



# Okaloosa County Public Library Cooperative

Crestview - Destin - Fort Walton Beach - Mary Esther - Niceville - Valparaiso

## **Governing Board Minutes: January 25, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.**

Niceville Public Library, Conference Room

### **Governing Board**

Okaloosa County:	Nathan Boyles
Crestview:	Cynthia Brown
Destin:	absent
Fort Walton Beach:	MG Moran
Mary Esther:	Bernie Oder
Niceville:	absent
Valparaiso:	Kay Hamilton

### **Directors Council**

Crestview:	Jean McCarthy
Destin:	Wen Livingston
Fort Walton Beach:	Kimberly Ball
Mary Esther:	Sheila Ortyl
Niceville:	Sheila Bishop
Valparaiso:	Hope Willis

### **OCPLC**

Vicky Stever  
Dorothee Bennett

#### **1. Introductions**

#### **2. Approval of October 26, 2022 Minutes**

Motion: Cynthia Brown  
Second: MG Moran  
Motion approved unanimously

#### **3. Coordinators Report**

**Professional.** Vicky was elected as the 2023 president of the Panhandle Library Association Network (PLAN) Board of Directors at the annual meeting on Nov. 4. She is a public library representative on the PLAN board through 2025.

Community support activity, Nov. 15-16 at the Junior League Emerald Coast's Child Clothing Project event, at the HSU Educational Foundation center in Fort Walton Beach. The JLEC Clothing Project provides new clothing, shoes, books and bags to children who need them, as identified through school channels. Each event lasted for a morning and culminated in lunch for the kids. While children waited their turns to select their own

clothing, they engaged in STEM and craft activities provided by community partner organizations. The Cooperative and Fort Walton Beach Library each hosted an activity station and interacted with 300 children and their facilitators.

[Video link <https://youtu.be/pWeGStq-yfU> ]

**Public Library Directors Meeting** in Tallahassee, Dec. 6-8. All 6 directors & Vicky attended, and the Cooperative provided one of the carpool vehicles. Meetings like this one bring in nationally-recognized thought leaders along with state and regional partner organizations. Networking and peer presentations inspire ideas for services and delivery methods. Much of what we learn is brought back to share with staff. A sampling, to demonstrate the range of topics:

- How to identify and define specific subsets of our potential audience and craft messages that are relevant to that specific group
- Increased awareness of barriers to library usage and strategies to overcome them.
- Department of Elder Affairs' huge variety of services focused on helping seniors stay in their homes for as long as possible, and how to refer library patrons
- National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled isn't only for those who are legally blind but also for anyone who cannot use print materials. Also, there's an app for that.
- A Library of Things (lending non-traditional items) reflects community interest to be successful
- Creating an "expertise database" to identify skill sets and knowledge within your organization
- Libraries as partner locations for social service delivery or having social workers on staff
- Free resources to help combat the opioid crisis affecting rural communities

**Membership Drive.** We are employing the marketing techniques we learned in a membership drive that will begin in February. The first phase of our drive is to increase retention through renewing expired members. The target audience is the adult residents who will be personally contacted and invited to renew. As well as increasing retention – the goal is 20% of those contacted will renew – the personal approach is instrumental in relationship building, which increases loyalty. Throughout 2023 we will select narrow audiences among non-users and develop messaging to appeal to their specific needs and interests. Our larger goal is to increase net membership by 5% by the end of July.

**Career Online High School update.** The first graduate of 2023, who finished on January 7, is our 30th graduate to date. Simon is the first graduate from Valparaiso. The high school diploma is the first step in his goal to become a cardiologist; he will enlist in the Air Force as soon as his diploma arrives. Since our October meeting, we've processed 21 interest surveys which resulted in 12 people enrolling in the prerequisite

class. Of those, 8 successfully completed the class and advanced to the panel interview. Six scholarships have been awarded; one was voluntarily returned when the student realized his circumstances were not optimal at this time. Of our 19 active students, two are above 90% complete. The two newest scholarship recipients will enroll next Monday, bringing our census to 21.

**Retirements.** We want to recognize two long-term library employees who are retiring this month. Anna Florence has 36 years with the Crestview Library, and Nancy Cardinal, currently children's librarian, has been at Fort Walton Beach for 17 years.

**UPCOMING:** Three libraries have been selected to participate in the Legal Services of North Florida's RV Road Trip. On March 7, LSNF will bring their new mobile outreach vehicle to Crestview, Niceville and Fort Walton Beach. The RV will be in the library parking lot for 2 hours, to inform the community about the no-fee legal services available to low-income individuals and families. LSNF is a private, not-for-profit organization serving 16 counties across the central and western Panhandle. There is never a fee to clients. They provide advice and representation in civil matters only. As well as daily life issues, they play an important role in the aftermath of disasters. After Hurricane Michael, for example, they assisted many in Panama City with landlord/tenant issues.

