



Town of Clayton
Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library Advisory Board Minutes
Thursday, March 19, 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.

Present:

Eugene Wheeler
Amanda Gawthorpe
Meredith Sewell
Lucy Bianchi
Jill King
Patrice Hardy
Christine Jernigan
Sarah Chera
Miriam Herrell

Staff Present:

Gretchen Williams, Council Member Liaison
Mel Poole, Library Manager
Heidi Holland, Town Clerk

Absent:

Makayla Walden
Julia Curran
Amber Revels-Stocks

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

a. Minutes

- September 18, 2025
- January 15, 2026

Approval of Minutes

Result:	Passed 9-0
Mover:	Lucy Bianchi
Second:	Eugene Wheeler
Yes:	Eugene Wheeler, Amanda Gawthorpe, Meredith Sewell, Lucy Bianchi, Jill King, Patrice Hardy, Christine Jernigan, Sarah Chera, Miriam Herrell
No:	None
Absent:	Makayla Walden, Julia Curran, Amber Revels-Stocks

3. CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR NOMINATIONS

- a. Nomination of Chair

Presenter:

Heidi Holland, Town Clerk

Board Member Jernigan nominated Board Member Wheeler for Chair.

Nomination of Board Member Wheeler as Chair

Result:	Passed 9-0
Mover:	Christine Jernigan
Seconders:	Jill King
Yes:	Eugene Wheeler, Amanda Gawthorpe, Meredith Sewell, Lucy Bianchi, Jill King, Patrice Hardy, Christine Jernigan, Sarah Chera, Miriam Herrell
No:	None
Absent:	Makayla Walden, Julia Curran, Amber Revels-Stocks

- b. Nomination of Vice-Chair

Presenter:

Heidi Holland, Town Clerk

Board Member Gawthorpe volunteered to take the position of Vice-Chair.

Approve Board Member Gawthorpe as Vice-Chair

Result:	Passed 9-0
Mover:	Christine Jernigan
Seconders:	Sarah Chera
Yes:	Eugene Wheeler, Amanda Gawthorpe, Meredith Sewell, Lucy Bianchi, Jill King, Patrice Hardy, Christine Jernigan, Jill King, Miriam Herrell
No:	None
Absent:	Makayla Walden, Julia Curran, Amber Revels-Stocks

4. Old Business

- a. Community Information Policy

Presenter:

Melissa Poole, Library Manager

This policy was tabled from the last meeting. This draft has been reviewed by the Town Attorney. A Procedure section has been added as requested by the board. It was suggested by the Town Attorney to remove the section of what cannot be posted.

Motion To Approve Policy

Result:	Passed 9-0
Mover:	Patrice Hardy
Seconder:	Miriam Herrell
Yes:	Eugene Wheeler, Amanda Gawthorpe, Meredith Sewell, Lucy Bianchi, Jill King, Patrice Hardy, Christine Jernigan, Sarah Chera, Miriam Herrell
No:	None
Absent:	Makayla Walden, Julia Curran, Amber Revels-Stocks

5. New Business

- a. Library Renovation Update

Presenter:

Melissa Poole, Library Manager

Ms. Poole provided an update on the library renovation. The temporary library is scheduled to close on April 20, 2026. The last day to place items on hold will be March 28, and programs will begin transitioning to Town Hall on April 9, with most held in the Four Oaks Room.

The renovation remains mostly on schedule, with construction expected to be completed in May. Once new furniture is installed, the move-in process will begin. The library plans to close for approximately two months to allow for the full transition, including staff training. The goal is to reopen on July 1, with a more definite date to be announced next month. A ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held, followed by a grand opening to coincide with the summer kickoff.

Improvements include a new ADA-compliant sidewalk, updated landscaping, and more accessible parking. There was also discussion about adding outdoor seating in the future.

The book drop will be closed during the transition; however, materials may be returned to any NC Cardinal location.

6. Observations from the Library Board

- a. Presenter: Julia Curran, Chair

No report.

7. Update on Friends of the Library

- a. Presenter: Julia Curran, Chair

It was stated the Fundraising Committee is currently working through ideas. As the group is no longer conducting book sales or accepting book donations, it has established a book account with a vendor, through which materials are sent and a percentage is returned to the organization. The committee is now evaluating next steps and continues recruitment efforts.

