

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF  
COLLIERVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD  
Tuesday, April 25, 2023**

The Collierville Public Library Board held a regular public meeting in the Board Chambers at Town Hall at 6:00 pm on Tuesday, April 25, 2023

**Agenda Item 1: CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman, Cheryl Long called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

**Agenda Item 2: ROLL CALL**

The following members of the Library Board were present: Ms. Cheryl Long, Ms. Shobha Iyer, Peggy Turnipseed, Samuel Beyhan, Rae Bittle, and Jennifer Goodwin. Absent: Alderman Billy Patton

Staff present included Library Director, Lisa Plath.

**Agenda Item 3: APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR TUESDAY, January 24, 2023**

There were no additions or corrections to the minutes. Ms. Iyer made a motion to approve the minutes; Ms. Turnipseed seconded the motion.

Roll Call: – Ms. Long - yes, Ms. Iyer - yes, Ms. Turnipseed – yes, Mr. Beyhan - yes, Ms. Bittle – yes, Ms. Goodwin - yes. Motion approved.

**Agenda Item 4: WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS**

Ms. Plath introduced and welcomed new library board member, Jennifer Goodwin, appointed to complete the term of a board member that resigned.

Jennifer Goodwin was born and raised in Collierville, where she and her husband of 27 years were fortunate to be able to raise their four (now grown) sons. Jennifer is a lifelong patron of the library, and she instilled that into her sons as she homeschooled them for the last ten years of their school careers. Today, she is still an avid reader, which spilled over into a love of writing. She has co-authored five Bible studies with a writing team of four other women from her church. Additionally, Jennifer has written devotionals, articles, and advice columns for online magazines and The Today Show. Today, she is still helping write Bible studies and online articles, and she's dreaming of the day when her children's books will make it to publication. Jennifer recently went back to work full time at Crosswind Elementary as an educational assistant in the Reading Intervention classroom. She and her family attend church at Collierville First Baptist, where she helps lead small groups, volunteers with the women's ministry, the tech team ministry, and where she sings in choir and on the praise team. She is excited to serve her beloved town in this new and exciting opportunity.

### Agenda Item 5: Library/Staff Update

Ms. Plath gave the library update. She highlighted the Nature Walk, which we did as a partnership with the Memphis Chapter of the TN Ornithological Society. It was a very successful program on a beautiful Saturday morning with 21 participants. She wanted to highlight how many people the staff help with their devices, either in a scheduled session or organically at the desks. Between Jan & Mar there were 65 people served. The young author, Janani Prakash, had 65 attend her program.

Ms. Plath showed the map of where our cardholders live. We have around 650 people that pay our non-resident fee, 164 that are non-residents but are exempt from paying the fee. Those are TOC employees, Collierville Schools or Collierville private school employees, active military personnel and property and business owners. They live all over the region including Mississippi and Fayette County, north into Eads as well.

She mentioned that there are a lot of expired older cards in our system. The main reason for that is because they have fees or fines attached to their accounts. We recently deleted many if they just had fines attached. Those with unreturned material attached to their accounts were left in the system.

The number of registered borrowers is down. We are encouraging people to use our online renewal system. We are going to have library personnel at every school registration in August to encourage parents to sign their kids up for library cards or to take care of renewals while they are there. There will be a \$50 fee beginning in July for non-residents. This takes our fee in line with Germantown and Memphis Libraries.

She showed a slide with what the Friends are making and giving to the library. In 2020-21, the library requested \$11,200 for the Children's Story walk. In 2021-22, \$6,700 for programs and materials. In 2022-23 \$17,000 for programs and a matching grant for storytelling room flooring. For 2023-24 she requested \$40,000, the majority of which will provide replacement tables and chairs for the ST room and Halle Room.

The slide showed Friends had a Fall book sale profit of over \$12,000 and \$18,700 profit from the bookstore last year. They have total cash on hand of \$167,404. She has introduced the idea to the Friends to hire a bookstore manager who may be able to work toward customizing pricing and creating standard procedures for the volunteers who sort materials.

Partnerships have been created with the professional network on aging and Collierville Schools. The library staff is very excited to host Lisa Wingate next week. We have a full registration list for the event with 350 signed up.

