

**Beaufort County Library
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Minutes – July 15, 2026– 4:00 p.m.
Bluffton Branch Library
120 Palmetto Way
Bluffton, SC 29910**

The fourth scheduled meeting for 2026 was held in-person at the Bluffton Branch Library.

Trustees: Dr. Janet Porter (Chair), Angela Baldree, Kathy Cooper, Jannine Mutterer, Dr. Mary Olodun, Dr. Dahlia Handman, Shawna Kulpa, Hattie Brown

Absentees: Tracey Robinson, Jacquelyn Howard, Terry Thomas

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 4:00pm. A quorum was established.

II. Pledge of Allegiance: Councilman Passiment led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Public Comment: None.

IV. Introduction of Guests: None.

V. Minutes from meeting held May 13, 2026: The minutes of the May 13, 2026 meeting were approved as presented on a motion by Ms. Baldree, seconded by Dr. Olodun. The motion carried unanimously.

VI. Correspondence and Communications: None.

VII. Old Business:

- **Revised Committee Descriptions:** Dr. Porter referenced 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. Dr. Handman confirmed also the

removal of language related to the Director evaluation procedures to avoid duplication with the Director Evaluation Committee. The revisions were presented for information and did not require Board action.

VIII. Strategic Plan presentation: Amanda Standerfer of Fast Forward Libraries presented the proposed 2026–2028 Beaufort County Library Strategic Plan. She reviewed the planning process, including community and staff input, and explained the Plan’s three strategic directions: Connect: Engage Our Community; Discover: Support Access, Learning, and Growth; and Grow: Ensure a Future-Ready Organization. She noted that the goals will be supported by an annual activity plan, evaluation measures, and regular reporting to the Board.

Ms. Cooper summarized the Strategic Planning Committee’s review of the draft and noted that more than 3,000 community comments were received through the public survey process. Board members expressed appreciation for the community input and the work of Library staff, the committee, and Fast Forward Libraries.

Motion: Ms. Cooper made a motion to adopt the 2026–2028 Beaufort County Library Strategic Plan. The motion was seconded by Dr. Olodun. The motion carried unanimously.

IX. 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 four vacant positions: Library Assistant (Full Time) at Lobeco, Senior Librarian (Beaufort District Collection), Marketing Development Specialist and Library Assistant (Part Time) at Port Royal.
- 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 the implementation of *Recommends*, a personalized email recommendation service that provides readers with customized book suggestions and themed email newsletters once a month. Reading recommendations will also be included on holds pickup notices highlighting similar titles patrons may wish to borrow.
 - **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.
 - 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. To date, 1,117 participants

have completed and submitted their gameboards, compared to 857 during the same period last year.

- Ms. Dickman reported that the Library presented twenty **America 250** programs across its six locations, attracting approximately 665 participants. The programs celebrated the 250th anniversary of the United States while providing opportunities for community engagement and lifelong learning.
- **Strategic Plan Goal: Space:** Ms. Dickman reported that renovations at the Beaufort Branch Library have been completed, including new carpet and paint, reconfiguration of the SCLENDS transit shelving in preparation for the July expansion of the consortium, and installation of sound-absorbing panels in the Small Conference Room. She also shared that carpet and paint improvements in the Early Learning Activity Room at the Bluffton Branch Library are nearing completion.
- **Strategic Plan Goal: Collections** Ms. Dickman highlighted the introduction of 54 early learning and literacy-themed circulating kits containing books and hands-on activities. She also presented FY2026 collection usage statistics: 8,547 new users; 602,699 physical items borrowed; 318,421 digital items borrowed; and 921,120 total items borrowed. Overall circulation increased from 901,648 in FY2025, with continued growth in digital use.

X. Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee: Ms. Mutterer reported that FY2026 expenditures were approximately 91% of budget, with most of the variance attributable to personnel vacancies, while operating expenditures were approximately 99% of budget. She noted that County Council approved the Library's FY2027 budget as requested and that the Finance Committee is working with Library Administration to streamline financial reports for future Board meetings. Ms. Dickman also provided an overview of the County's annual budget development cycle and the Library's FY2027 budget.

B. Strategic Planning Committee: The committee's report was incorporated into the Strategic Plan presentation and discussion.

C. Liaisons

Friends of the Library (FOL):

- **Friends of Beaufort Library:** Ms. Dickman reported that the Friends are on summer hiatus but approved up to \$35,000 for new shelving at the Beaufort Branch Library. Their Annual Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, September 12, and will include a celebration of the renovated picture book area.

- **Friends of Bluffton Library:** Dr. Handman reported the Friends of Bluffton Library hosted a successful bake sale (July 9). In their recent meeting, the group's discussion focused on growing membership, strengthening involvement, and exploring opportunities for the three Friends organizations to collaborate and build capacity.
- **Friends of Hilton Head Library:** Ms. Dickman reported that the Friends of HHI Library held their annual luncheon and budget meeting in June. Their next meeting is expected in September.

Public Library Foundation: Ms. Cooper reported that the Foundation met on June 24 and continues to support the Summer Reading Program and *Literacy Together* coalition. They are continuing their work to build a website for the Foundation. Joe Bogacz will assume the Treasurer position this fall, and Lynn Miller has joined the Foundation Board.

XI. New Business:

- **Governance and Nominating committee:** Dr. Olodun reported that the Governance and Nominating committee developed a proposed slate for Vice Chair and an updated executive nominating packet. The committee will complete its review against the Board bylaws and plans to bring a slate of officers at the next Board meeting.

XII. Announcements:

- Dr. Porter recognized Ms. Dickman's selection as a participating Beaufort musician in the SCETV/PBS *Towns in Tune* project pairing musicians from Beaufort, SC and Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador. Ms. Dickman shared information about the project and performed a portion of an original song for the Board.
- The next public meeting of the Library Board of Trustees is scheduled for September 9, 2026 at 4pm at the Beaufort Branch Library.

With no other business to discuss, Dr. Porter made a motion to adjourn the Library Board of Trustees meeting at 5:13pm with a second from Ms. Cooper. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Amanda Dickman
Library Director