

HEARTLAND LIBRARY COOPERATIVE

GOVERNING BOARD

Lake Placid Public Library – Meeting Room

1069 US Hwy. 27 N., Lake Placid, FL

Minutes to the February 15, 2023 Meeting

CALL TO ORDER:

The Meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m. Invocation and pledge was led by Nicole Drake.

ROLL CALL:

Governing Board Members Present: Jeannie Palacios Chair Hardee County; Commissioner Judy Schaefer Vice-Chair DeSoto County; Lauri Benson Desoto County; Commissioner Donna Storter-Long Glades County; Jeanette Peeples Glades County; Commissioner Judith George Hardee County; Nicole Drake Hardee County; Sue Rood Highlands County; Margaret Dewey Highlands County; Vikki Brown Coordinator Heartland; Sonya Chapa Assistant Coordinator Heartland

Also Present: Iris Perkins Librarian Glades County; Liz Coronado Librarian DeSoto County; Kresta King Librarian Okeechobee County; Brian Quinlin Accountant CliftonLarsonAllen.

Absent: Commissioner Brad Goodbread Treasurer Okeechobee County; Commissioner Arlene Tuck Highlands County; Ann Ryals Desoto County; Julie Perry Glades County; Denise Whitehead Okeechobee County.

ROUTINE BUSINESS:

Notice of Public Meeting: Notice was properly given.

Additions to Agenda: Vikki Brown informed the Board of the addition of the financial statements to the Consent Agenda.

Approval of the Agenda: Lauri Benson moved to accept the agenda with changes, seconded by Nicole Drake; unanimously passed.

Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting: Nicole Drake asked that her attendance be corrected on the minutes as it stated that she was in attendance by phone but she did arrive in person during the meeting. Jeanette Peeples moved to approve the minutes with proposed changes, seconded by Lauri Benson; unanimously passed.

NEW BUSINESS:

CLA Audit Presentation & Results:

The audit results and reports were presented by Brian Quinlin of CliftonLarsonAllen in place of Julie Fowler. Brian informed the Board that the Independent Auditors Report issued an unmodified, clean opinion for the Heartland Library Cooperative. Brian also stated that the

Internal Control Report also was a clean report with no deficiencies in internal controls and no identification of any instances of noncompliance. Brian informed the Board that the Management Letter stated that there was no note of anything that would be required to be communicated and no recommendations for the report. Brian explained the Independent Accountants report to the Board, which is an examination of compliance with Florida statutes, stating that the Heartland Library Cooperative was in compliance by default as the Cooperative did not hold any investment accounts. Brian did not that if the Cooperative decided to invest outside of the depository accounts that it would be in the best interest to speak with the auditors first to ensure continued compliance. Brian informed that Board of the Governance Communication Letter, stating that the auditors worked well with management and had no corrected or uncorrected misstatements. Briand reported that overall the Heartland Library Cooperative received a very clean statement. Nicole Drake moved to approve the Auditor's Results and Report, seconded by Lauri Benson; unanimously passed.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Vikki Brown informed the Board that the Consent Agenda includes the Grant Agreement and supporting documents and the Financial Statements. Vikki asked for any questions on either item. Lauri Benson asked if all tasks will be performed by the September 30th deadline. Vikki stated that the Cooperative Libraries have been working on execution of the grant and do plan to have the grant completed by the deadline, and that the State Library will also work with the Cooperative to make adjustments if needed. Lauri Benson moved to approve the Consent Agenda; seconded by Judy Schaefer; unanimously passed.

Grant Agreement for "Help in the Heartland"

- I. Supporting Documents**
 - A. Grant Agreement**
 - B. Notice of Grant Award**
 - C. Award Letter**

Financial Statements

INFORMATIONAL:

Grant Updates

Vikki Brown informed the Board that the Cooperative is applying for other grants including two American Library Association grants and is working on a third ALA grant as well. Vikki informed the Board that Sonya Chapa was working on a grant from the Florida Humanities Council as well. Vikki hopes to have updates on the grants in time for the May meeting. Vikki informed the Board that these grants are focused on adding to outreach services and events and a focus on teen programming that includes gaming and events.

