

**Forsyth County Public Library Board of Trustees
Minutes from February 23, 2015 Meeting**

The Forsyth County Public Library Board of Trustees held a called meeting at the Cumming Library on February 23, 2015. Present were Board members Mary Helen McGruder (Chairman), Jean Bowline, Bob Keller, Kristin Morrissey, and Tim Plotner. Also present were Jon McDaniel (Director), Holly Barfield, Linda Kelly, Stephen Kight, Anna Lyle, Susan Thornton, and other staff members.

Mary Helen McGruder called the meeting to order.

Approval of January 20, 2015 Library Board meeting minutes

Motion was made by Jean Bowline to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2015 meeting. Tim Plotner seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, with all Board members present.

Discussion of proposed revisions to the Library's Personnel Policy Manual

Anna Lyle, Assistant Director for Support Services, noted that print copies of the existing Personnel Policy Manual, the proposed revised Personnel Policy Manual, a redline version of the manual, and a chart summarizing key proposed changes to the existing manual were available on the Board table for reference. The revisions were also projected on the screen for group review. Ms. Lyle introduced Susan Thornton, Human Resources Manager, who would help answer Board members' questions.

Ms. Lyle said that she planned to cover several specific points from the chart, but did not plan to discuss every revision. She asked that Board members speak up if they wish to discuss additional sections. The following manual sections and issues were discussed:

Employment statuses

Ms. Lyle noted that several policies were updated to reflect changes in eligibility for health insurance, the new 25-hour status, and differences between classified and non-classified staff.

Definitions—Volunteer

Ms. Lyle explained that a definition of *volunteer* had been added to the Personnel Policy Manual in order to clarify that FCPL employees may not volunteer with FCPL, due to potential conflicts with the Fair Labor Standards Act. In response to a question from Mary Helen McGruder, Ms. Lyle clarified that employees may volunteer with the FCPL Friends and Advocates, but are expected to do so at a different location than their regular work location in order to avoid confusion.

Section A-5—Discrimination and Harassment

Ms. Lyle stated that this policy had been updated to include a section on bullying. Bullying is similar to harassment, but is not targeted to a protected group. Tim Plotner asked that text be added to address false accusations and noted that guilt should not be assumed. Ms. Lyle suggested adding text similar to that used elsewhere in the same policy. There was general Board agreement to add this clarifying text.

Section A-6—Immigration Law Compliance

Ms. Lyle explained that specific procedures have been removed and replaced with a generic statement that FCPL will follow the current procedure dictated by the appropriate agency.

Section A-7—Workplace Safety

Ms. Lyle pointed out the paragraphs of the Workplace Safety policy that had been revised to reflect the County's new Loss Prevention Policy. There is an increased emphasis on the role of supervisors, training, safety inspections, and investigations.

Section A-9—Workplace Violence

The proposed revision states that FCPL continues to not allow employees to bring guns to work, which is allowed under O.C.G.A. § 16-11-135. Tim Plotner stated that he could not support this limitation—that someone with a carry permit has signed up for this responsibility and does not take it lightly. Ms. Lyle summarized her current understanding of the County's position—that their policy has not been revised, but that the existing policy does not allow employees to bring guns to work. She added that there had been some concern that the County's insurer would require a prohibition against employees carrying guns and that the Risk Management staff had been instructed by the Board of Commissioners to seek direction from the County's insurer. Ms. Lyle said she did not know the outcome of this—that the guns issue had not appeared on subsequent agendas. Mr. Plotner reiterated that he could not support disarming employees in the workplace and that he would disagree with any insurance requirement to have such a policy. Ms. Lyle noted that, if a staff member wore a gun at a children's program, the library would likely receive negative publicity. Mr. Plotner clarified that he has no problem denying open carry—that the responsibility of having a carry permit includes keeping the weapon concealed. Bob Keller said that he agrees with Mr. Plotner to a point, but said he would take the side of not making patrons uncomfortable. Mr. Keller said that if you make the public uncomfortable, you no longer have that public. Kristin Morrissey said that she would not be comfortable with the Library having a different position than the County. Mary Helen McGruder agreed that the Library should be consistent with the County. There was general agreement to table this topic for now and for staff to do additional research about the County's position on this issue.

Section A-10—Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

Ms. Lyle noted that this policy has been added to reflected changes to O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5, which was expanded to include employees and volunteers of public libraries as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse.

Section C—Drug-Free Workplace

Ms. Lyle explained that this revised policy has the same approach and philosophy as the existing policy, but includes more detail and more practical information.

Section D-4—Non-Competitive Appointments

Ms. Lyle stated that this policy has been expanded to list the types of appointments that have been or may be made outside of the competitive process. Kristin Morrissey said it is good to have flexibility for the future. Mary Helen McGruder said that she was fine with the revision since the attorney was comfortable with the changes.

