



Town of Clayton
Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library Advisory Board Minutes
Thursday, March 20, 2025 at 5:30 PM
Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library
100 S. Church Street

Board Members Present:

Julia Curran
Eugene Wheeler
Amber Revels-Stocks
Meredith Sewell
Amanda Gawthorpe
Sarah Chera
Miriam Herrell
Lucy Bianchi
Jill King

Staff Present:

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

Board Members Absent:

Victoria Privette
Makayla Noel Walden

1 CALL TO ORDER

- a) Ms. Curran called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a) Adoption of Minutes
- January 16, 2025
- Presenter:* Sam Johnson-Phillips, Deputy Town Clerk

Adoption of Minutes

RESULT:	CARRIED 9-0
MOVER:	Amanda Gawthorpe
SECONDER:	Jill King
YES:	Amber Revels-Stocks, Meredith Sewell, Amanda Gawthorpe, Sarah Chera, Miriam Herrell, Julia Curran, Lucy Bianchi, Eugene Wheeler, and Jill King
NO:	None
ABSENT:	Victoria Privette, Makayla Noel Walden

3 OLD BUSINESS

4 NEW BUSINESS

a) Chair Nomination

Presenter: Sam Johnson-Phillips, Deputy Town Clerk

Deputy Town Clerk Johnson-Phillips provided the board with the opportunity to nominate a Chair. Board Member Bianchi nominated Julia Curran to remain Chair, and Board Member Herrell seconded the nomination. Deputy Town Clerk Johnson-Phillips asked if there were any other nominations for the Chair position. With none offered, Julia Curran was confirmed to retain the Chair position to the Library Board.

Chair Nomination

RESULT:	CARRIED 9-0
MOVER:	Lucy Bianchi
SECONDER:	Miriam Herrell
YES:	Amber Revels-Stocks, Meredith Sewell, Amanda Gawthorpe, Sarah Chera, Miriam Herrell, Julia Curran, Lucy Bianchi, Eugene Wheeler, and Jill King
NO:	None
ABSENT:	Victoria Privette, Makayla Noel Walden

b) Co-Chair Nomination

Presenter: Sam Johnson-Phillips, Deputy Town Clerk

Deputy Town Clerk Johnson-Phillips provided the board with the opportunity to nominate a Co-Chair. Board Member Gawthorpe nominated Eugene Wheeler to remain Co-Chair, and Board Member Curran seconded the nomination. Deputy Town Clerk Johnson-Phillips asked if there were any other nominations for the Co-Chair position. With none offered, Eugene Wheeler was confirmed to retain the position of Co-Chair to the Library Board.

Co-Chair Nomination

RESULT:	CARRIED 9-0
MOVER:	Amanda Gawthorpe
SECONDER:	Julia Curran
YES:	Amber Revels-Stocks, Meredith Sewell, Amanda Gawthorpe, Sarah Chera, Miriam Herrell, Julia Curran, Lucy Bianchi, Eugene Wheeler, and Jill King
NO:	None
ABSENT:	Victoria Privette, Makayla Noel Walden

c) Library Renovations

Presenter: Mel Poole, Library Manager

Ms. Poole stated each year a request for Capital Improvements Projects is placed. It was explained that Capital Improvement is anything in excess of \$100,000. There is a ranking system that goes before the Town Council and the Executive Team. The ranking is determined by what priority, what would have the biggest impact on the community and the cost effectiveness of the project (for example would land need to be acquired?). Based on those rankings, the determination would then be made. Ms. Poole communicated to the board that the library renovation has been in the top 10 rankings for a couple of years.

Ms. Poole communicated to the board and showed computer generated examples of the pending renovations.

Mrs. Andruzzi asked where the public computers would be located. Ms. Poole replied the public computers would be in the main room in the adult area. It was stated there would be eight public computers.

