



Town of Clayton
Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library Advisory Board Minutes
Thursday, May 15, 2025 at 5:30 PM
The Clayton Center
Four Oaks Room
111 E. Second Street

Board Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

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

Board Members Absent:

Jill King
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
- March 20, 2025
- Presenter:* Sam Johnson-Phillips, Deputy Town Clerk

Adoption of Minutes

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

ABSENT: Jill King and Makayla Noel Walden
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3 OLD BUSINESS

- a) Library Renovation Update
Presenter: Mel Poole, Library Manager

Ms. Poole informed the board that the library is now closed to the public for renovations. She stated that the project remains on schedule, with the move to the temporary location set to begin in the first week of June 2025. The temporary facility is expected to open in July 2025, and the estimated duration of the renovation is approximately nine months.

Ms. Poole noted that the temporary location will offer public computers, a small children's area, and limited programming. Essential services will continue to be available, and some outdoor space will also be provided.

It was reported that library programming has been successfully hosted at The Clayton Center, and the transition has gone smoothly. Program updates and announcements have been shared via social media and posted signage to keep the public informed.

Mrs. Bianchi asked how the public would be made aware of the new temporary location. Ms. Poole responded that signage with the new address will be placed at the front of The Clayton Center, and additional information will be posted in the outdoor display cases at the Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library.

4 NEW BUSINESS

- a) Advocating for Libraries
Presenter: Mel Poole, Library Manager

It was stated advocacy is showing support for a cause. Library supporters can become advocates by discussing why libraries matter to elected officials, leaders, and community members. Advocacy is crucial, especially during tough economic times, to ensure libraries continue receiving support.

There was discussion on how to get started in advocacy. It was shared advocacy could begin by speaking with friends, attending a library program and using the services, effective library advocacy begins with a deep understanding of both the community you serve and the library itself. Advocating for the library would require knowing what the services are, what the impact is, why it matters, why it helps the community, understanding the policies and knowing what the community wants. It was stated the Library Advisory Board Members are representatives of different areas of the community. It was stated that, as members of the Library Advisory Board, their focus is primarily on local matters, specifically those involving the Council.

Mrs. Poole shared ways they could advocate for the Library. It was stated they could advocate for the library by actively promoting their values to the community, leaders, and elected officials. They could share their experiences on how the library make a difference.

It was also stated they could advocate by attending Library Board Meetings, Council Meetings, and by engaging with local decision-makers. Build partnerships with schools, businesses, and organizations to show how libraries support education, workforce development, and community well-being. It was stated advocacy is a year-long effort and continual conversations are key.

Mrs. Poole discussed three bills that are affecting the libraries:

HB595 "Parental Rights for Curriculum and Books" and HB636 "Promoting Wholesome Content for Students" these bills are geared more towards censorship as to what materials are allowed in schools and school libraries.

HB902 "Free to Learn the Library Bill of Rights Act" it was stated the American Library Association has a Bill of Rights Act in which this HB from. In summary this HB allows freedom to read, protection for Librarians and Educators to do their jobs.

It was shared that if any of the bills pass, there would be further discussion. Mrs. Poole encouraged the board members to read up on HB so that they could decide where they stand.

There was discussion about the State going through their budget process. Their budget is made every two years. The Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library receives approximately \$25,000 from State Aide. It was shared currently the State allocates \$18 million for State Aide that gets divided to all recognized public libraries in the State. It was shared for the FY27 budget to reduce that by \$866,000.

Discussion continued to the Federal level. It was stated there is an Executive Order which would diminish the services offered by IMLS (Institute of Museum Library Services). IMLS is the only Federal Funding source for public libraries.

It was shared there is a program called Grants to States, which IMLS gives money to each State and each State gives money through grant funding. Last year North Carolina received approximately \$5 million, that was then divided through multiple services. It was reported that it should continue but things are uncertain. It was reported that the additional grants that fall outside of the Grants to States program have been terminated. It is unknown if the Grants to States program would continue.

The State Library does provide some of the funds for grants that could affect Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library because they are statewide programs; for example:

- NC Cardinal: approximately \$1.5 million of the operating cost has been grant funded.
- NC Kids Digital Library, is a free service offered by Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library, is also grant funded.
- Digital NC: online historic collection via UNC Chapel Hill
- Staff Development

It was communicated, if IMLS and Grants to States Program ends all of the aforementioned programs would end. This would put the library at risk for additional funding sources.

b) Summer Reading 2025

Presenter: Grace Davis, Youth Services Supervisor

Ms. Davis explained that the library does a reading challenge through an app called "Beanstack". It was reported that the goal is the time spent reading, not the amount of books. The app is broken down into age groups: 0-4 years, 5-12 years, teen and adult. The teen and adult age groups would track the number of books, not hours spent reading. It was reported the purpose of the reading challenge would be to mitigate some of the learning loss during the summer months. That would be accomplished through summer reading and programming offered.

It was reported the theme for this summer's reading would be "Color Our World" and there would be art crafts in relation to that.

