

**Beaufort County Library
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Minutes – May 13, 2026– 4:00 p.m.
Beaufort Branch Library
311 Scott Street
Beaufort, SC 29902**

The third scheduled meeting for 2026 was held in-person at the Beaufort Branch Library.

Trustees: Dr. Janet Porter (Chair), Angela Baldree, Kathy Cooper, Janinne Mutterer, Dr. Mary Olodun, Hattie Brown, Tracey Robinson.

Absentees: Dr. Dahlia Handman, Jacquelyn Howard, Terry Thomas, Shawna Kulpa

County Council: Councilman Passiment (District 5)

County Staff: Amanda Dickman (Library Director), Chuck Atkinson (Library Operations Manager), Traci Cox (Library Administration), Darlene Simmons (Library Administration), Leigh Ramey (Library Administration), and Ileana Herrick (Library Administration)

I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 4:06pm. A quorum was established.

II. Pledge of Allegiance: Ms. Mutterer led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Public Comment: None.

IV. Introduction of Guests. The Board recognized Brenda Ladson Powell for her 11 years of service as a Library Trustee. Dr. Porter thanked Ms. Powell for her dedication, advocacy, and commitment to the Beaufort County Library System. Ms. Powell expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to serve. Dr. Porter welcomed Hattie Brown, newly appointed Trustee representing District 1. Ms. Brown introduced herself and shared her background as a retired educator with Beaufort County School District. Janice Herbert, President of the Friends of the Beaufort Library, was also in attendance.

V. Minutes from meeting held March 11, 2026: The minutes of the March 11, 2026 meeting were approved as presented on a motion by Ms. Cooper, seconded by Ms. Robinson. The motion carried unanimously.

VI. Correspondence/Memberships: None.

VII. Library Director's Report: Amanda Dickman, Library Director presented her report:

A. Personnel Update: The *Library Organizational Chart* is provided for reference. There are currently three vacant positions: Library Assistant (Full Time) at Lobeco, Library Specialist (Full Time) at Port Royal and Branch Manager at St. Helena. The Library is interviewing for four (4) Summer internships at Beaufort, Bluffton, Lobeco and St. Helena locations.

Ms. Dickman introduced Chuck Atkinson who will soon begin serving as Library Operations Manager.

B. Projects Update: Ms. Dickman reported on library operations framed within the priorities of the Library's Strategic Plan.

- **Strategic Plan Goal: Communication** Ms. Dickman noted that two of the directives under the Communication goal in the Strategic Plan are to “*enhance and foster employee information sharing across the organization*” and to “*explore opportunities to better connect with the public.*” She shared several recent activities and initiatives that support these objectives:
 - Staff Development Day held on April 21, 2026, at the Bluffton Branch Library featured representatives from Hoopla who provided staff training on Hoopla resources and how digital publishing works. The afternoon session focused on gathering staff input to support development of the Library's Strategic Plan.
 - She also reported that Hoopla representatives visited the Beaufort and Bluffton Branch Libraries on April 22 for Hooplalalooza Day, where they met with library guests, answered questions, and shared information about Hoopla services and resources.

To support employee information sharing across the organization, Ms. Dickman noted that the Library has implemented several ongoing initiatives including monthly programmers' meetings to share program ideas across branches; collection development meetings for selectors to discuss purchasing trends, popular materials, and genre recommendations; and periodic “Learning Lounge” virtual meetings where staff share information from webinars and professional development opportunities. She also shared that the Library continues to offer an annual Staff Reading Challenge based on NovelList prompts, with 41 staff members currently participating.

Additionally, Ms. Dickman shared that the next gathering of literacy-related organizations participating in the Library's “Literacy Together” initiative will take place on Wednesday, May 20, 2026, at the Bluffton Branch Library. Organizations in attendance will share their plans and collaborative efforts to encourage reading throughout the summer months.

- **Strategic Plan Goal: User Experience** Ms. Dickman shared several upcoming activities that support the Library's focus on enhancing the user experience and encouraging community engagement.

- **2026 Bookmark Contest** winners were announced as: Sammy Chahin (ages 5-8), Lily Nelson (ages 9-12), Aya Trembly (ages 13-17) and Megan Clavijo (Ages 18+). The bookmarks are currently being printed for distribution during the Summer Reading program.
- The Library's **2026 Summer Reading program**, offered in partnership with the Beaufort County School District, will run from June 1 through July 31, 2026. Participants are encouraged to read 30 minutes per day for 30 days using a printed or downloadable gameboard. Incentive prizes will be awarded at 10-day checkpoints to encourage participation and completion. Ms. Dickman also shared that the Library will not host the Summer Lunch program this year, as the Beaufort County School District will instead offer a new "Groceries to Go" program providing weekly breakfast and lunch meal kits for children ages 18 and under. Additional information is available through the school district.
- Several **America 250** programs and activities are currently underway, with additional events planned throughout the coming months. Community members are encouraged to pick up a "Celebrate America 250" passport at any library location. Participants who complete four listed activities may return their passport to a library or bookmobile location to receive a limited-edition sticker. Ms. Dickman encouraged attendees to visit the Library Calendar for additional event details.
- **Strategic Plan Goal: Space:** Ms. Dickman invited Board members to attend the naming ceremony for the Large Meeting Room at the Hilton Head Branch Library in honor of author John Jakes and Jonathan Daniels on Thursday, May 13, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. at the Hilton Head Branch Library.

