

**HEARTLAND LIBRARY COOPERATIVE
GOVERNING BOARD**

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

Minutes to the September 14, 2022 Meeting

CALL TO ORDER:

The Meeting was called to order at 10:40 a.m. Pledge and invocation was led by Donna Storter-Long.

ROLL CALL:

Governing Board Members Present: Donna Storter- Long Chair Glades County; Brad Goodbread Treasurer Okeechobee County; Judy Schaefer Commissioner DeSoto County; Jeanette Peoples Glades County; Jeannie Palacios Hardee County; Nicole Drake Hardee County (phone); Denise Whitehead Okeechobee County (phone); Sonya Chapa Assistant Coordinator Heartland; Vikki Brown Coordinator Heartland.

Also Present: Iris Perkins Librarian Glades County; Linda Waters Librarian DeSoto County; Regina Urssery Librarian Hardee County; Kresta King Librarian Okeechobee County.

Absent: Sue Rood Vice-Chair Highlands County; Lauri Benson DeSoto County; Ann Ryals Desoto County; Julie Perry Glades County; Judith George Commissioner Hardee County; Arlene Tuck Commissioner Highlands; Margaret Dewey Highlands County.

ROUTINE BUSINESS:

Notice of Public Meeting: Notice was properly given.

Additions to Agenda: None.

Approval of the Agenda: Judy Schaefer moved to approve the agenda, Brad Goodbread seconded; unanimously passed.

Approval of Minutes of September and November Meetings: Sonya Chapa informed the Board of a correction of Lauri Benson on the minutes and removal of Mandy Hines. Judy Schaefer moved to approve the minutes with the change, Brad Goodbread seconded; unanimously passed.

Brad recommended the addition of a consent agenda to address house-cleaning items in order to streamline the meeting. Vikki Brown agreed. Donna Storter-Long recommended that a consent agenda be sent before the meeting. Brad clarified that if a member wished to pull something from the consent agenda to be discussed further in the meeting that could still occur if needed.

NEW BUSINESS:

Engagement Letter/Package - CLA:

Julie Fowler informed the Board that she had nothing specific to discuss but was available for questions; the Board had none. Brad Goodbread moved to approve the engagement letter package for CliftonLarsonAllen, Judy Schaefer seconded; unanimously passed.

Engagement Letter - WBW:

Cheryl Williams informed the Board she had no additional information to add but was also available for questions; the Board had none. Jude Schaefer moved to approve the engagement letter for Wicks, Brown, Williams & Co., Brad Goodbread seconded; unanimously passed.

August Financial Statement:

Vikki Brown provided an overview of financial activity for the month of August stating that a lot of grant work occurred as we are wrapping up on many of the grants. Vikki stated that she was available for questions, the Board had none.

Final Budget Amendment of FY22:

Vikki Brown informed the Board that some funds were being moved around to accommodate for some of the grants as they end. Vikki also informed the Board that the Heartland Cooperative assisted the Sebring branch with some purchases and was reimbursed by the Friends of the Sebring Library, leading to a budget amendment to accept the funds. Vikki also mentioned shifting funds to accommodate for small changes related to grants, such as education. Donna Storter-Long noted that Manpower was down; Vikki informed the Board that more had been estimated due to the mobile Library grant, however as it was a later start these funds were moved to accommodate other expenditures within the same grant. Judy Schaefer moved to accept the Final Budget Amendment of FY22, Jeannie Palacios seconded; unanimously passed.

ByLaws:

Vikki Brown informed the Board that these have gone before many of the county attorneys already, and has not received word of any issues or changes that needed to be made. Vikki stated that the major changes in the ByLaws reflect the addition of the Assistant Coordinator and addition of alternate governing board members to assist with issues of quorum. Donna Storter-Long asked if there has been any feedback from any of the county attorneys; Vikki stated that all counties have reviewed if not approved yet, and no issues have been found. Brad Goodbread moved to accept the ByLaws as presented, Judy Schaefer seconded; unanimously passed.