Ms. Davis stated a book and a canvas cotton bag that could be decorated would be given during Summer Reading registration. It was explained there would be several different prize packages offered within the Beanstack app as achievements are met.

Ms. Davis discussed the different arts and crafts that would be done this summer; some that were mentioned were Planetary Luminaries, Mini Basket Weaving and Articulated Puppets to name a few.

Mrs. Curran inquired if there has been further discussion on rebranding/renaming the library and/or updating the logo. Mrs. Poole responded, per the deed, the land would have to have a library, and the library must be named "Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library". It was stated that it was non-negotiable. It was communicated that if there were to be a satellite library in the future that could be possible.

It was stated there would not be a Summer Reading "kick off" event this year. Registration would take place online and BeanStack would be available in June and the official challenge would begin July 1, 2025. Once registration has been

completed individuals could stop by for their bag and book. Mrs. Poole stated they would give away approximately 400 bags for Summer Reading.

Mr. Wheeler inquired if shirts would be made this year because a lot of people asked him how they could order. Numerous board members stated they get asked about their shirts as well, Mrs. Poole replied, for those who are interested in shirts, to reach out to her to order.

5 OBSERVATIONS FROM THE LIBRARY BOARD

a) *Presenter:* Julia Curran, Board Chair

A question was asked; how would someone renew and/or get a new library card with the library being closed? Mrs. Poole responded, digital cards are offered via an online application. It was shared, when the library reopens, they could then get a physical card. It was communicated, the library staff are answering phone calls and returning emails.

It was stated the temporary library would open to the public approximately July 1, 2025. The temporary library would be located where Lipscomb Daycare was once located, near Compare Foods, approximately three blocks from the current location.

6 UPDATE ON FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

a) *Presenter:* Julia Curran, Board Chair

Mrs. Curran shared she continues to suggest to the Friends to reach out and find other avenues for revenue because they are not able to store books and also to think of creative ways to store books.

The Friends of the Library would be at "The Last Friday Market" in Home Square on May 20, 2025, selling books.

Mrs. Curran stated she is working with them to update their by-laws, which would provide clarification on membership requirements.

Mrs. Curran shared she donated books to the Friends of the Library.

7 LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

a) Librarian's Report
Presenter: Mel Poole, Library Manager

There was discussion on what's been happening. The adult area of the library closed down on April 14, 2025, and the entire library closed on May 5, 2025. Mrs. Poole shared they are on schedule for the library move and that the Staff

have been amazing! Summer reading has been finalized and is on the website's event calendar. Summer Reading Challenge would be July 1, 2025 - August 16, 2025. It was shared that staff have had the opportunity for staff development.

It was stated that staff have been working on the historical collections work. The vertical files were being worked on and cleaned up. Vertical files are a ready-reference tool that include ephemera, newspaper clippings, and more various subjects. Staff have worked on creating obituary indexes, by using newspaper clippings found in the vertical files. Both of those projects are ongoing and would ultimately be publicly accessible.

It was reported the library is nearing the end of their fiscal year (June 30). The Town's FY26 Budget Engagement Survey Results are available online: www.townofclaytonnc.org/850/FY-2026-Budget-Engagement

March 2025

Visits: 7,122; New Patrons: 282; Physical Checkouts: 14,299; Digital Checkouts: 3,332; Public Computer Sessions: 565; Early Literacy Program/Attendance: 22/526; Children Program/Attendance: 2/16; Teen Program/Attendance: 0/0; Adult Program/Attendance: 8/105; Meeting Room Usage Total Reservations/Total Attendance: 9/959

April 2025

Visits: 4,951; New Patrons: 173; Physical Checkouts: 11,882; Digital Checkouts: 3,327; Public Computer Sessions: 221; Early Literacy Program/Attendance: 28/479; Children Program/Attendance: 1/8; Teen Program/Attendance: 1/3; Adult Program/Attendance: 7/82; Meeting Room Usage Total Reservations/Total Attendance: 6/36

Outreach Events

- Meet the Pros - American Leadership Academy
- Slide Into Summer

Popular Check Outs

- All The Colors Of The Dark - Chris Whitaker
- Fourth Wing - Rebecca Yarros
- The Women - Kristin Hannah
- None Of This Is True - Lisa Jewell
- The Night We Lost Him - Laura Dave
- Just For The Summer - Abby Jimenez

8 OTHER BUSINESS

9 ADJOURNMENT

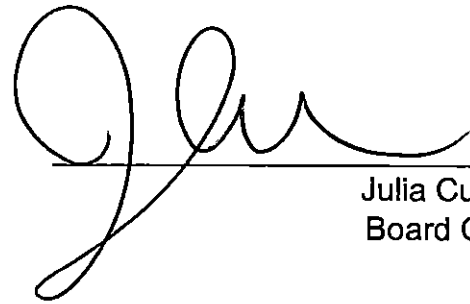
a) Motion to Adjourn

With nothing further, the meeting was adjourned at 6:32 p.m.

Motion To Adjourn


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

Duly adopted this 17th day of July 2025.



Julia Curran
Board Chair

ATTEST:


Sam Johnson-Phillips, CMC
Deputy Town Clerk

