



**Town of Clayton
Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library Advisory Board Regular
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 15, 2026 at 5:30 PM
Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library
446 E. Second Street**

Pursuant to N.C. General Statute § 143-318.10(e), these minutes provide a general summary of the Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library Advisory Board meeting and do not represent a verbatim transcript.

Board Members Present:

Julia Curran, Board Chair
Eugene Wheeler, Board Vice-Chair
Makayla Walden
Meredith Sewell
Amanda Gawthorpe
Amber Revels-Stocks
Lucy Bianchi
Jill King
Patrice Hardy
Christine Jernigan
Sarah Chera
Miriam Herrell

Staff Present:

Gretchen Williams, Council Member Liaison
Mel Poole, Library Manager
Sam Johnson-Phillips, Deputy Town Clerk

Board Members Absent:

None

1. Call to Order

Board Chair Curran called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

- a. Adoption of Minutes
 - November 20, 2025

Approval of November 20, 2025 Minutes

Result:	Passed 12-0
Mover:	Julia Curran
Seconder:	Makayla Walden
Yes:	Makayla Walden, Meredith Sewell, Julia Curran, Amanda Gawthorpe, Eugene Wheeler, Amber Revels-Stocks, Lucy Bianchi, Jill King, Patrice Hardy, Christine Jernigan, Sarah Chera, Miriam Herrell
No:	None
Absent:	

3. Old Business

- a. Library Mural Update
 - Presenter:**
Julia Curran, Library Advisory Board

Board Chair Curran reported that she attended the Public Art Advisory Board (PAAB) meeting this week and shared that the PAAB provided several helpful suggestions. One recommendation was to partner with Clayton High School, which could help reduce project costs. The PAAB also suggested visiting Garner to observe a similar project and recommended using vinyl on the building rather than paint. Additionally, they encouraged forming a partnership with the Downtown Development Association (DDA) and utilizing the Façade Grant, creating a potential three-way partnership.

The PAAB also suggested making the sculpture interactive, allowing visitors to take photos. Board Chair Curran asked if anyone would be interested in forming a committee for the project. Library Manager Poole agreed that creating a committee would be a great idea. Ms. Noel Walden, Vice-Chair Wheeler, and Ms. Herrell volunteered to serve on the committee for the Library Mural project.

Ms. Poole noted that the mural would need to be placed on the wall in the grass area, and she also requested that the bushes be removed so they would not impede the visibility of the wall.

Board Chair Curran asked Ms. Noel Walden if she knew the estimate of the funding

available through the Façade Grant. Ms. Noel Walden stated that she would obtain the application. Board Chair Curran also noted that the PAAB requires a separate application for the project.

4. New Business

- a. Introduction of New Members

Presenter:

Sam Johnson-Phillips, Deputy Town Clerk

The Deputy Town Clerk introduced the new board members, Ms. Patrice Hardy and Ms. Christine Jernigan. The Deputy Town Clerk then invited the new members to introduce themselves and share a brief overview of their experience. Following their introductions, the current board members also introduced themselves.

- b. Community Information Policy

Presenter:

Mel Poole, Library Manager

Library Manager Poole presented a proposed Community Information Policy, which establishes guidelines for materials displayed within the library, including flyers, brochures, display windows, and any potential community bulletin boards. The policy is intended to clarify what types of materials may be posted, prioritize library and Town-related information, and provide staff with clear standards when responding to requests from community members.

The policy prioritizes materials related to library programs, Town events, and local nonprofit, cultural, educational, or government activities within or near Clayton. Displayed materials may include educational announcements, nonprofit events, author appearances, and government services. Items will generally be removed after four weeks or once the event date has passed, unless prior approval is granted. All materials must be reviewed and approved by the Library Manager or designee and placed only in designated display areas due to limited space.

The policy also outlines prohibited materials, including advertisements for personal or commercial services (except for author book promotions), political campaign materials, items that violate laws, or materials that promote violence, discrimination, or hatred. Materials posted without approval will be removed and discarded. The Community Information Policy also clarified that posting materials does not imply endorsement, and the library is not responsible for lost, damaged, or removed items.

