Beaufort County Library
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Minutes – September 9, 2026– 4:00 p.m.
Beaufort Branch Library
311 Scott Street
Beaufort, SC 29902

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

Trustees: Angela Baldree, Hattie Brown, Kathy Cooper, Dr. Dahlia Handman, Jacquelyn Howard, Jannine Mutterer, Dr. Mary Olodun

Absentees: Dr. Janet Porter (Chair), Tracey Robinson, Terry Thomas, Shawna Kulpa

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), Audra Antonacci-Ogden (Assistant County Administrator for Community Services), Nicole Wood (Deputy County Administrator of Beaufort County)

I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 4:04 pm. A quorum was established.

II. Pledge of Allegiance: Mrs. Howard led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Public Comment: None.

IV. Introduction of Guests. Deputy County Administrator Nicole Wood addressed the Board and thanked trustees for their service. Ms. Dickman recognized Grace Cordial upon her retirement in August 2026 after 27 years and 6 months of service as Manager of the Beaufort District Collection. Since joining the Library in February 1999, Grace Cordial has served as Manager of the Beaufort District Collection, the special collections and archives division of the Beaufort County Library. Under her leadership, the Beaufort District Collection has become a highly regarded resource for local history, genealogy, archival research, and historical programming. The Board thanked Ms. Cordial for her exceptional service to the Beaufort County Library and community and wished her well in retirement. Cassandra Knoppel was introduced as the new Senior Librarian overseeing the Beaufort District Collection.

V. Minutes from meeting held July 15, 2026: The minutes of the July 15, 2026 meeting were approved as presented on a motion by Mrs. Cooper, seconded by Dr. Olodun. The motion carried unanimously.

VI. Correspondence and Communications: None.

VII. Old Business: None.

VIII. 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 five vacant positions: Senior Librarian (Youth Services) at HHI, Library Specialist (Beaufort District Collection), Librarian (St. Helena), Marketing Development Specialist and Library Assistant (Part Time) at Port Royal. Ms. Dickman shared that the Library will be hosting a graphic design intern this Fall.

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

- **Strategic Plan Goal: Connect** Ms. Dickman noted the Library concluded its annual Summer Reading Program with 3,073 participants completing the program, a 20% increase over the previous year. In August, the Bluffton and St. Helena libraries served as Early Voting sites for special elections, with Bluffton, St. Helena, and Hilton Head Island libraries also serving as Election Day polling locations. The third convening of Literacy Together partners is scheduled for September 24th at River Ridge Academy to continue the group's collaborative efforts to strengthen literacy throughout Beaufort County.

- **Strategic Plan Goal: Discover** Ms. Dickman shared that *Transparent Language* launched for Library cardholders on August 3rd, providing patrons with a new online language-learning resource. Since its launch, 384 users have created accounts and completed 1,597 learning sessions.

- **Strategic Plan Goal: Grow**: Ms. Dickman reported improvements to the Children's Picture Book Area at the Beaufort Branch Library are complete, with a celebration planned for September 12th at 10am featuring brief recognition of the project followed by a Bluey-themed storytime and activities for children and families. Furnishings and activity components for the Early Learning Activity Room at the Bluffton Branch are on order, with an anticipated ship date in October with installation date to be determined upon confirmation of shipping. The RFQ for design services for the future Pritchardville/Okatie Library has closed, with County staff currently reviewing proposals. Staff are also reviewing proposals received for the replacement of the Library's self-check and Automated Materials Handling (AMH) equipment, with vendor selection to follow the evaluation of proposals.

X. Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee: Mrs. Mutterer reviewed the new consolidated financial report format and commended the Finance Committee and Library Administration staff for their efforts in

developing a more streamlined and comprehensive report. Ms. Dickman noted grants awarded to the Library, including continuing education grants for the Library Operations Manager and Mobile Services Manager to attend professional conferences, a $10,000 Carnegie-related award for projects at the Beaufort Branch Library, and a $50,000 LSTA Impact Grant to support the purchase of a replacement bookmobile.

B. Strategic Planning Committee: Mrs. Cooper reported that Library Administration is finalizing a communications plan for the committee's review.

C. Nominating Committee: Dr. Olodun reported that the committee is developing a slate of nominees for Vice Chair and will schedule a meeting to finalize nominations. Board members interested in serving as Vice Chair or nominating another member were encouraged to contact Dr. Olodun. She noted that the Vice Chair coordinates the Director's annual evaluation and must be prepared to assume the duties of the Chair in their absence and should be prepared for future service as Board Chair.

D. Liaisons

Friends of the Library (FOL):

- **Friends of Beaufort Library**: Ms. Dickman reported that the Friends of Beaufort Library will host their Annual Meeting on Saturday, September 12th, and will include a celebration of the renovated picture book area.

- **Friends of Bluffton Library**: Dr. Handman reported that the Friends of the Bluffton Library will hold their annual book sale September 17th–19th with auction items also available.

- **Friends of Hilton Head Library**: Ms. Dickman reported that the Friends of HHI Library have scheduled their next meeting for September 22nd.

Public Library Foundation: Ms. Cooper reported that the Foundation continued its support of the annual Summer Reading Program and is developing a website. The Foundation will also meet soon to discuss its annual fundraising appeal.

E. Facilities Committee: Mrs. Howard noted the Facilities Committee will schedule a committee meeting prior to the November board meeting.

XI. New Business:

- Mrs. Howard commended Library staff for their assistance with room reservations and coordination of voter registration education events planned at the Bluffton and Hilton Head Island branches on September 15th.
- Ms. Dickman shared an update from Councilman Passiment, who was unable to attend the meeting. She relayed his support for continued progress on the New Riverside Library project and that County Council is interested in exploring potential options for the Lobeco Library property with the Beaufort County School District.

XII. Announcements:

- The next public meeting of the Library Board of Trustees is scheduled for November 18, 2026 at 4pm at the Bluffton Branch Library.

With no other business to discuss, Ms. Howard made a motion to adjourn the Library Board of Trustees meeting at 5:00pm with a second from Dr. Olodun. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Dickman
Library Director