Award. She spoke about the importance of intellectual freedom and having access to a wide range of ideas. She thanked Lori Osborn and Susan Childers for their service on the library board and for supporting the library's mission and upholding policy even under pressure.

3. Juliet Penna

She congratulated the library director, Stephanie Howard, on receiving the SCLA Intellectual Freedom Award. She spoke about the Director upholding the idea that the library is for everyone regardless of their identity or beliefs. She thanked Lori Osborn and Susan Childers for their service on the library board and staying constant despite the book banning conflict.

4. Brittany Fowler

She spoke about the library being one of the cornerstones of our community offering literacy support, job resources, technology access, research tools and a quiet place to find a book and read. She thanked the librarians and library staff for their professionalism and commitment to the community. She gave special recognition to the library director, Stephanie Howard, on receiving the SCLA Intellectual Freedom Award. She expressed gratitude for Lori Osborn and Susan Childers for their service on the library board and for being strong advocates for intellectual freedom.

5. Benedetta Agnoli

She spoke about her love for the library system and how libraries are a big part of her kid's lives. She noted that the book Mein Kampf is on the shelf at this library and that this book disgust her, but she does not contest the right to have this book on the shelf in this library. She is thankful for this community and plans to be more involved.

6. Faith Rugh

She spoke about Satan being everyone's enemy and that his job is to destroy us and keep us in fear, frustration, fatigue, and failure. She spoke about the polluting of children's minds with the books of porn. She spoke about choosing life by getting pornography books off the shelves and not death with Hitler hanging on a meat hook in hell.

4. Approval of Minutes

a. Library Board Meeting September 20, 2025

Ms. Osborn mentioned a typo in the minutes, to search for and replace the word "resend" with the word "rescind."

Ms. Childers made a motion to approve the September 20, 2025, board meeting minutes. Ms. Pinkerton seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

b. Library Board Special-Called Meeting September 25, 2025

Ms. Childers made a motion to approve September 25, 2025, special-called board meeting minutes. Mr. Parton seconded the motion. Motion approved. Ms. Pinkerton and Ms. Miller abstained from the vote due to not being at the special-called meeting on September 25, 2025.

c. Budget Committee Meeting November 6, 2025

Ms. Childers made a motion to approve the budget committee meeting minutes for November 6, 2025. Ms. Pinkerton seconded the motion. Motion approved. Ms. Osborn and Ms. Miller abstained from the vote due to not being at the budget committee meeting on November 6, 2025.

5. Library Director's Report

a. Recognition of Director – SCLA 2025 Intellectual Freedom Award

The Assistant Director recognized and congratulated the Library Director, Stephanie Howard, for receiving the SCLA Intellectual Freedom Award. This award honors individuals who have made meaningful contributions to protecting intellectual freedom and upholding the First Amendment in South Carolina libraries.

b. Library Information & Statistical Report

The Director reports:

System-Wide Book Weeding

The system-wide weeding project is complete. Libraries used a framework targeting items not circulated in three years and fewer than ten times, with librarians making final decisions based on collection needs and book condition. This coordinated project occurs every 5 - 10 years, separate from ongoing regular weeding.

Staff Day

Staff Day was a great success. We thank Table Rock State Park for hosting us and providing a wonderful space for team building and professional development.

SCLA Conference

Several staff attended this year's South Carolina Library Association conference and returned with valuable ideas for future programs and services.

Facilities Update

HVAC improvements continue as planned. GMC, our architects for the expansion project, expect to present preliminary plans next month.

Youth Services Promotion

Margaret Holder has been promoted from Pickens Branch Manager to Youth Services Manager. Margaret brings extensive experience and a strong commitment to youth engagement. Her leadership will support the development of system-wide youth services goals.

Community Holiday Parades

Branches are actively decorating and preparing for participation in several holiday parades throughout the county. Staff are coordinating festive, service-focused themes to highlight library programs and engage with the community during this season.

The Assistant Director explained that there was a 3% decrease in visitors in the first quarter due to HVAC being down on the second floor of the Easley branch for a month. Patrons didn't have access to the computer lab, printers and study spaces. Pokémon had to be canceled for the month. The Liberty branch was also closed for one week in September for carpet installation. Those two closures affected our visitor count.

We had a 20% increase in new library card signups. Material circulation is way down due to the delay in receiving state aid, we could not purchase physical books, eBooks, or E-audio books. We had a lot of patrons asking about where the new books are and wondering why the Libby app did have the new titles, because they are used to us having everything.

Everything else looks good. The e-magazines almost doubled, promoting Kanopy worked. Computer users are down, but maybe even more due to the closures. We did have a makeshift computer lab setup on the first floor of Easley, but most patrons preferred to wait for the second-floor lab to open back up.

Meeting room reservations and attendance are way up. We do want to note that we changed the way we calculate meeting room attendance to reflect more accurate room usage. We are now including program attendance, so we can get a true sense of how much the rooms are used both internally and externally. Just to give you a comparative number of room usage without the program attendance, the attendance would have been 9,484. Which would still be an increase in room usage.