Board members discussed possible procedures for submitting materials for approval, including requiring individuals to bring materials to the library to ensure documentation of submissions. Virtual submissions may be considered on a case-by-case basis as accommodation. It was also noted that the library's public display areas cannot be fully monitored, and materials may be removed or damaged by the public.

Following discussion and suggested edits, the draft policy was tabled to allow staff to make revisions before bringing it back for further review.

Table Community Information Policy

Result:	12-0
Mover:	Julia Curran
Seconded:	Patrice Hardy
Yes:	Makayla Walden, Meredith Sewell, Julia Curran, Amanda Gawthorpe, Eugene Wheeler, Amber Revels-Stocks, Lucy Bianchi, Jill King, Patrice Hardy, Christine Jernigan, Sarah Chera, Miriam Herrell
No:	None
Absent:	

c. **Material Delivery Policy**

Presenter:

Mel Poole, Library Manager

Library Manager Poole presented a revised Material Delivery Policy, originally discussed in January 2025, noting that basic guidelines had existed since around 2020 during COVID but had never been formally adopted. The updated policy clarifies eligibility requirements, delivery expectations, and safety protections for both library staff/volunteers and recipients. It also combines home delivery services and institutional courier services (such as daycare centers) into a single policy to streamline procedures.

Library Manager Poole confirmed that deliveries currently include ETJ residents and that institutions may receive up to 50 items, while home delivery patrons typically receive one bag of

approximately 10 items. Deliveries are limited due to staff capacity, with 10 home delivery patrons currently served, which was indicated is the current operational limit. Institutions currently receiving deliveries include daycare centers and the Planning Center for Active Aging. Materials may also be requested through the Cardinal system. For lost or damaged materials, institutions are billed, while home delivery patrons are subject to the library’s circulation policy, which allows consideration for hardship cases.

The policy specifies that staff do not enter homes, and deliveries are typically left on porches during a scheduled window, with bags exchanged at pickup. Board members also discussed liability considerations related to potential future volunteer delivery drivers, which will require additional review with legal counsel.

Following discussion and questions regarding delivery procedures, lost materials, health

considerations, and language accessibility, the board voted to approve the Material Delivery Policy. Ms. Poole noted the policy will still require legal review and approval through the Town’s chain of command and Town Council before final adoption.

Approval of Adoption of Policy

Result:	Passed 12-0
Mover:	Julia Curran
Seconded:	Patrice Hardy
Yes:	Makayla Walden, Meredith Sewell, Julia Curran, Amanda Gawthorpe, Eugene Wheeler, Amber Revels-Stocks, Lucy Bianchi, Jill King, Patrice Hardy, Christine Jernigan, Sarah Chera, Miriam Herrell
No:	None
Absent:	

5. Observations from the Library Board

- a. Observations from the Library Board Members

Presenter:

Julia Curran, Library Advisory Board

The library recently hosted the Santa Center program, where children could write letters to Santa, which were collected by the Junior Woman’s Club elves. Santa sent back personalized responses, and a total of 172 letters were collected from the library, the Downtown Development Association (DDA) box at the tree lighting, and other locations.

In other library updates, the seed library was promoted to a local gardening group. Expansion is planned once additional space becomes available. New seed batches are expected in February 2026. The library’s promotion on local Facebook groups generated significant engagement, with posts viewed approximately 17,000 times over 118 likes.

The fiber arts group has seen renewed interest due to broader promotion. While previous attendance fluctuated around 12–15 participants, recent outreach brought 22 attendees to the last meeting. Expanding the group to all fiber artists (not just knitters/crocheters) appears to be attracting new participants and fostering a more inclusive environment. Staff are hopeful these efforts will continue to rejuvenate community engagement.

6. Update on Friends of The Library

- a. Update on Friends of The Library

Presenter:

Julia Curran, Library Advisory Board

Discussed were opportunities for community members to become a Friend of the Library or renew their membership. Membership is \$10, and interested individuals can join or renew online through the library's website.

