

Regional Board Meeting Minutes

May 12, 2025

Board President Larry Alexander called the Southeast Arkansas Regional Library Board meeting to order at 10:31 AM. Those in attendance in person and via Zoom were board members Kim Forrest, Greg Harton, Diane Parnell, Judi Fava, Ruth O'Loughlin, Vertie Staples, Larry Alexander, Mary Jo Tucker, Elgenia Ross, Vernestine Wilson, Cristy Dunnahoe, Regional Director Hunter Bennett, and SEARL Digital Coordinator Jennifer Knight. Visitors included SEARL Collection Developer/Cataloger Tabatha Jenkins.

Minutes from the February 2025 board meeting were presented for approval. With no corrections or additions, Cristy Dunnahoe made a motion to accept the minutes as read with a second by Diane Parnell. The motion passed.

Financial Report

Regional Director Hunter Bennett presented the financial report in printed form. Ruth O'Loughlin made a motion to accept the financial report, with a second by Kim Forrest. The motion passed.

Director's Report

Regional Director Hunter Bennett gave her first report as Regional Director for the first quarter of the year. The oral report included an introduction of the new Regional Collection Developer/Cataloger Tabatha Jenkins. Director Bennett informed the Board of technology/branch updates, including a new Google Drive for the Region to increase uniformity among the branches, as well as a space to share programming ideas, and the new Square card readers at the Star City, Warren, Dumas, and Lake Village branches. Other updates included the annual Summer Reading Workshop for branch managers and library assistants, as well as the introduction of new mini-workshops for branch managers between the larger spring and fall workshops.

Vernestine Wilson made a motion to accept the Director's Report, with a second by Judi Fava. The motion passed.

Committee Reports

No reports given.

Old Business

No old business.

New Business

First item under new business was the Christmas closings for the Region. The Region is closed on Christmas Day and two others to be determined by the Board. The Director recommended the Region close on

December 24 & 26. Judi Fava made the motion to accept the recommended closing dates; Diane Parnell seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

Next on the agenda was the Region's Unattended Child Policy (4.9). The Director explained that the Region has the lowest age in which children may be unattended in the library, and the policy needs to be updated to reflect the times. The Director sought permission to research and write a new policy to be presented at the August 11 meeting. Judi Fava recommended that the policy be discussed sooner, due to the Summer Reading Programs, and the Director stated that a special meeting of the board may be needed. Ruth O'Loughlin made a motion to allow the Director to research and write a new policy to be discussed at the next meeting. Mary Jo Tucker seconded the motion; the motion passed.

The final item of new business regarded the quote for tree removal on the SEARL Headquarters/Monticello Library property. Three trees are to a point in which safety for patrons and staff is an issue; Drew County received bids on the property, and they selected Beaver Tree Service. The Director reported that Drew County did not have enough money in their budget to cover the cost of the trees, so the Director sought guidance. One solution was to ask Drew County to budget the expense for next year; the other solution was for SEARL to pay from a budget line item. Cristy Dunnahoe made a motion for the Region to pay for the tree removal quoted by Beaver Tree Service from the Building Maintenance budget, with clarification on the company's definition of clean up and which stump to be removed. Vertie Staples seconded the motion; the motion passed.

Correspondence

No correspondence this quarter.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Announcements

The next Regional Board meeting will be held on Monday, August 11, 2025, at the Monticello Branch meeting room. Ruth O'Loughlin made a motion to adjourn; Greg Harton seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 10:52 AM.