Library staff did Stewards of Children Training with the Memphis Child Advocacy Center. Story walk is the *Bear and the Piano* through May. Summer Reading Kickoff is May 31. There will be a Touch a Truck event. The theme is *All Together Now*. Each week will cover a different part of the world. Youth Services is partnering with the Friends for a booth at Fair on the Square to promote

Summer Reading and for the Friends to sell books and recruit new members. Julia created two promotional videos for Summer Reading to use at the schools. We have a new Adult Services Manager, Mary Grace Berry who started in November.

### **Agenda Item 6: Focus group discussion with Susan Ewing of Ewing Marketing Partners**

Susan Ewing from Ewing Marketing Partners is conducting research, interviewing key stakeholders. She will present her findings to the BMA in June.

Susan feels the Library Board is a good group from which to gather feedback acting as a focus group since you are probably supporters and promoters.

Susan and Lisa mentioned that the community survey went out over the weekend through various channels.

She is gathering information and the goal is to present a case to the BMA to show what the community is looking for at the library. The responses are looking good so far.

Susan asked:

Overall, what are your thoughts about the library?

Rae Bittle said our library is progressive.

As an adult reader, Shobha Iyer feels the library has a very strong selection of books. It fulfills the purpose of a library.

Peggy Turnipseed feels the staff is responsive to the needs of patrons.

Shobha asked about the map and how to market to the people and find out what people want using a concentric circle concept. Susan and Lisa pointed out that the survey is for anyone, targeting mostly those living in Collierville. We are not tracking zip codes because we wanted to remain anonymous. Shobha wanted to point out the most important part of the survey was understanding the variables such as demographics and what the results look like based on those. She feels we need to focus on the needs of those who are closest to the library since they are the ones who use the library the most.

Susan stated we are trying to focus on what Collierville residents want. What we can provide to them. What are we offering today and how can it be improved. The survey is gathering demographic information.

Shobha asked for clarification on the survey and what it is analyzing. Susan explained the purpose of the survey and the various groups that have responded. She explained that we were looking for how to improve various services at the library. She further explained other sets of data that

she will be using such as the research the schools did for the future growth of the child population in Collierville. There is high growth in the lower age groups. She wants to focus on the future of the library and what needs to be changed for the next ten years.

Cheryl Long stated more access to digital would be needed as we expand and grow. She wants digital access at later hours after. Susan talked to the architects who are building the Arlington Library. They decided they don't want to call it a library because of the negative connotation. They want to call it a Learning Center. We would like to transform the perception of a library. Even our leaders don't understand what the library is used for.

Cheryl would like library services for dyslexics using her son as an example to encourage use.

#### How important is the Library to the community?

Rae Bittle says a good library signifies a growing town and a high quality town. On a personal level, the library is the first place Rae came to when she moves to a new city.

Susan stated that the library is part of the quality of life. Often, the Town responds to the Park and Rec needs first.

Peggy Turnipseed is grateful that our library is forward-thinking and has responded to patrons in ways that even she doesn't understand.

#### What do you feel the library should provide to the community?

Peggy Turnipseed understands that the Library needs to broaden its purpose.

Shobha Iyer stated the library has kept up with the times. She stated, "could we be doing more to serve all the cross-sections of the community that uses the library? Yes, we can always do more. I don't have any comparisons with other libraries. But I think our library is awesome."

Rae Bittle pointed out that the representation of the Library Board, shows that the library knows its population and demographics.

Cheryl Long requested more clarification on the purpose of the survey.

Susan stated she is trying to show the value and how important the library is to the community and to build a case to expand. Generally, understanding perspective. For the resources we have and the building we have, the library has done a great job. We are already at the minimal amount of space, we want these things to build a case to expand.

Rae mentioned John Duncan sells the town and uses the library as one of the reasons why Collierville is a great city.

Cheryl Long stated that their son is hooked on Audible. She recommends improving access to eAudiobooks. The waits are very long for the library's access to digital audiobooks.

Susan stated that the biggest thing we are trying to show is the need for more space.

Cheryl Long said, "we could use a second Halle Room. As people come into the library to go to meeting, it might make people look at the library differently."

Susan mentioned that we would be looking to get a multi-use space that would be divisible into smaller meeting rooms.

Lisa mentioned that her vision is to have a large meeting space that can hold 100 people and we would be able to divide and generate revenue for the Town. And to expand the children's space.

Samuel suggested to aim high, asking for more so you can possibly get a portion of that. In his experience, it is better to ask for 2 rooms so you can get one. He also pointed out that we need to be more ready for a population increase. We need more study space for peak times.