Policies & Procedures:

Vikki Brown informed the Board that there were many updates in the Policies and Procedures, however all have been reviewed by all counties' attorneys and no feedback or changes have been reported. Vikki stated that the one change regards the wording of disruptive patrons to be more inclusive of all ages, not just children. Another major change is the addition of Specialty Cards including institution, educator, and students cards. Vikki informed the Board that in light of what is currently going on in the education realm, we do not know what will come of these types of cards, however anyone applying for a card will still have to come to the Library to apply and receive a card directly from the Library, so it will not be connected to the school; this separation favors the Library and does not involve the Cooperative in any legal issues tied to the schools. These cards will have limits to borrowing items. Vikki also stated another change to Fines and Fees, as some counties are fine-free and others do not wish to be at this time. Vikki stated that any items without a specific fine of \$1.00 per day, are fine free; this was done mainly to get rid of book fines for children and prevent adults from using children's card to rack up fees, barring the child from using their card to access books. Donna Storter-Long asked if there will be any other enforcement measures. Vikki stated that most Libraries are fine free and have found that as people feel less stigma, more items are being returned. Vikki also informed the Board that items that are long overdue (with the time frame determined by each individual county), are charged a Lost Item Fee. Brad Goodbread stated that Okeechobee did this two years ago and had thought this was a cooperative wide policy as it has been very successful. Vikki stated that there is a clause in the policy that states local rule still determines. Kresta King informed the Board that patrons who still come in to pay fees will regularly donate to the Friends of the Library upon learning that they do not owe any fines. Jeannie Palacios stated that this change is great news as the Friends of the Hardee Library held a back to school event with the intention of registering High School students to the Mometrix service provided by the Cooperative, but found that any students who still had old fines were unable to access the service, so the Friends of the Library offered to cover the gap for these students. Donna Storter-Long asked if this information would need more publicity; Vikki stated that once the policies are approved by all County Boards, a publicity campaign will be launched to share this information with our communities. Regina Ussery asked Vikki if she had the authority to go to her County to petition to waive all fines or for specific groups; Vikki stated yes this is possible up to each County, however on the technical end would be done individually for each person who comes in to the Library as the shared system would not be able to do a blanket waive without affecting other counties. Vikki stated that another change was an update to the forms for challenges to acquisitions or statements of concerns, clarifying language to state that we are not part of any school system and that the Cooperative follows the Library Bill of Rights which means we do not censor items or displays. Vikki stated that we welcome everyone's right to tell us by using the form. Brad Goodbread moved to accept the Policies and Procedures as presented, Judy Schaefer seconded; unanimously passed.

Inter-locals:

Vikki Brown stated that the Inter-locals were updated to reflect the addition of the Assistant Coordinator position along with a more clear definition on public records created and maintained by the Cooperative and the ownership of such records. Vikki provided the example

of access to Cooperative emails stating that these are maintained by the Cooperative and if someone wished to access them they would have to make a request to the Heartland Library Cooperative to supply the public record request. Vikki again stated that all of the county attorneys have reviewed the request with no feedback on issues. Judy Schafer moved to accept the Inter-locals as presented, Brad Goodbread seconded; unanimously passed.

State Aid to Libraries Grant Agreement:

Vikki Brown presented the State Aid to Libraries Grant Agreement, stating it is the same as every year. Jeannie Palacios moved to approve the State Aid to Libraries Grant, Brad Goodbread seconded; unanimously passed.

Annual Certification of Hours:

Vikki Brown informed the Board that this document states that all Libraries are open 40 hours a week. Vikki also stated that between all branches, the Cooperative operates with 6 day coverage during the week. Judy Schaefer moved to approve the Annual Certification of Hours, Brad Goodbread seconded; unanimously passed.

FY23 Budget:

