

**HEARTLAND LIBRARY COOPERATIVE  
GOVERNING BOARD**

Lake Placid Public Library – Meeting Room  
1069 US Hwy. 27 N., Lake Placid, FL

**Minutes to the November 17, 2021 meeting**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The Meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

Governing Board Members Present: Sue Rood Vice-Chair Highlands County; Jeanette Peeples Glades County; Ann Ryals Desoto County; Margaret Dewey Highlands County; Brad Goodbread Commissioner Okeechobee County ; Sonya Chapa Assistant Coordinator Heartland; Vikki Brown Coordinator Heartland.

**Also Present:** Marybeth Soderstorm Heartland Rides presenter; Iris Perkins Librarian Glades County; Linda Waters Librarian DeSoto County.

**Absent:** Donna Storter-Long Chair Glades County; Julie Perry Glades County; Mandy Hines Desoto County; Judy Schaefer Commissioner DeSoto County; Fran Syfrett Okeechobee County; Denise Whitehead Okeechobee County; Jeannie Palacios Hardee County; Nicole Drake Hardee County; Rene Wyatt Commissioner Hardee County; Arlene Tuck Commissioner Highlands;

**ROUTINE BUSINESS:**

Quorum: Sue Rood asked if there was quorum for the meeting with those in attendance. Vikki Brown and Sonya Chapa stated that there have been recent updates to Sunshine Law and other agencies and regulations so quorum may be established. Consensus was reached to hold the meeting as normal with the addendum that that if quorum was not met the voting points would all be brought back to the February meeting of the Heartland Governing Board.

Notice of Public Meeting: Notice was properly given.

Additions to Agenda: There were no additions to the agenda. Vikki Brown informed the Board that the auditors would not be presenting at this meeting.

Approval of the Agenda: Brad Goodbread moved to accept the meeting agenda, Margaret Dewey seconded; unanimously passed.

Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting: Margaret Dewey moved to accept the minutes of the previous meeting, Brad Goodbread seconded; unanimously passed.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Central Florida Regional Planning Presentation:**

Marybeth Soderstorm presented on behalf of the Central Florida Regional Planning Council (CFRPC) on mobility options and transit available in the Heartland region. Serving the Okeechobee, Highlands, Hardee, Desoto, Lake Placid, Glades, and Hendry counties, different agencies come together to deal with transportation planning including the Heartland Regional Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO), CFRPC, Heartland 2060, Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged. Mobility is a major issue in the Heartland region for those without access to a personal car, providing major obstacles to healthcare and quality of life. The aforementioned agencies attempt to foster partnership and advocate information and awareness of existing resources. Current mobility options in our region include:

- Transportation for the disadvantaged – a program for those with obstacles and disabilities for which transportation is funded through rural public transportation grants.
- DART – a program available in Arcade and operated by JJ transportation providing fare-free transportation.
- STREAM – available in Glades and Hendry counties, this program provides door-to-door transportation.
- Medicaid transportation – available to those with specific Medicaid plans that provides transportation to medical appointments.
- Other specialized programs funded through specific grants and agencies.

Heartland Rides is a service that utilizes a website and phone number to inform people of available resources and transportation in our region. This service also offers support for transportation companies and other transportation services. Heartland Rides only relates to the six counties of the Heartland region and requires patrons to complete a Rider Registration Form.

Brad Goodbread mentioned that local taxi and transportation companies are unhappy as the free fare services are hurting their business. Mary Beth stated that there are options for these companies to become partners with these transportation services, but it also comes down to costs; free fare transportation services can take longer for actual commutes as it serves multiple people and locations, so those who can afford to will still pay and support these local businesses for the convenience they offer.

Mary Beth asked the Board members and Librarians to think of these services from the Library's perspective, asking each to look at the patron communities and identify its' needs for transportation. Currently transportation is usually available for medical appointments and other vital trips, but others transportation services allow for other areas like the Library and park that can help positively affect quality of life. This presentation is intended to help connect the dots and get information out to the community in a meaningful way to allow for more partnerships, opportunities, etc.

#### **Inter-locals & Public Information:**

Vikki Brown informed the Board that the State Library has advised the Heartland Library Cooperative that a crucial piece of information is missing from the inter-locals involving the

ownership of email and records. Vikki stated that it has always been understood that the Cooperative handles all email and other records, maintaining ownership of these items. The State Library has advised that the Cooperative revise the inter-locals and have them reviewed by an attorney to ensure these practices are clearly stated and will prevent confusion in the future. Vikki asked the Governing Board for direction as there are three ways of working with the attorney: have the inter-locals revised by a specific county's attorney, send the revised inter-locals to each county's attorney for review, or see an outside attorney to work on revision and review. As a majority of the Board was not present for the meeting, Vikki stated that this issue can be pushed to the February meeting if desired by the present members. Linda Waters and Brad Goodbread stated that each county's attorney will review the inter-locals before accepting them at the county level. Brad asked if an attorney needs to write the inter-locals. Vikki stated that was not necessary but they do need to be reviewed according to the State Library's guidance. The Board's preference is to have each county's attorney review the inter-locals once revised and written by the Cooperative administration. Vikki shared the timeline as a hand out, with the inter-locals set to be approved by the end of the current fiscal year and enacted at the beginning of the next fiscal year.