Section E-2—Initial Training Period

Ms. Lyle explained the recommendation to change the initial training period for promotions from 8 months to 12 months. Kristin Morrissey asked if employees are given time on the job to read the Personnel Policy Manual. Susan Thornton explained how the manual is introduced to employees during orientation and the degree to which independent review is expected. Jean Bowline commented that the process is certainly adequate.

Section F-3—Prohibited Conduct

Tim Plotner said that the use of the term *business necessity* in item #12 was unclear. Susan Thornton explained that a business's response to disclosure of a criminal conviction must be consistent with business necessity. For example, a Courier driver receiving a DUI would be handled differently than an employee with no driving responsibilities. Ms. Thornton said she would reword this section to clarify the meaning of *business necessity*.

Section F-6—Appeals Procedure

Ms. Lyle noted that the only change was to allow timeframes to be extended by the Director (for Complaint Procedure), Library Board Chairperson, or by mutual agreement. Ms. Lyle also shared that the attorney recommended adding a list of additional situations for which the appeals procedure would not be available. The Board members reviewed this list and declined to add these points. Bob Keller commented that the appeal procedure would be available to employees who want to carry a gun at work.

Section G-9—Procedures for Reporting Absences and Requesting Time Off

Ms. Lyle clarified that, although this is a new section, most of the content is not new. Information about requesting time off was previously in the Benefits section, which made it less likely to be accessed by non-classified staff. New text has been added regarding returning to work.

Section H-6—Sick Leave Benefits

Ms. Lyle explained that the redefinition of *family member* from a list of specific relatives to individuals who play a significant role in the life of the employee was intended to make the policy more flexible and to eliminate the need for interpretation and requests for exceptions.

Tim Plotner initiated a general discussion about the fact that maximum leave accruals are not prorated for part-time staff (Section H-5). No action was taken as a result of this discussion.

Section H-10—Educational Leave Benefits

Ms. Lyle outlined the recommended changes to educational leave benefits, including lowering the eligibility requirement from 3 years to 2 years of classified service and

requiring the education to be directly relevant to an employee's work with FCPL (e.g., MLIS).

Section I-3—Leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Ms. Lyle said that several changes were made to bring the policy in line with 2013 changes in the FMLA. Ms. Lyle noted that another change is expected soon, specifically a change in the definition of spouse, but that the final regulations have not been issued yet.

Section I-5—Personal Leave of Absence

Ms. Lyle said that this policy is used for those employees who are not eligible for paid leave but have a reason for an extended absence—typically for medical absences (for those employees not eligible for FMLA) or for employees who wish to return home to another country for an extended visit. The revision clarifies procedures and outlines modified options regarding job protection during the leave of absence.

Section J-1—Dress Code

Ms. Lyle explained that the changes to the Dress Code policy are minor and that the policy still focuses on overall image. The term *conservative* has been replaced with *modest*. Per the attorney's recommendation, the prohibition against extreme hair colors has been removed.

Section K—FCPL Property and Electronic Information

Ms. Lyle stated that this section has been consolidated from 17 sections to 8 sections, but that content remains largely the same.

Section K-7—Social Media and Networking

Ms. Lyle said that this new policy is based on a sample provided by the attorney. Ms. Lyle noted the difficulty in balancing freedom of speech issues with expectations of professional behavior. There was a general discussion about social media behavior. Mr. Plotner said one should err on the side of freedom whenever possible.

Ms. Lyle concluded her comments by asking if Board members were ready to vote on the revisions at this meeting or if they would prefer to wait until the March meeting. Ms. Morrissey said she was comfortable making the motion and incorporating the changes discussed. Ms. Lyle and Ms. Thornton reviewed these changes to verify their understanding of the Board's instructions.

Motion was made by Kristin Morrissey to approve proposed revisions to multiple sections of the Personnel Policy Manual, effective March 1, 2015, with the exception of the following directives from the Board: add text regarding false accusations in bullying section (A-5), retain existing text regarding guns in the workplace (A-9) until further discussion, and add clarification regarding "business necessity" in prohibited conduct section (F-3). Bob Keller seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, with all Board members present.

Mary Helen McGruder said the gun issue would be discussed at a future meeting. Kristin Morrissey suggested polling other Georgia libraries to see how they have responded to the new weapons legislation.

Approved 3/16/2015

Motion was made by Bob Keller to adjourn the meeting. Tim Plotner seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, with all Board members present.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Forsyth County Public Library Board of Trustees will be Monday, March 16, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. at the Cumming Library, 585 Dahlonega Road, Cumming, GA 30040.