

**Mountain Regional Library System
Board Meeting of Trustees
Fannin County Court Room
Wednesday, February 17, 2021, 10 a.m.**

I. Call to Order and Welcome – Paula Whitehead, Chairman

Members present - Paula Whitehead (T), Dionne Berrong (T), Joan Crothers (T), Kathy Tickner (F), Carol Crawford (F), Stacey Head (U), Kaye McCann (U), Trish Allen (U).

Members absent: Holly Tiger (T), John Turner (F), Joan Mannheim (U).

Staff Present: Heath Lee, Director, Vicki Adkison-Asst. Director/Business Mgr., Monica Clark, Fannin Branch Mgr.

II. Amendments to Agenda: There were none.

III. Adoption of Agenda: Motion made by Stacy Head, seconded by Trish Allen, and passed.

IV. Minutes: The minutes of the November 18, 2020 meeting were sent by email. Kaye McCann made a motion to approve them: seconded by Kathy Tickner and passed.

V. Public Comments: None

VI. Items to be discussed

a. **Old Business:**

- i. MRLS Constitution & By-Laws: Tabled

b. **New Business:**

- i. MRLS Legal Counsel Discussion:

Since MRLS has no current lawyer, Director Lee reached out to 8 different ones in the area. Clark & Clark, in Ellijay, GA and Monica Barron, Atty., whose office is in Young Harris, were discussed as to their fees and experiences with the following stipulations: Retain for one year and split costs between the 3 county branches. Evaluations of performance can be made at the end of the one-year agreement. Trish Allen made a motion to retain Monica Barron, seconded by Kaye McCann, and passed.

VII. Chairman's Report—Paula Whitehead, Chair: No report.

VIII. Library Director's Report—Heath Lee:

I have been here a year and look forward to many more years.

MRL reopened to curbside service on February 10th and will be open to the public beginning in March. Services will be offered 3 days per week from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. T.C. Public Library will revert back to service being available 4 days/week from 10 a.m.- 6 p.m. based on the decision by the Towns County Library Board of Trustees. At this time, weekend service is not being planned to be offered at either location due to financial constraints. We plan to address the loss of weekend services with the Towns County government in the next budget cycle.

Sometime in the first quarter of 2021 Fannin County government should begin making determinations as to what they intend to do with the Whitepath building.

Internet bandwidth to the branches had not been increased since 2013. Speeds and capacity will be improving dramatically on July 1, 2021 for GPLS and Boaz. Towns, MRL, and Union will be receiving dedicated 1 GB speeds and Fannin will be receiving dedicated 700 MB speed. The contracts that were signed are for 3-year terms with Windstream Communications and Ellijay Telephone Company. The increases in speed and capacity will also allow for much improved Wi-Fi capacity and connectivity.

In the coming months, Boaz Networking will be installing additional Wi-Fi access points in all the branches in locations that will allow our patrons to access our Wi-Fi from parking lots, benches, their vehicles and previous dead spots located in the buildings.

All MRR LibTech grant funds for FY21 have been spent, and a reimbursement has been requested from GPLS. The total grant funding was \$11,132.00 which was much less than in previous years. Some of the items purchased with the funds include a new copier for UCPL, a new AWE Learning tablet for FCPL, and new 75" televisions for both UCPL and TCPL. MRR LibTech funds are once again being requested by GPLS in the upcoming state budget.

With the help of Boaz Networking, we will be able to reconfigure our network architecture to allow for the better Internet service and with funds from the approved Innovation Tech Grant, we will be able to purchase the necessary equipment to handle the increased loads and changing network architecture. Changing the network design allows the branches access to better service by freeing up expenses that are presently dedicated to an outdated network design. Internet access costs for the system exceeds \$72,000 with ERATE grants paying the majority and GPLS paying the remainder. All of this was accomplished at no additional cost to MRLS.

IX. Finance Report -Vicki Adkison: MRLS FY21 2nd Quarter Finance Report was discussed.

X. Personnel Report: Vicki reported new employees: Jessica Tibbetts - TCPL/MRL, Whitney Husid – MRL, Madison Capstick – MRL, Alexis Osborne – TCPL, Mary Elder – HDQ.

Resigned Since November 17, 2020: Kaley Flowers – UCPL, Debbie Phillips – TCPL (retired).

XI. Adjournment- 11 a.m.

Motion to adjourn was duly made.

/s/Joan Crothers, Secretary