Ms. Poole discussed the renovation timeline, and all dates are subject to change:

- March 22, 2025: Last day to check out technology items
- April 14, 2025: Adult room shuts down
 - No access to adult materials
 - No access to public computers and/or printing
 - No longer able to place holds for pickup
- April 28, 2025: Programs and meetings regularly held would be moved to The Clayton Center. Additional programs may be held at alternate locations.
- May 5, 2025: Library closed to the public.
 - No access to physical materials
 - No holds pickups
 - Public meeting room no longer reservable.
- July 2025: Library opens in temporary location.
 - Access to physical materials
 - Able to pick up holds
 - Public computers and printing would be available.
 - Library programs would resume in this temporary location.
- Summer 2025: Renovations begin at HEML
- April 2026: Renovations would be completed.
 - Move from temporary location back into library.
 - Some loss of service may occur.
- Summer 2026: Renovated library would reopen to the public.

Ms. Poole explained the various methods of public communication, emphasizing that updates would be shared regularly. She also highlighted the importance of transparency and clear communication.

Methods discussed were:

- Library webpage
- Press release
- Social media posts
- Library newsletters
- Library checkout receipts

It was shared that every effort has been made to minimize the loss of library users. Library programs, including the Summer Reading Program, will continue, and digital resources will remain available 24/7. These resources include Libby, Kanopy, Craftsy, and NC Live. Additionally, the HEML card can be used at any NC Cardinal Library, including those in Johnston County, for physical checkouts. Ms. Poole also mentioned that material due dates would be extended during the closure, and up to 50 books can be checked out at a time.

A Board Member inquired if assistance would be available in the event of a technology issue. Ms. Poole responded, yes, assistance would be available through phone and email.

Ms. Poole stated the HVAC system will be updated, and some of the lighting will be replaced. Additionally, all the molding will be refreshed, and painting will be completed.

Ms. Poole expressed enthusiasm about the renovation and the positive impact it would have on the Town's residents. She also expressed her gratitude for the Town Council's support.

Mr. Wheeler asked how long this process has taken. Ms. Poole responded that this has been in the works for six years. She also shared that the staff feel valued because the renovation is taking place.

Ms. Poole responded that the renovation would be funded by the Town. She also mentioned a \$250,000 grant from the State, which was not tied to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), and approximately \$100,000 in donations from the Friends of the Library. She clarified that while the Executive Order impacted IMLS, the Grants to States Program is statutory and would remain in effect.

5 OBSERVATIONS FROM THE LIBRARY BOARD

6 UPDATE ON FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

a) Friends' Report

Presenter: Ellen Andruzzi, President of The Friends of the Library

Mrs. Andruzzi shared that the book sale held on March 1, 2025, had lines out the door and was a great success. Mrs. Curran's parents made a handmade full-size quilt that was raffled off, contributing to a successful fundraiser. The proceeds from the book sale will fund the Summer Reading Program. It was also noted that a large donation of children's books in Spanish was received, and the unsold books would be donated to children in Guatemala, with distribution handled by Mrs. Jacobs, who will be going on a church mission trip there. Unsold large print adult fiction and regular print adult fiction books were donated to hospitals on Highway 42 and in Smithfield, where the funds raised from selling the books would support their operations and provide scholarships for individuals interested in healthcare careers. Approximately six boxes of non-fiction books were donated to the Re-Store on Highway 42. Additionally, some children's and inspirational Christian fiction books were donated to a charity in Angier called "Crossing All Borders Ministry."

Ms. Poole stated that The Friends of the Library was originally founded to help fundraise for the construction of the library's original portion. She emphasized that they have been incredibly instrumental in supporting the library's growth and success.

Mrs. Andruzzi inquired whether the Story Walk would continue during the renovation process. Ms. Poole responded that they do plan to keep it going. She mentioned that it is a low-cost initiative unless repairs are required. Mrs. Andruzzi commented that The Friends of the Library provided funding for the Story Walk as well.

Mrs. Curran stated that The Friends of the Library now has a website where online donations are accepted, and individuals can also request to become a member.

Mrs. Andruzzi acknowledged that Mrs. Curran helped set up the website and the Square platform. She mentioned that thanks to Mrs. Curran, they are now able to accept credit card payments. It was noted that they deeply appreciate Mrs. Curran's contributions.

7 LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

a) • Librarian's Report

Presenter: Mel Poole, Library Manager

Ms. Poole shared the department's goals for 2025, noting that these goals were established before 2025 and without knowledge of the upcoming renovation. However, she expressed that some of these goals could still be pursued to some extent. The first goal discussed was to enhance the library's collection in terms of diversity and accessibility by expanding the availability of materials in both print and digital formats. She mentioned that a diversity audit is planned for this year to assess the current collection, with the process set to take place in the Fall. The next goal was to strengthen community engagement and inclusivity by offering diverse and innovative programming. The final goal was to improve the library's visibility and community engagement by implementing effective marketing and outreach initiatives aimed at attracting new patrons and retaining existing ones.