Vikki Brown informed the Board that as of the meeting, she had not received official notice that the Help in the Heartland Grant was approved, however the online system stated that the Grant was awarded to the Cooperative; as such the FY23 Budget has been prepared with the grant included. Vikki Brown also informed the Board that the Compensation of Absences has been discussed with the auditors for many years and it has been suggested that these funds be included in the budget this year. Vikki stated that should the full time Heartland employee, Paul Ramponi, retire today, the Cooperative would need to pay Highlands County for his retirement payout; these funds have been put aside by Highlands County in the past but were not billed to the Cooperative. Donna Storter- Long was surprised the auditors haven't required this to occur sooner. Vikki informed the Board that the auditors stated that the Cooperative budget is fiscally able to compensate without going into a deficit should this occur, however it was suggested that a plan for the backpay be included within the budget itself to prevent having to use unbudgeted funds. Donna asked if the Cooperative would need to begin accounting for this retirement payout currently; Vikki stated that this is already part of the Cooperative's budget and has been in place for a couple of years now. Jeannie Palacios asked if we expected to have this employee working for four more years; Vikki stated yes that there is no indication for him to retire soon. Vikki also informed the Board that she has spoken to Highlands County and has confirmed that if Paul were to retire soon, Highlands County has agreed to allow the Cooperative four years to pay the accrued retirement regardless. Kresta King stated that during her time as Coordinator, the situation became known and that the auditors, accountants, and Highlands finance are all aware and on the same page. Donna asked if there was a back up plan in case Paul was to retire. Vikki stated that yes there is a plan, the Help in the Heartland grant is to develop an internship with partners like Florida Southern College to develop IT personnel to work in Libraries and specifically in the program with Paul to recruit future IT for the Cooperative. Vikki informed the Board that she is also working with Paul to set up a success plan

for IT information. Donna stated that Glades has a similar employee who is working as part of an IT succession plan. Brad Goodbread moved to accept the FY23 Budget as presented, Judy Schaefer seconded; unanimously passed.

FY23 Meeting Dates:

Vikki Brown presented the meeting dates for FY23 as November 16, 2022, February 15, 2023, May 24, 2023, and August 30, 2023. Donna Storter-Long urged everyone to put the meeting dates in their calendar now. Vikki stated that the next meeting date will be held November 16, 2022 as state aid is due December 1st. Donna asked if there were any issues with any of the other dates.

Annual Plan of Service:

Vikki Brown presented the Annual Plan of Service to the Board. Vikki noted that the long-range plan is set to expire in 2025, as such it is included to work on this plan in the FY23 annual plan of service. Vikki also explained that due to the Help in the Heartland grant there is an addition to explore internships.

Chair Terms Expiring:

Donna Storter-Long asked how long the position terms were; Vikki Brown stated that each chair's terms are for three years. Vikki briefly explained each position: the Chair hosts the meetings and signs the paperwork, the Vice-Chair serves in absence of the Chair, the Treasurer signs off on checks and purchases and expenditure documents.

- A. Chair:** Donna Storter-Long nominated Jeannie Palacios. Brad Goodbread moved to cease nominations, Judy Schaefer seconded; nominations ceased.
- B. Vice-Chair:** Donna Storter-Long nominated Judy Schaefer. Brad Goodbread moved to cease nominations, Jeannie Palacios seconded; nominations ceased.
- C. Treasurer:** Judy Schaefer nominated Brad Goodbread. Judy Schaefer moved to cease nominations, Donna Storter-Long seconded; nominations ceased.

Brad Goodbread moved to accept the slate of nominations, Jeannie Palacios seconded; unanimously passed.

Grant Updates:

A. IMLS ARPA: Outstretching Hands

Vikki Brown informed the Board that due to the unavailability of the van, Vikki applied for a grant extension which was accepted; the grant has now been extended until October 2023. Vikki stated that she kept in touch with the vehicle companies and there is now a van available. Vikki has secured the quote and we are just waiting on Board approval to move forward with the purchasing process.

- a. Van Purchase** - The only option available currently is the Ford transit with a high roof; Vikki stated that this was actually the Cooperative's first choice that had been unavailable last year. Vikki stated that the price of this vehicle is a little

higher but is still within the grant funding. Brad Goodbread moved to approve the purchase of the Ford Transit van, Judy Schaefer seconded; unanimously passed.

B. LSTA ARPA: Bridging the Gap

Vikki Brown reported that the LSTA ARPA was a great success with 595 welcome packets distributed, well over the required 490 packets. The Cooperative Libraries also hosted 22 outreach tables and 52 pop-up storytimes, with 1,183 attendees and 3,925 books distributed to our communities. Vikki commended the Libraries for their work as this grant was accomplished with a very tight deadline, and was done in the middle of summer along with regular Summer Reading programming.