Media Inquiries

Vikki Brown informed the Board that the Cooperative received a visit from ABC Action News that included a filmed interview at the Venus stop of the Mobile Library; this interview focused on spotlighting the Cooperative's Mobile Library grant and how the Cooperative workings together among the five counties. For context, ABC Action News' Special Projects recently did an interview highlighting the Hardee Help Center that led to increased funding for the Help Center's initiatives.

Vikki also informed the Board that she was on NPR with Scott Simon to talk about the Mobile Library to talk about the Cooperative's Mobile Library services, which has brought more media inquiries and contacts to Vikki from across the country who are showing interest in the Cooperative and have even donated funds for the purchase on books for the Mobile Library.

Vikki Brown informed the Board that these interviews have come about as a result of the ILoveMyLibrarian Award provided by the American Library Association awarded to our own Coordinator Vikki! Vikki was one of ten winner's chosen nationally! Among the list of Vikki's accomplishments were the initiatives that were started under Vikki, including the Mobile Library, which has drawn great interest from other Libraries and organizations across the country. Vikki is very excited to be able to promote the Heartland Library Cooperative and all of the Libraries at the same time and that the Libraries are getting the attention that all of our staff work so hard for and deserve. Vikki stated that she will keep the Board updated on new media inquiries. Jeannie Palacios asked if people are able to donate to the Library directly since they are government entities. Vikki stated that all Public Libraries are able to accept private donations and that they may not be able to spend it in the current year unless they do a budget amendment, but it will end up in the budget. Donna Storter-Long stated that people even leave donation to Libraries in their will; Vikki stated that this happens along and is also handled through the Counties' budget process. Jeannie stated that she was asking as sometimes donations are provided to the Friends groups instead of the Libraries; Vikki stated that local decisions can affect donation procedures different in each county, however most Public Libraries should be able to accept donations and that there are some different provisions for Library spending when specified by donations.

Member Updates

Donna Storter-Long asked how many Libraries have Library Boards and Friends of the Library groups. Vikki stated Highlands County has a Friends group only with Sue Rood stating that the Highlands BOCC has ruled that the Library did not need an Advisory group. Sonya Chapa stated that Okeechobee has an active Friends group. Donna stated that she was asking as she wanted to clarify is the Friends groups can accept money but the Library Boards cannot. General consensus from the members was that this was the true of all the counties.

Jeanette Peeples informed the Board that Glades County will have land developed to provide 700 homes near Buckhead Ridge with a new commercial district and houses of worship.

Iris Perkins asked about information regarding Library Advisory Board governance and the Librarian's role on that Board; Vikki Brown informed her that there should be bylaws detailing the governance of that Board specific to Glades County. Iris Perkins informed the Board that

she attended the Joint Council of Librarians of Color conference and thanked Sonya Chapa and the Tampa Bay Library Consortium for helping her attend as she really enjoyed the professional conference. Iris also asked what the other Libraries have planned for Spring Break programming. Sonya stated that Okeechobee Library is starting in person programming monthly for all age ranges and has a lot of programming planned for every day of National Library Week in April. Vikki Brown stated that Highlands County has a therapy dog unit visiting during Spring Break for children's programming. Liz Coronado stated that DeSoto has a lot of new technology for children available during Spring Break along with the upcoming remake learning days with the Patterson Foundation and other local partnerships.

Donna Storter-Long asked the Board about the Libraries' interest in children's literacy programs such as reading to dogs to help with literacy decline in youth. Nicole Drake informed the Board that Hardee has a series of reading stories to dogs that are available for adoption. Vikki Brown stated this is the purpose of the therapy dog visits as these sessions have been shown to increase literacy and access to therapy for children. Sonya Chapa stated that the Okeechobee Library has partnered with the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office Animal Control to host Pups in the Park storytimes to highlight animals available for adoption and promote outreach storytimes which have been very successful.