Programs and Outreach continue to climb. We did about the same number of children's programs and there was a 20% increase in attendance. Teen programming and attendance have gone way up with a 714.18% increase. Our teen programmer does a wonderful job keeping in tune with what the teens want, and this has led to the teens bringing in more of their friends. It is at the point where we are going to need a second person to help with the large group of teens attending the programs. Outreach has gone up as well. Children's Outreach is going to daycares on average once a week for story time. Outreach is keeping busy going to high school football games, Daniel High School Homecoming parade, Clemson Welcome Back Festival, stargazing events and Haygood Mill events.

c. Financial Report

The Director reports that everything looks good so far. One thing to note is a line item that was not proposed in our budget, the data line. The data line item is for our Wi-Fi hotspots because we didn't know what was going to

happen with our state aid. County put that line in there, and since we did get state aid, we need to take that item off. County requested a letter from the state library that states that we do not have to return the state aid, the state library did provide that letter. The negative number that is there should disappear and that number will come out of state aid.

Another thing to note is that our state aid number has not been changed yet. It still says \$329,445 but it should be a little bit over \$362,000. We will request that that number is updated to reflect a more accurate number. Money did have to be moved to repairs to vehicles to replace a catalytic converter. Those two vans are aging out. We still have funds coming out of state aid for this year to purchase two new vans. One for our courier and one to assist staff with the outreach programs going to the daycares and other events.

Mr. Parton asked if we have purchased prior vehicles with state aid. The director explained that we did not, those vehicles came from the county. We did research last year and found out that we can use state aid to purchase vehicles for library if the vehicle is only used for library needs i.e. the courier services and outreach.

d. Foundation Report

The Director reported that the Foundation is doing well. The account is at \$78,744.59. The Foundation is meeting tomorrow to discuss more exciting new fundraising opportunities related to Dial-A-Story. They are working towards some of their goals and ideas for what they want to spend the money on.

6. New Business

a. Library holiday schedule and holiday hours for 2026

The Director pointed out a few changes. July 4, 2026, is on a Saturday, so we have proposed the library close on Sunday as well. Christmas 2026 is on a Friday, so we have proposed closing Saturday and Sunday that weekend of Christmas. Other than those changes, they are the same as last year.

Ms. Pinkerton made a motion to accept the holiday schedule as is. Mr. Parton seconded the motion. Unanimous approval. The Director pointed out that the holiday hours in December have been working well for the past few years. This allows us to place staffing resources where they are needed most during this time.

Ms. Childers made a motion to accept the holiday hours. Ms. Pinkerton seconded the motion. Ms. Pinkerton asked if the only difference in the hours is that the library closes at 6pm. The Assistant Director explained that all library branches would close at 6pm; normal closing hours for some branches are 7 pm or 9 pm. The Saturday hours for all branches would be 10 am to 2 pm during the holiday hours. Unanimous approval.

b. Library Board Meeting schedule for 2026

The Director explained that this is the regular board meeting schedule with the same locations as always. Ms. Pinkerton made a motion to accept the calendar and locations as written. Ms. Miller seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

c. Presentation of Preliminary FY27 Library Budget Request

The Director explained that the budget committee met and went over this very preliminary budget for FY27. We must have a preliminary budget turned into the county by November 28th so they can start the budget process. This process will involve several county meetings and budget committee meetings from now until April of 2026. The county is aware that there is still information they will need to provide us with to create an accurate budget.

The Director pointed out that this budget proposal includes some staffing adjustments. We are suggesting a reclassification of the outreach librarian position to outreach supervisor. This would make outreach its own department that would include all outreach and house calls operations. The outreach supervisor would oversee one full-time librarian and assist with supervision of the floater position as needed. Our future plans for that department would include the addition of a part-time staff member to support growth. Currently the reference supervisor oversees reference, historical collections, digital archives, adult programing, and collection management in addition to outreach responsibilities. This proposed change would improve management capacity and service quality in all areas.

The other position that we have requested for several years now is a part-time public relations media staff member. This position is critical to strengthen communication, public engagement, and promotion of library programs and services systemwide.

We are also requesting a part-time children's services staff member to meet the rising program demand, because the attendance at children's programs continues to increase. Having only one person for a program that use

to have 30 people attending but now has double that amount is getting to be too much for just one staff member. We are pulling staff from other places to help supervise. Public feedback reflects the need for additional offerings, like some are asking for story time to continue through the summer in addition to the summer reading programs and we currently do not have the staff to accommodate doing that. This will also allow us to keep up with the growth when the expansion spaces are completed, and we finally have the space for more programs. This addition is necessary to maintain quality and expand programming opportunities for families in the youth services department.

We previously discussed as a board to have funds for legal consultation, so \$5000 was added to the consulting and contractual budget to retain a lawyer for the board. The county attorney said that she doesn't know if she will be able to be active in whatever comes up for us. It would be great to have a lawyer available to review policies just to make sure that they're legal and to offer advisement on the many other things that have come up.