C. LSTA ARPA: Read Across DeSoto

Linda Waters informed the Board that over 1,000 ebooks have been purchased through the grant for the Access360 eBook Library, along with over 1,000 print books, which are distributed throughout the Cooperative. Processing of these items are all underway through the Cooperative. Vikki stated that she was happy that the Access360 Library was able to be built and cultivated by the Librarians to provide a curated Library to our communities.

D. LSTA: Reaching Beyond Our Walls

Vikki Brown informed the Board that 40 videos were filmed, edited, and posted with a total of 3,670 views. Vikki also stated that 40 different types of Take & Make kits were also made, with 2,197 kits distributed across the 7 branches' communities.

Member Updates:

Nicole Drake informed the Board that Regina Ussery is the new Library Service Director and they are excited to have her along with her new ideas and aspirations for Hardee County. Vikki Brown stated that she is very excited to see Regina grow in this position as she used to be her employee.

Regina Ussery stated that Hardee has been very busy with summer programming and fulfilling the grants. Regina informed that Hardee County is continuing with the success of the outreach, highlighting an event with East Coast Migrant Head Start Project next month for over 100 kids and parents and would be providing Spanish books to the community.

Jeannie Palacios stated that they loved Mrs. Dee but that were excited for the new opportunities that Regina will bring to the Hardee Library and for the growth that has already happened in the Library.

Linda Waters stated that DeSoto had a great summer enjoying working with the community. Linda also informed the Board that both Regina and DeSoto employee Liz have been accepted into the Sunshine State Library Leadership Institute, a very prestigious program for Librarians in Florida. Linda stated that DeSoto is continuing to reach out and find partnerships to serve the community, and is especially proud of DeSoto's strength in programming for disabled adults and is continuing the program 3 times a week and is incorporating new technology and other grant items to huge success.

Judy Schaefer congratulated Regina on her new position in Hardee and to Jeannie Palacios as the new Chair, and said she knows Regina will be able to have lots of help in the Cooperative. Regina stated that everyone has been very welcoming. Judy stated that she is also very proud of Linda and the success of DeSoto county.

Kresta King stated that Okeechobee Library had a particularly successful program with the Bridging the Gap grant with a partnership with the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Animal Control Shelter to provide an animal adoption storytime called Pups in the Park, after which all animals were adopted within 48 hours. Kresta also congratulated Iris Perkins as the Glades Library has doubled circulation every month in comparison to previous years.

Iris Perkins stated that Glades had a long and exciting summer getting out into the community and will continue the outreach with partnerships including the nursing homes. Donna Storter-Long stated that thanks to Iris the Glades Library has now been able to bring back Saturday hours for the community. Iris also stated that planning and preparation for Arts in the Park is beginning.

Jeanette Peebles stated she was very happy to see that Storytime programming was returning to the Glades Library and thanked Iris for her hard work.

Brad Goodbread stated Okeechobee would have five commissioners again this year after new elections. Brad stated the new Commissioner Frank de Carlo has been a long time resident and business owner of Okeechobee and will be seated in November.

Sonya Chapa stated that Okeechobee Library is very busy and is continuing programming and outreach with partnerships that began this summer including the Florida Department of Transportation, Parks & Recreation, and a new year-long partnership with East Coast Migrant Head Start Project. Sonya also stated that storytimes are returning once a month as larger community events, along with fun and educational programs for the community. Sonya stated she was very proud of her staff for accomplishing so much, along with all Cooperative staff for getting through all of the grants, outreach, and Summer Reading programs to continue serving the community so successfully. Sonya also asked everyone to please thank their Library staff for all of their hard work.

Vikki Brown stated that she agreed with Sonya's sentiments and that she was very thankful to the Librarians and staff for putting up with the many updates and items related to grants. Sonya stated that everyone was thankful for the updates and keeping everyone on track. Vikki stated that all seven branches are seeing the benefits of the outreach with strong numbers and stats and growing awareness in the community of the Libraries and Library services.

Donna Storter-Long stated she had a great time serving as chair and that she has been surviving and thriving during a difficult year, but she has managed to do a lot of reading. Donna stated that she is happy that the Cooperative has helped its communities and she is appreciative of all staff.

Denise Whitehead stated that she is proud of Okeechobee staff for their hard work and the great leadership that Sonya has taken in the organization this past year.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, November 16, 2022.

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 11:57 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sonya Chapa