#### **4. Election of Vice-Chair**

Election and Term of Office. "The office of Chair shall be assigned to the member representing the County and shall hold office for the member's term upon the Board. The Vice-Chair shall be elected annually by the Board at the January or February meeting of the Board and shall hold office for one (1) year."

Motion to elect Abner Williams to be the vice-chair for the second year.

Motion: MG Moran

Second: Cynthia Brown

Motion approved unanimously

#### **5. FY24 Budget Planning**

The Cooperative's departmental budget needs to be developed February-March, and is due to the county by April 28. A draft budget will be presented for board input and direction on March 22. Library IT projects for FY24, including those funded by municipalities or external grants, need to be routed through County IT's process in accordance with the Interlocal. Deadline is March 3 for county departments; cities are recommended to meet the same deadline to ensure review before libraries submit city budgets. We want to avoid unhappy surprises such as technology that won't play nice with existing systems or can't be supported on the county network, if applicable. This includes purchase/addition of staff or public computers that would be configured/supported by County IT. This agenda item is advance notice to the board in order to be ready for discussion in March.

## 6. New Board Member Informational Package

Vicky asked board members, what information they would have liked to get, when they joined the library Governing Board. Suggestions included: A who-is-who at the libraries and on the Board, how-to advocate for libraries within the respective cities, purpose of the Board, bylaws, history of the cooperative, message from the Chair. Format could be print, email and/or video, or a combination of formats. In-coming board members could be asked how they like to receive the information. Current operating documents such as ByLaws and Interlocal Agreement would be included. Since a library cooperative is a unique type of entity, an explanation of how the organization operates is needed.

## 7. Items from the floor

**Destin (Wen):** The Destin Library will soon celebrate 20 years in the current building. The building is starting to show its age and some improvements are needed.

**Mary Esther (Sheila O):** Youth services is planning “Camp Read S’more”, an outreach event at Mary Esther Elementary School. Andy and Judy (folk music duo) will perform on Saturday, January 28. For March, the Youth Services team is planning activities themed “Spring into Nature.”

A group of parents with special needs children will use the library as a meeting space.

**Crestview (Jean):** The library will host annual AARP tax preparation.

Youth Services will hold a Bear Hunt Event on January 27 (kids with flashlights will search for their teddy bears hidden throughout the darkened library).

The library is working on creating a maker space; furniture has been received.

Jean is testing the cooperative-wide membership drive targeting expired accounts. So far, every contact resulted in the library member renewing their account.

Upcoming event for kids and teens is Touch-a-Truck. Kids can get up-close to a variety of vehicles. Teens will be invited to explore related careers.

**Fort Walton Beach (Kimberly):** Recent outreach events include the Child Clothing Project (Junior League of the Emerald Coast); City Christmas parade: Winter Wonderland (FWB Police Department event). Meghan Duffey was promoted to be the Children’s Librarian after Nancy Cardinal’s retirement. Meghan has a Masters degree in Library Science. The library restructured an area within the children’s department to provide a dedicated space for babies and parents to be near their own materials.

**Valparaiso (Hope):** The library hosts “Justice on the Block” clinic held by Legal Services of North Florida the first Thursday of each month (not available in February). Health and Job Fair is scheduled for February 17<sup>th</sup>. Valparaiso is gaining a new outdoor customer space. The patio area has been paved; a pavilion will be added soon. The library has plans to expand into Room 3 and the City Chambers, which is currently not officially part of the library.

Andy and Judy (folk music duo) will perform Friday, Jan. 27. On February 8<sup>th</sup> the library entity will turn 52 years old.

**Niceville (Sheila B):** Niceville is offering more adult activities such as viewing/discussing documentaries. Long-time City Manager Lannie Corbin has announced his retirement for

early August (he will have worked for the city for 52 years). The folk-music duo Hungrytown will perform in Niceville February 16<sup>th</sup> (and in Destin February 14<sup>th</sup>). The Niceville Library will celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in June 2024.

**Crestview** (Cynthia): Anna Florence is retiring. She was named the City of Crestview Employee of the Year in October 2022 and was recognized at the City Council Meeting on Monday, Jan. 23. Her retirement party is on Tuesday, January 31 from 10 am-2 pm at the Library.

The City of Crestview recently hosted an opioid summit and Cynthia requested the libraries be part of the community effort for public education.

**8. Meeting adjourned**

The next meeting is Wednesday, March 22, 2023, at Niceville Library at 4:00 p.m.