Adjustments were made to facilities and utilities to plan for the completion of the expansion spaces. Our future operating budget will need to reflect the larger footprint. We should know more about the timeline for the completion of the expansion spaces starting this December. We'll get to look at plans and see when those spaces are going to come online. This will give us a better idea of whether we need to include the adjustments in the FY27 budget or FY28 budget.

Under vehicles, if we can't get them this year, we are hopeful that we will be able to, if not, then we will need to propose that as a capital expense. For operations and software, the annual software costs have increased across all our essential systems, and we are proposing implementation of a new service with Communico to include a room reservation module that will assist us when we get the new spaces online. We're planning on purchasing the software My Turn, this allows patrons to reserve Library of Things items in advance for future events.

We added a 2% increase to office supplies and county suggested adding a 5% increase to things like property insurance and tort insurance.

Ms. Pinkerton asked about the possibility of getting SLED background checks for volunteers and what the cost for that would be. Ms. Osborn mentioned that SLED background checks do not cover sexual offenders. The Director explained that we can look at what the school district does and see what it will cost us. Ms. Osborn mentioned that nonprofits pay \$8 for SLED but the one for the school district costs \$25 and the volunteers pay for it.

The Director clarified that the board should vote to send this preliminary budget to county. The county understands that these numbers will change. Ms. Osborn can send a letter with this preliminary budget to county that states that these numbers are preliminary and will change once we get more information. Ms. Pinkerton expressed her concerns about sending this budget. The Director pointed out that the county's new deadline for submitting a preliminary budget is November 28th. Ms. Osborn stated that if we don't send them a budget by November 28th, then it looks like the library is not cooperating. Ms. Pinkerton requested to set up a workshop meeting with the library board and the county finance director. Ms. Childers pointed out that we have requested meetings with him in the past and it was never granted. The Director stated that she is happy to ask for a meeting to be set up with the county finance director.

Ms. Pinkerton made a motion to send this FY27 preliminary budget with a letter stating that this budget is preliminary and we would like to have a meeting with the county finance director. Ms. Childers seconded the motion. Ms. Osborn, Ms. Childers, Ms. Miller and Ms. Pinkerton are in favor. Mr. Parton is opposed. Motion carried.

d. Upcoming Special Called Meetings:

December 11: Book appeal *Like a Love Story*, By-Laws update

January 8: Nomination and Vote for Library Board officers, Committee selection

The Director pointed out that the upcoming meetings will have to be at the Central-Clemson library. Ms. Pinkerton asked what the by-laws update is. The Director explained that the by-laws need to specify that a special-called meeting will take place before the first regular scheduled meeting to nominate and vote for board officers.

7. Old Business

a. Results of Teen vs YA survey

The Director stated that we received 21 responses, 20 said yes, they understand the YA is interchangeable with teen. We had this out for 2 months in the teen areas of all the libraries. The responses are from people that use

the collection. Ms. Pinkerton asked if there was advertising that there was a survey being conducted. The Assistant Director explained that there was signage in the teen areas to take the survey. The Director stated the patrons that took the survey also used it as a wish list request for what they would like to see more of in the teen areas.

Motion Period and New Business

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

Mr. Parton asked about when the agenda needs to go out and when the by-laws changes should go out. The Director stated that it is in the by-laws that any changes to the by-laws should be sent out 2 weeks prior to the meeting and the agenda should be sent out 1 week prior to the meeting.

8. Recognition of Library Board Members Susan Childers and Lori Osborn

The Director recognized Susan Childers for her dedicated service to the Pickens County Library Board. Susan is stepping off the board after having served three terms on the library board. The impact of Susan's experience, insight, and commitment will continue to be felt across our entire library system. The Library Foundation is honoring her many years of service with a leaf that will be displayed at the Captain Kimberly Hampton Memorial Library. A Scarlet Oak tree was planted right outside the children's library area in honor of Susan, too. Thank you so much for your support, your many years of volunteer service and for how much you care about this community.

The Director recognized Lori Osborn for her extraordinary service on the library board and her work as the board chair. Lori's leadership has been steady, thoughtful, and courageous, especially in moments when the library needed strong advocates. Lori has shown unwavering support for intellectual freedom, for the library staff, and for the mission of our public library. We are presenting Lori with a copy of a frequently challenged book that she defended during library board meetings, *Brave Face by Shaun David Hutchinson*, as a symbol of her unwavering dedication to the freedom to read. The book is signed and personally inscribed to her by the author, and it is also signed by Pickens County library staff. Thank you for your service, your advocacy, your leadership, and the many ways you've lifted and strengthened this library system.

Ms. Osborn and Ms. Childers expressed their gratitude for the library staff and the library for the hard work that they do.

Mr. Parton made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Pinkerton seconded the motion. Unanimous approval. Meeting adjourned at 7:24 pm.

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

Special Called Meeting: Thursday, December 11, 2025, 6:00 pm at the Central-Clemson Library

Special Called Meeting: Thursday, January 8, 2026, 6:00 pm at the Central-Clemson Library

Regular Scheduled Meeting: Thursday, January 15, 2026, 6:00pm at the Hampton Memorial Library