#### **Coordinator Evaluations:**

Vikki Brown presented the sample evaluation for the Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator, thanking Linda Waters for doing the research and legwork to create the forms. Vikki also informed the Board that the Board evaluates the Coordinator and the Coordinator evaluates the Assistant Coordinator, asking if the Board would like to continue on in this direction. Linda Waters stated that she had brought this question up to Administration, stating that if other people are involved in the evaluations then it protects the Coordinator and the Assistant Coordinator from any malicious intent as she has recently seen happen in another Library's situation. Sonya Chapa asked for clarification on the Board's involvement and if there were any issues to arise, couldn't either Coordinator go to the Board for direction or resolution. Linda mentioned that she has seen situations where the Board was unable to do anything. Brad Goodbread moved to table the discussion until the February meeting, Margaret Dewey seconded; unanimously passed.

#### **LSTA Grant Agreement:**

Vikki Brown informed the governing board that we have received all of the grants applied for by the Heartland Library Cooperative. Preapproval had already been made by the Governing Board to allow Vikki to purchase equipment and other items for the LSTA grant above her allotted spending limit, in order to complete grant deliverables and purchases in a timely manner. Vikki asked the Board to approve the same measures for the other two grants. Margaret Dewey moved to allow the Coordinator to purchase grant equipment and funds above the spending limit as needed, Brad Goodbread seconded; unanimously passed.

#### **Budget Amendments:**

Vikki Brown informed the Governing Board that budget amendments were needed due to the awarding of the grants. Vikki stated that these amendments needed Board approval for the

account to assign accounts to each grant for revenue and expenditures. Vikki also mentioned that each county's Librarian has reviewed and approved the amended budget prior to the meeting. Brad Goodbread moved to approve the necessary budget amendments; Ann Ryals seconded; unanimously passed.

#### **IMLS ARPA Grant "Outstretching Hands":**

Vikki Brown provided information on the Institute of Museum and Library Services American Rescue Place Act Grant awarded to the Heartland Library Cooperative. This is a federal grant for \$50,000 that will provide a mobile Library, a scaled down version of a bookmobile that will be more manageable by current staff and budget. A courier van will be purchased that can be utilized by Librarians for mobile outreach, but will also have set times and locations for a mobile Library service and mobile collections including books, hotspots, and other items. This was a nationwide grant, and the Heartland Library Cooperative was one of only 101 Libraries chosen to be awarded across the country.

#### **LSTA ARPA Grant "Bridging the Gap"**

Vikki Brown provided information on the Library Services and Technology Act American Rescue Plan Act grant that was awarded to the Cooperative for \$78,885. Titled "Bridging the Gap", the grant will provide each Library with supplies to advocate outreach services and events and ease planning and staffing for these programs. Along with equipment, this grant will also provide other needed materials and marketing. Brad Goodbread moved to accept the grant award, Anny Ryals seconded; unanimously passed.

#### **LSTA ARPA GRANT "Reading Across Desoto": \$59,700**

Vikki Brown provided information on the Library Services and Technology Act American Rescue Plan Act grant that was awarded to the Heartland Library Cooperative for \$59,700. Titled "Reading Across Desoto", this grant was applied for by the Desoto Library partnering with the Desoto County School Board and Desoto County to provide students with Library cards and access, but will provide services for all of the Cooperative Libraries through additional digital materials and access. This grant will also lay the groundwork for each Library to connect with their own school boards eventually. Ann Ryals moved to accept the grant award, Margaret Dewey seconded; unanimously passed.

#### **Member Comments:**

Margaret Dewey appreciated the Heartland Rides presentation stating that mobility is definitely an issue for our area. Margaret stated that she had been in previous location where mobility was a major issue and the Library was able to develop homebound services for their patrons through grants. Margaret was happy to hear that these services are being offered in our area as they improve quality of life.

Linda Waters stated that was thankful for all of the work that Vikki Brown and Sonya Chapa are doing for the Heartland Library Cooperative.

Sonya Chapa thanked the members for attending the meeting and approving the grants. Sonya also stated that though this has been another irregular year due to COVID she hopes the Board has seen the progress made by the Coordinators and the efforts to continue supporting all of our Libraries and moving the Cooperative forward, and thanked the Board for their support and providing the opportunity to do so.

Vikki Brown stated that Paul Ramponi has worked behind the scenes on the Emergency Connectivity Fund grant for which the Heartland Library Cooperative has now been awarded. Now all seven Libraries will have hotspots with unlimited data access through T-Mobile. The Cooperative will start with 60 hotspots at no cost to the Libraries as they will all be funded through the e-Rate program. There will be certain rules and regulations such as having patrons sign a waiver stating that they need internet access. This grant will also absorb the 100 hotspots currently in Okeechobee County Library's collection and fund them through the grant moving forward. This grant will be launching soon.

**Next Meeting:**

Wednesday, February 23, 2022.

**Adjournment:**

Meeting adjourned at 11:26 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sonya Chapa