January 2025

Visits: 5,096; New Patrons: 268; Physical Checkouts: 11,124; Digital Checkouts: 3,219; Public Computer Sessions: 445; Early Literacy Program/Attendance: 18/317; Children Program/Attendance: 2/12; Teen Program/Attendance: 0/0; Adult Program/Attendance: 7/122; Meeting Room Usage Total Reservations/Total Attendance: 7/66

February 2025

Visits: 5,098; New Patrons: 223; Physical Checkouts: 11,547; Digital Checkouts: 2,732; Public Computer Sessions: 461; Early Literacy Program/Attendance: 20/287; Children Program/Attendance: 2/22; Teen Program/Attendance: 1/3; Adult Program/Attendance: 8/103; Meeting Room Usage Total Reservations/Total Attendance: 10/79

Popular Check Outs on Libby:

- Onyx Storm - Rebecca Yarros
- Fourth Wing - Rebecca Yarros
- The Women - Kristin Hannah
- The Nightingale - Kristin Hannah
- New Scientist - Magazine
- New Yorker - Magazine

Outreach Events

- Childcare Network
- Nest School
- JCPS Educator Wellness Fair

Department Goals for 2025:

- Enhance the library's collection diversity and accessibility by expanding the availability of materials in print and digital formats.

- Strengthening community engagement and inclusivity by offering diverse and innovative programming that meets the evolving needs and interests of our patrons.
- Improve the library's visibility and engagement within the community by implementing effective marketing and outreach initiatives to attract new and retain active patrons.

February social media had some higher traction than normal.

- Blind Date with a Book - 3,898 organic reel plays on Instagram
- Friends of the Library Book Sale - 788 reactions on Facebook
- Library Cards are Free - 211 reactions on Facebook

Quarterly Library Program Survey

- They requested feedback at each program in March.

Ms. Poole stated that the library renovations have been announced to the public. The Summer Reading Challenge will be July 1, 2025 - August 16, 2025. It was noted that there would not be a kickoff event this year.

Upcoming Programs

- April 12: Preserving Our Historic Town: Resources for Home & Business Owners - this would be presented by Clayton Historical Association
- May 3: Scrap Paper Shakespeare presents The Two Gentlemen of Verona - this will be Co-sponsored with The Clayton Center
- May 15: Crockpot Meal: Carrot & Ginger Soup - this will be presented by Gwen Williams of NC Cooperative Extension

8 OTHER BUSINESS

- a) There was a discussion about sharing a contact list of the board members, and with everyone in agreement, the list was emailed to all members.

It was brought to the board's attention that some parents have requested toys in place of tablets in the kids' section. Ms. Poole mentioned that there have been discussions about incorporating more manipulable toys and items, and that this could be further explored once they return to the library. She acknowledged the concerns about screen time and the fact that not all children have access to technology. However, she also pointed out that learning to use technology is an important skill.

9 ADJOURNMENT

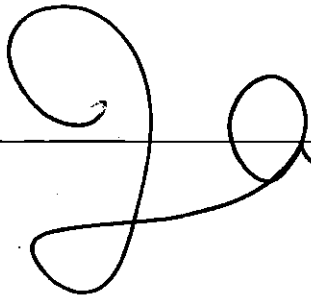
With nothing further, the meeting was adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

- a) Motion to Adjourn

Motion To Adjourn


RESULT:	CARRIED 9-0
MOVER:	Eugene Wheeler
SECONDER:	Lucy Bianchi
YES:	Amber Revels-Stocks, Meredith Sewell, Amanda Gawthorpe, Sarah Chera, Miriam Herrell, Julia Curran, Lucy Bianchi, Eugene Wheeler, and Jill King
NO:	None
ABSENT:	Victoria Privette, Makayla Noel Walden

Duly adopted this 15th day of May 2025.



Julia Curran
Board Chair

ATTEST:



Sam Johnson-Phillips, CMC
Deputy Town Clerk