7. Librarian's Report

a. Librarian's Report

Presenter:

Mel Poole, Library Manager

Library staff are currently reorganizing the adult fiction collection by assigning genres, updating shelving locations, spine labels, and call numbers in preparation for the library's move. Genres will include romance, sci-fi/fantasy, horror, historical fiction, inspirational, literary/general fiction, and mystery/thrillers. This reorganization aims to improve browsing and circulation, making it easier for patrons to find books by category. Major shelving changes will occur once the library reopens.

Renovation remains on schedule for a summer reopening, likely in June or July. Staff will begin packing and relocating materials in the spring, with plans for a brief closure during the move.

The library is exploring community engagement activities, such as an honorary "book passing" event, a grand re-opening, and a ribbon-cutting, with opportunities for volunteers and Friends of the Library involvement. Marketing efforts, including social media and local press, are being coordinated to attract new patrons and highlight programs.

Current programs include the Winter Reading Challenge, which continues through February 28 and features activities that can be completed simultaneously. The fiber arts group has expanded its membership with broader promotion, now welcoming all fiber artists. The seed library is preparing for a limited expansion, with new seed batches expected in February.

Efforts are also underway to document African American history in Clayton, including partnerships with local Black churches and the transcription of oral histories. The library is focused on preserving history accurately through careful collection, cataloging, and volunteer support. Current initiatives include digitizing newspapers and processing oral histories from the early 2000s.

Volunteers and Friends of the Library continue to support programs, fundraising, and special events, including the grand re-opening and summer reading programs. All program and collection updates, including shelving reorganization and delivery policies, are designed to improve patron access while maintaining staff efficiency and safety.

November 2025:

Visits: 1,688; New Patrons: 114; Physical Checkouts: 8,917; Digital Checkouts: 3,215; Public Computer Sessions: 286; Early Literacy Program/Attendance: 2/23; Children Program/Attendance: 3/14; Teen Program/Attendance: 1/4; Adult Program/Attendance: 7/126; Meeting Room Usage Total Reservation/Total Attendance: 0/0

December 2025:

Visits: 1,625; New Patrons: 149; Physical Checkouts: 8,487; Digital Checkouts: 3,273; Public Computer Sessions: 239; Early Literacy Program/Attendance: 2/10; Children Program/Attendance: 2/15; Teen Program/Attendance: 1/5; Adult Program/Attendance: 6/81; Meeting Room Usage Total Reservation/Total Attendance: 0/0

Outreach Events:

Three outreach events were held in November and December.

Upcoming Programs:

- Storytime Theatre & Improv: January 29th and February 25th (K-5th Graders)
- Foam Marbled Valentines: February 14th (Preschool)
- From Think to Ink: February 19th (K-5th Graders)
- NC Reads Book Club: February 25th (Adult)
- Family Speed Game Night: February 26th
- Team Jigsaw Puzzle Competition: March 23rd (Teen and Adult)

Popular Checkouts (Physical Books):

- The Wedding People: A Novel by Alison Espach
- Dog Man: Grime and Punishment by Dav Pilkey
- James by Percival Everett
- The Killing Stones: A Detective Jimmy Perez Novel by Ann Cleeves
- The Women by Kristin Hannah
- All The Colors of the Dark by Chris Whitaker

8. Other Business

9. Adjournment

- a. Adjourn


With nothing further, the meeting was adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

Motion to Adjourn

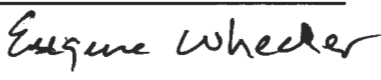
Result:	Passed 12-0
Mover:	Julia Curran

Seconded:	Amber Revels-Stocks
Yes:	Makayla Walden, Meredith Sewell, Julia Curran, Amanda Gawthorpe, Eugene Wheeler, Amber Revels-Stocks, Lucy Bianchi, Jill King, Patrice Hardy, Christine Jernigan, Sarah Chera, Miriam Herrell
No:	None
Absent:	

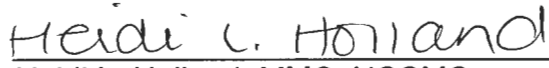
Adopted by the Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library Advisory Board on Thursday, March 19, 2026.



 Julia Curran
 Board Chair



Attest:



 Heidi L. Holland, MMC, NCCMC
 Town Clerk