Ms. Dickman also shared updates on several improvement projects underway within the library system. Planned enhancements at the Beaufort Branch Library include new carpet, paint, and shelving in the picture book area; the addition and rearrangement of shelving in the SCLENDS transit area in preparation for seven additional counties joining the SCLENDS in July 2026; and the installation of sound absorption panels in the Small Conference Room. Additionally, updates are being planned for the Early Learning Activity Room at the Bluffton Branch Library, including new carpet, paint, and enhanced interactive activities for children and families.

- **Strategic Plan Goal: Collections** Ms. Dickman shared a year-over-year comparison of library usage statistics for July through April in relation to the Strategic Plan goal of supporting access, learning, and growth through strong collections. Physical circulation increased from 332,455 titles borrowed in 2025 to 487,020 in 2026, while digital circulation increased from 228,614 to 264,274. The Library also issued 6,744

new library cards during July–April 2026 compared to 5,617 during the same period in 2025. Ms. Dickman noted that the continued growth in both physical and digital borrowing demonstrates strong community demand for library collections across multiple formats and highlights the importance of continued investment in print and digital materials to support patron access and engagement.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee: Ms. Mutterer presented the financial report noting Beaufort County Library is in good financial standing. She noted that several annual database renewals and digital resource expenditures would occur before the close of the fiscal year. She also recognized the Library's successful pursuit of grant funding supporting strategic initiatives, including study pods, strategic planning, and the Pen & Palmetto Local Author Festival.

B. Strategic Planning Committee: Ms. Cooper reported that staff input has been collected following the Board Retreat and Staff Development Day and will be incorporated into the development of the Library's next Strategic Plan. Library leadership is scheduled to meet with Fast Forward to begin drafting the plan, after which the Strategic Planning Committee will review the draft before it is distributed to the full Board in consideration for adoption.

C. Liaisons

Friends of the Library (FOL):

- **Friends of Beaufort Library:** Ms. Robinson reported attending her first meeting as liaison and expressed enthusiasm for supporting the Friends' work.
- **Friends of Bluffton Library:** Ms. Dickman noted the Friends of Bluffton remain strong in their activities in support of the Library.
- **Friends of Hilton Head Library:** Dr. Porter noted the Hilton Head Friends discussed the upcoming dedication of the Jonathan Daniels and John Jakes Meeting Room and other routine business.

Public Library Foundation: Ms. Cooper reported on the Foundation's continued support of library initiatives, including the Literacy Together initiative, digital collections, and facility improvements. She also shared that the Foundation is developing a website to support fundraising efforts and welcomed Joe Bogacz as its newest board member.

IX. Old Business:

- **Revised Committee Descriptions:** Dr. Porter reviewed revisions to the Board committee descriptions, including renaming the “Nominating Committee” to the “Governance and Nominating Committee” to better reflect its expanded responsibilities, which include evaluating the effectiveness of the Board's governance, conducting periodic Board self-assessments, and overseeing a comprehensive review of the Board's bylaws. A formal

description for the Facilities Committee was also added. The Board discussed delaying the selection of a Vice Chair until newer trustees have had additional time to become familiar with Board operations, with the expectation that a recommendation will be brought forward later in the year.

X. New Business:

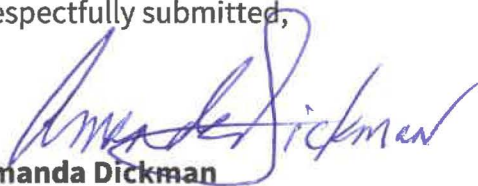
- **Library Director Annual Evaluation Policy:** Dr. Porter reviewed the Library Director Evaluation Policy, emphasizing that all trustees participate in the Director's annual evaluation process. Ms. Baldree suggested updating the policy to reflect the County's employee evaluation schedule, which is now based on each employee's anniversary date.

XI. Announcements:

- The next public meeting of the Library Board of Trustees is scheduled for July 15, 2026 at 4pm at the Bluffton Branch Library.

With no other business to discuss, Dr. Porter adjourned the Library Board of Trustees meeting at 5:10pm on a motion from Ms. Cooper and a second from Ms. Robinson.

Respectfully submitted,



Amanda Dickman
Library Director