

Regular meeting
Bedford Public Library System Board of Trustees
Minutes for November 5, 2024
Montvale Library, Meeting Room

Members present: Debra Bahouth, Heather Craver, Jennifer Lazowski, Olivia Madison, Pamela Palmer

Members not present: Sharene Duncombe, Tracey Reichard

Staff present: Jenny Novalis, Library Director; Julie Wyatt, Technology Librarian

Mrs. Palmer called the meeting to order at 5:00pm. She asked for a motion to approve the agenda with an additional item under new business, review the process for how the library handles patron book suggestions for purchase. Mrs. Lazowski motioned to approve the agenda, as amended and Mrs. Bahouth seconded, all agreed and the motion passed. Mrs. Palmer asked if there were any additions or changes to the minutes from the previous meeting. There were none and the minutes were approved.

No public comments

Mrs. Wyatt reported on the technology equipment project needs for the next E-rate cycle (July 2024 – June 2025), including new cabling for the new tech services area at Bedford Central and the Montvale Library. In addition, several pieces of equipment are nearing ‘end of life’ status and the wifi coverage at Montvale is also in need of better coverage. Details were discussed. The library’s E-rate consultant has the bid documents ready to be posted and vendors will have 28 days to submit bids. Once that timeframe has expired, the contracts will be presented for full Board approval, at either the January or February meeting. Mrs. Palmer asked for a motion to authorize staff to submit the E-rate project bids and then report back to the Board at the January or February meeting. Mrs. Craver motioned, Mrs. Lazowski seconded, there was no further discussion and all agreed and the motion passed.

Mrs. Novalis discussed the current County CIP requests that relate to library projects and what changes would be recommended for the 2025-2030 request cycle. The Board discussed these projects in depth and their importance for the continued needs of the library system. They approved submitting three projects – Montvale Library improvements, Forest Library expansion; Huddleston Library services, plus the current project for more parking and a turnout lane at the Forest Library. The deadline to submit the projects is Wednesday November 27 and Mrs. Novalis noted there were still a lot of steps needed for these projects to be approved. She noted the Forest Friends of the Library are holding \$50,000 for the Forest Library expansion project and would like to start a citizen petition to assist with getting support for this project in their district.

The Commonwealth of Virginia calendar includes additional holiday time for staff – 4 hours - on Wednesday November 27 and Tuesday December 31. Mrs. Novalis noted that patron traffic is usually low on these days anyways and Bedford County has these additional hours already on

their holiday calendar. There would be no impact on salary/wage budget, as the hours would only apply to those employees already scheduled to work on those days. A brief discussion ensued. Mrs. Palmer called for a motion to approve the change to this year's calendar. Mrs. Madison motioned to approve the additional holiday hours using the pay calculations discussed, Mrs. Bahouth seconded. There was no further discussion. All agreed and the motion passed.

The Long Range Plan data gathering phase is still in process. Mrs. Palmer and Mrs. Novalis finished the focus group sessions at the end of October. The survey will be released this week. It took a little longer than anticipated to compile the data so the full report on users' broad themes and subjects report should be pushed back to the January meeting. This would also give the Board time to discuss both budget and collection development policy at the December meeting if Mrs. Palmer wanted to do that.

Mrs. Palmer noted that it was good to meet people from every branch, during the focus group sessions. It was interesting how unique each location and the people are in the different areas of the County. She noted that we wanted a good cross section of people, various ages, both sexes and, we didn't really get that because of the timing of the meetings. Overall it was an interesting experience and everyone loved their librarians, they could not say enough about how great the staff is.

Mrs. Novalis updated the Board on the repairs to Bedford Central and Forest due to the HVAC leak and the women's bathroom fire. She noted that the carpet is preliminarily scheduled to be removed and new carpet installed in early January at Bedford Central. During that process there will be a lot of dust in the air, glue fumes and debris that will need to be transported in and out of the building. Mrs. Novalis asked if the Board would consider granting her authorization to close Bedford Central on the carpet project days, for health concerns and ease of access for the contractors. The Board discussed it. Mrs. Palmer noted that people will probably be unhappy but it is just not avoidable and people have to be protected. Mrs. Novalis noted that the staff could open up the Bedford Room for people to pick up their holds or for simple requests to retrieve items from the shelves or other small business services like, making copies, faxing, notary and so on. Mrs. Bahouth motioned to authorize the director to close Bedford Central during the carpet removal and installation days. Mrs. Craver seconded. There was no more discussion, all agreed and the motion passed.

The September 2024 incomes and October 2024 expenses reports were reviewed. Mrs. Novalis noted a couple expense lines that will need to be adjusted at about the half-way mark in the year. Overall though the expenses are sitting at 32.9% expended and the benchmark for this point in the year is 33% expended, so the library is right on the mark for that.

New Business:

Mrs. Palmer decided to wait to raise her questions and concerns regarding the book suggestion process/collection development policy, preferring to avoid having to start the discussion so late in the meeting and because there is a time constraint with Jen's schedule. This item was tabled until the December meeting.

Board member comments:

Mrs. Palmer wanted to re-iterate that this is a really good library system we are working with here. The focus group meetings were fun and it gave me extra time with Jenny too. During the focus group sessions Jenny was professional when that was called for and there were times she was relating to one of the people here at Montvale, she said to her, 'oh here comes trouble!' ; it was just what she was looking for, May just ate it up, the way Jenny related to her. She was easily the oldest person we had in the groups. A short discussion ensued.

Mrs. Palmer asked for a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Lazowski motioned to adjourn, Mrs. Madison seconded, all agreed and the motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 6:20pm