There was discussion referencing a past Council liaison's comment that "increased fundraising by the Friends of the Library (FOL) could positively influence future Town funding for a larger

library facility." Members were encouraged to support the Friends of the Library and refer anyone who may be interested in joining.

The budget survey was discussed, noting that the library typically ranks near the bottom of priorities.

The next Friends of the Library meeting is scheduled for April 23 at 1:00 p.m. It was stated this group continues to contribute to the library's programming budget.

There was also discussion about increasing diversity within Friends of the Library while continuing to honor and recognize current members.

8. Librarian's Report

a. Presenter: Mel Poole, Library Manager

Ms. Poole stated Kate Tompkins-Gross completed the 9-week stated-wide Libraries for Entrepreneurial Advancement Fellowship (LEAF) program. She gained a lot of information and created a resource guide that is available online. There was discussion of her communicating with the Chamber of Commerce and doing programming that would target small business owners.

Updates were made to the local history webpage, including the creation of a guide that provides additional information about the collection, such as an obituary and death notice index. The guide will be updated throughout the year. A potential walking tour of the Town was also discussed.

The Summer Reading Program will begin July 1, with the theme "Unearth a Story," focusing on dinosaurs, archaeology, and paleontology, and will run for six weeks. Staff have also discussed potential adult programming collaborations with the NC Museum of History in Raleigh.

Shared were 2026 Library Goals which included:

- Moving the library from the temporary location back to the renovated facility
- Updating policies and procedures to align with new staff workflows, building changes, and initiatives
- Maintaining regularly scheduled programming while leaving an opening for new, innovative events each month

Upcoming Programs include:

- Baby Move & Sing: April 15 (Babies)
- Teen Trivia Competition: April 21 (Teens)
- Roll for a Story: April 23 (3rd - 5th grades)
- NC Reads Book Club, Virtual Author Talk: April 28 (Adult)
- Recycled Bird Feeders: May 14 (3rd - 5th grades)
- Researching Ancestors of Color in NC: June 13 (Teen & Adult)

The numbers were shared for January and February 2026. Visitor numbers have increased slightly in recent months, new library card registrations have risen, circulation remains steady, and digital checkouts continue to grow. Programming was discussed, including challenges in increasing teen participation, while adult programming attendance remains consistent. Upon

reopening, staff plan to designate the meeting room for teen use on Thursdays. The library will also participate with a table at outdoor concert events beginning in May.

January 2026

Visitors: 1,941; Physical Checkouts: 10,209; Digital Checkouts: 3,761; New Patrons: 206; Public Computer Sessions: 274; Meeting Room Usage: 0; Outreach Events: 3

Programming/Attendance

2 Early Literacy Programs (37 attendees); 4 Children's Programs (100 attendees); 0 Teen Programs; 7 Adult Programs (104 attendees)

February 2026

Visitors: 1,912; Physical Checkouts: 9,733; Digital Checkouts: 3,465; New Patrons: 151; Public Computer Sessions: 309; Meeting Room Usage: 0; Outreach Events: 3

Programming/Attendance

1 Early Literacy Programs (26 attendees); 4 Children's Programs (31 attendees); 1 Teen Program (5 attendees); 7 Adult Programs (92 attendees)

9. Other Business

10. Adjournment

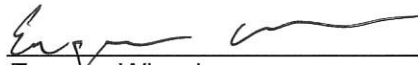
- a. Adjourn

With nothing further, the meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Motion To Adjourn

Result:	Passed 9-0
Mover:	Lucy Bianchi
Second:	Patrice Hardy
Yes:	Eugene Wheeler, Amanda Gawthorpe, Meredith Sewell, Lucy Bianchi, Jill King, Patrice Hardy, Christine Jernigan, Sarah Chera, Miriam Herrell
No:	None
Absent:	Makayla Walden, Julia Curran, Amber Revels-Stocks

Duly Adopted by the Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library Advisory Board on Thursday, July 13, 2026.


Eugene Wheeler
Chair


Meredith Mumford
Deputy Town Clerk