Cheryl Long stated that Collierville Schools starting to do classes online for college credit. This will create a demand for more space for students to work on their own. Having a spot outside of school for those students to be together on classes. Gathering spaces for those groups.

Lisa stated that enclosed spaces for group study and informal gathering spaces are a trend in modern libraries. To have those spaces for young adults would be a good idea.

Susan stated that we want the library to be an extension of the school during evening and weekend hours, so students have a place to go.

She wants to be able to tell the story of the library and its value to the community.

Susan stated that not everyone wants to use the library, but we need to take care of it for the people that do want to use it.

Shobha stated we need to do something to get the right segment into the library. We want to attract a different segment of people.

Lisa stated this needs to be a next-gen library. The Blue Oval City FORD investment is a factor. The BMA wants to maintain the Town image but at the same time they are growing and graduating from being a "Town" to a "City". They want to attract world-class business, headquarters, executives, people with income. Those people expect EXCELLENT service. We must have what attracts them.

Susan E has done some branding work for Spring Hill. They are now in a dilemma because they didn't plan and weren't proactive in their growth. Collierville is very proactive, already does have

good infrastructure and wants to be the best. The library expansion has been needed for 10 years now. We will be behind the times if we don't do something now.

Cheryl Long pointed out that the library is expanding itself by growing into the park with the Story Walk. That has been an amazing asset.

Shobha agrees that the more we branch out, it will benefit the library.

Susan & Lisa contributed to the dialog that there have been a lot of survey comments about adding outdoor spaces.

Lisa has put aside the original Haizlip plan and has the vision to focus on the meeting space in the back and adding outdoor space by the children's area. Susan mentioned that we need repurpose inside space and add other spaces. Lisa pointed out there are some things we can do to make it more accessible such as having lower shelves in the children's area. Susan compared it to the area outside at the high school.

The Haizlip plan from 2014-15 addressed everything brought out in the focus groups at that time. When Ms. Plath presented to the BMA in 2021 for the expansion, she projected what extra staff would be needed post-expansion. The cost was very high at approximately \$500,000 because of added personnel. That was hard for the BMA to accept, so now it's important for us to figure out what we really need.

Susan stated that the BMA has a lot of things to consider in the Town – police, fire.

Samuel wondered if there was anything they could do to help.

Susan stated that we will now be gathering the surveys. Having 1000 to show the representation would be a very good response.

Discussion ensued about various ways to get the word out about the surveys.

Shobha wondered if we could target certain demographics for completing the survey.

#### What are the challenges for the library?

Money is one of the biggest challenges. Samuel Beyhan commented that it is not about the fact that there isn't enough money. It is about showing the need.

Peggy Turnipseed feels that the library is seen by some as too narrow of usage. It is not valued by everyone in the community. Some view it as a nice thing to have but not necessary.

Susan mentioned that the BMA is quick to respond to those wanting a cricket field. Sports people are more vocal/competitive. Library people tend to be quieter.

Peggy pointed out that Collierville got a theater because Germantown had one.

Susan pointed out that Germantown library is bigger than our library. Per capita, our library is at the bare minimum requirements.

Lisa stated that several other libraries have much larger children's spaces in their libraries.

Susan stated she is trying build a case to show where we are today and based on the growth, we will be behind. We need to move forward before it is too late.

Lisa – the BMA gets the library reports every month, but how the library is being used does not seem to resonate with some of them.

Cheryl suggested the idea of having a workshop on how to write a college essay.

Susan talked about the many needs in the town - early literacy, special needs, and lifelong learning. She mentioned that according to the school librarians, kids are two years behind in reading.

Lisa stated that a subtitle for the library could be "Center for Lifelong Learning". She also mentioned that it has been proven reading improves mental health. As you age, reading helps.

Cheryl recalled a conversation about reading every day and stated how important it is for everyday life.

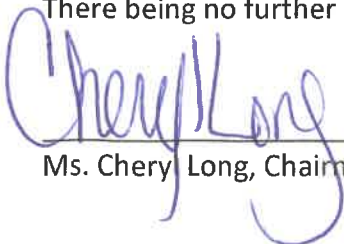
Some board members recommended dropping off surveys at the Linda Kerley Center.


Lisa stated that Susan had been a big help in this entire process and gave her kudos for her work.

Susan thanked the library board for giving her their attention.

### Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.

  
Ms. Cheryl Long, Chairman

  
Lisa Plath, Library Director