



Regional Board Meeting Minutes

August 11, 2025

Board President Larry Alexander called the Southeast Arkansas Regional Library Board meeting to order at 10:30 AM. Those in attendance in person and via Zoom were board members Kim Forrest, Greg Harton, Diane Parnell, Cecilia Whittemore, Judi Fava, Ruth O'Loughlin, Larry Alexander, Mary Jo Tucker, Judge Jesse Griffin, Reathel Privett, Vickie Ross, Vernestine Wilson, Sandra Crofford, Cristy Dunnahoe, Regional Director Hunter Bennett, and SEARL Digital Projects Coordinator Jennifer Knight. Visitors included East Central Arkansas Regional Library Director JP Myrick.

Minutes from the May 2025 board meeting were presented for approval. With no corrections or additions, Mary Jo Tucker made a motion to accept the minutes as read with a second by Diane Parnell. Motion passed.

Financial Report

Regional Director Hunter Bennett presented the financial report in printed form. Sandra Crofford made a motion to accept the financial report with a second by Reathel Privett. The motion passed.

Director's Report

Regional Director Hunter Bennett gave her report on the second quarter of the year. The report began with technology and branch updates across the Region, stating the trees were removed from Monticello Branch, and the StoryWalk will be installed soon now the trees are gone. She stated she continued former director Judy Calhoun's tradition of visiting the libraries to observe their Summer Reading Programs. All branches had a successful summer. For community engagement and outreach, the Arkansas State Library awarded SEARL as one of three library systems across the state to host the new pilot program Candid, an online database where nonprofits may search for grants to help their mission. SEARL was also awarded a grant from the American Heart Association to place eight tabletop blood pressure monitors in the branches, as well as three hundred and thirty-five blood pressure cuff kits to be distributed to the community and added to the Region's collection for patron checkout.

The biggest bit of news in the Director's report involved the ongoing HVAC issues. Director Bennett reported the Region and Monticello Branch were without a working unit for two weeks, causing early closings for the safety of patrons and staff. The first reported quote from Mizell Heating and Air to complete the work was for approximately \$25,000; another HVAC company is currently getting a price list for their recommended repairs. She stated Drew County is in the process of filing an insurance claim to help with the cost of the repair. Vernestine Wilson made the motion to accept the Director's Report with a second by Kim Forrest. Motion passed.

Committee Reports

No reports given.

Old Business

The only item under old business was the proposed revision to SEARL policy 4.9: Unattended Children in the Library. Director Bennett read the proposed changes to the current policy, highlighting the fact that SEARL had one of the lowest unattended ages for the state. The new policy raises the age to all children twelve and younger must be accompanied by a responsible adult eighteen and older. Reathel Privett made the motion to accept the revised policy with a second by Cristy Dunnahoe. The motion passed.

New Business

First item under new business was the selection of the Budget/Finance Committee. The committee is comprised of the officers of the Board and members from the other counties not represented by officers. Ruth O'Loughlin, Cecilia Whittemore, and Cristy Dunnahoe volunteered. The Budget/Finance Committee is as follows: Larry Alexander (Desha), Reathel Privett (Drew), Vickie Ross (Drew), Cecilia Whittemore (Bradley), Cristy Dunnahoe (Lincoln), and Ruth O'Loughlin (Chicot). Sandra Crofford made a motion to accept the representatives of the committee with a second by Diane Parnell. Motion passed.

The last item under new business was the approval to have Judy Calhoun placed as the Director of Record while Director Bennett pursues her MLIS. She thanked Director Myrick for his help and representation the past six months as the current Director of Record. Greg Harton made the motion to accept the placement with a second from Sandra Crofford. Motion passed.

Correspondence

No correspondence this quarter.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Announcements

The next Regional Board meeting will be held on Monday, November 10, 2025, at the Monticello Branch meeting room. Ruth O'Loughlin made a motion to adjourn; Mary Jo Tucker seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 10:54 AM.