Kresta King informed the Board that Okeechobee Library had over 19,000 giveaways of activity kits, books, etc. for the Okeechobee community. Kresta also informed the Board of the Book Boxes program which has been very successful, beginning with 10 boxes available monthly for teens and now expanded to children, teens, and adults and special one-time occasion Book Boxes. Sonya Chapa informed the Board that the number of boxes has increased to 42 boxes a month, and based on the success of the Book Boxes and Take Home Kits, these are now being adapted to include Adult monthly craft kits as well. Donations have increased from local organizations including the local Rotary group to funds these literacy programs due to their popularity.

Sue Rood informed the Board of the great success of the Sebring Library's Christmas event which had 309 attendees with decorations and different stations available for different ages. Vikki Brown stated that originally the Library had anticipated 50 people and were happy to receive even more.

Nicole Drake introduced Judith George as the Commissioner for Hardee County. Nicole also informed the Board that Hardee Library sustained considerable damage during Hurricane Ian but repairs are in the process. Nicole also praised the Library staff stating that they deserve awards for being able to adjust so quickly and still host events and programs including Storytime in a Bag for outreach storytimes, new partnerships with the Sheriff's Office for stories with adopted animals, a great Christmas event which had 300 attendees, and the upcoming Pioneer Festival which had the Library partnering to provide scavenger hunts and a booth at the festival through QR codes, promoting the Library and the Friends group to the community.

Margaret Dewey stated that she was very proud of our Highlands Librarian Vikki Brown who has been covered by the media for all of her success. Margaret stated as a Friends member for the

Sebring Library, she was happy to report that the Friends group was able to fund everything on the Library's wishlist for 2022. Margaret also informed the Board that the Friends' bookstore is getting renovated and that business is good.

Lauri Benson thanked all of the Librarians and support staff for all of their creativity and hard work and for doing a great job.

Liz Coronado informed the Board that the DeSoto Library received funding for its own Mobile Library van which will go out to the more rural areas of DeSoto County. Liz also stated that DeSoto Sharing Libraries has launched with 4 community libraries now in the community which are catering books to specific areas and communities; these box libraries are well used and always need refilling. Liz also stated that craft kits have been awesome with children and toddler kits available year-round and adult ones available around the holiday, but due to its success DeSoto is thinking of expanding the adults' ones as well.

Sue Rood stated that the Highlands Commissioners have done well at promoting the Library programs and services on its Facebook page.

Sonya Chapa informed the Board that the Okeechobee Library is starting in-person programming again but is still keeping the passive and at-home based programs as well due to its success. In-person programs will include music concerts, coding classes, gardening activities, yoga classes, storytimes at local organizations, and more to build the core community of attendees back up post-COVID. Sonya stated that she was incredibly proud of the Okeechobee staff for working hard to continue Library services while also working hard to expand programming both at the Library and in outreach. Sonya stated that we have very great staff all across the Cooperative, and while the Librarians do everything we can to plan and promote the Libraries, the front-line staff are amazing Library staff who are serving our community. Sonya also congratulated Vikki on her well-deserved award and thanked her for everything she has done for the Cooperative.

Vikki Brown informed the Board that myhlc.org website is always updated with newsletters, fliers, and more information on all of the great programs, services, and events that the Heartland Libraries are doing. Vikki commended all of the Libraries for being able to do so much even though we are smaller Libraries. Vikki was very happy that the Libraries are being recognized positively for all of our accomplishments and efforts. Vikki informed the Board that Highlands County is installing a vending Library in Spring Lake opening in March 2023. This vending Library will have items available for patrons to borrow on the spot and also have holds placed to pick up at the vending unit to be filled by staff. The vending Library can hold up to 400 items and can be used by any Heartland Cooperative patron.

Sonya Chapa reminded the Board to please check the website for more information on what all of the Libraries are doing especially in the lead up to Summer Reading 2023.

Jeannie Palacios thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and participating on the Board.

Adjournment:

Donna Storter-Long moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Nicole Drake; unanimously passed. Meeting adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sonya Chapa