

MINUTES
FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARIES OF TOWNS COUNTY
April 8, 2025

I. Call to Order and President's Report

President Rose Mary Crook called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. at Mountain Regional Library, Young Harris, GA.

Board members present were: Marcia Aunspaugh, Kim Brown, Rose Carter, Suzanne Carter, Rose Mary Crook, Kathy Day, Kevin Kirby, Judith Lee, Robin Pita, Jim Reynolds, Delores Staton, and Mary Welken. Friends Dick Aunspaugh and Elaine Roberts; guest, Janice Cochran, Chair of First Readers of Towns County was also present.

Board members not present: Bena Ball and Darlene Pilcher.

II. President's Report

President Rose Mary Crook welcomed Youth Services Specialist and Acting Branch Manager of MRL, Robin Pita.

III. Minutes

Minutes of the February 11, 2025 meeting were presented by Kathy Day. A motion was made by Marcia Aunspaugh to accept the minutes as presented. Motion was seconded by Rose Carter; motion carried.

IV. Treasurer's Report

Jim Reynolds presented the Treasurer's Report for the period of January 1, 2025 to April 4, 2025. Beginning balance was **\$26,203.71**. Total income YTD was **\$4,308.91**. Total expenses YTD were **\$1,302.26**. The bank balance as of April 4, 2025 is **\$29,210.36**, with encumbered funds of **\$5,872.26** and with unencumbered funds of **\$23,338.10**. The financial report was accepted.

Jim reported Mountain Regional Library used their allotted money from Memorial Funds to purchase children's books.

Jim reported the following library statistics for 2024:

Program offerings	up 335%
Attendance	up 218%
Borrowers	up 92%
Circulation	up 110%
Wireless & Online Usage	up 231%

V. Library Reports

Kevin Kirby, TCPL Branch Manager, reported that all programs for 2025 Summer Reading are booked. He requested funds from FOLTC to purchase popsicles for the 3 outdoor events this summer and for the purchase of CROCS charms and bracelets to use as prizes for summer reading program events.

A motion was made by Suzanne Carter to provide \$250 for Summer Reading Program supplies to include popsicles, bracelets, and charms, as needed. The motion was seconded by Rose Carter; motion carried.

SPECIAL REPORT FROM MRLS DIRECTOR HEATH LEE

Director Lee came to the meeting to give the FOLTC board a summary of the impact that recent cuts by the President are anticipated to have on Georgia Public Libraries and MRLS specifically. The following are his comments:

“As you may be aware, an Executive Order issued on March 14 ordered the dismantling and restructuring of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Every year, IMLS provides over five million dollars in support to Georgia libraries.

These funds support critical statewide Georgia programs and resources, including:

- Library circulation software
- PINES statewide interlibrary loan program
- Summer Reading Program
- GALILEO research databases
- Library for the Blind and Print Disabled
- Partnership and marketing grants

These services are provided to every community in Georgia at no additional cost to local taxpayers. Our access to them is fully funded by IMLS. This offers enormous value to local communities thanks to economies of scale.

The Georgia Public Library Service, our state agency, is able to negotiate contracts on behalf of all Georgia libraries that are more economical than if each library system had to negotiate independently. In short, many of the services you know and enjoy from MRLS would not exist without IMLS grant funding. MRLS would have to ask its local funding partners (Fannin, Towns, and Union Counties) to increase contributions to maintain current service levels.”

He further responded to inquiries about what we could do to provide support both financial and otherwise during these uncertain times. He stressed the need to contact

US Congress members to impress upon them the need to support IMLS and maintain its status in order to keep our libraries functioning at acceptable levels.

V. Book Club

Kim Brown and Rose Carter will conduct a survey of various topics related to a book club to assess level of interest and preferences of those interested in joining a book club. The April title is *Have You Seen Luis Velez?* by Catherine Ryan Hyde; May title is *The Golden Spoon* by Jessa Maxwell.

VI. Corresponding Secretary

Judith Lee reported thank you notes were sent to the following:

Donors: David and Robin Hering, James and Sandra Hazen, and Joy and Walton Sineath, Jr.

Sponsor: Theodore & Maureen Gustafson

Patrons: Sven's Counseling Services, Betty and Mark Dotson, Marilyn K. Brown,

Bob and Barbara Bone, and L.A. and G.D. Dye

Donation in Memory of Ernie Seckinger by Betty Seckinger

VII. Bookstore/Book Sales

Marcia Aunspaugh stated sales are doing well at the Book sales at the two libraries. After the sale there will be a great need for book sorting in both the closet and the shed.

VIII. Bake Sales

No bake sales are currently scheduled.

IX. Membership

Rose Carter shared as of this date, there are 64 current members consisting of 2 business, 7 donor, 6 family, 1 honorary, 22 individual, 8 life, 15 patron, and 3 sponsor. Rose will research what would be involved with our being able to accept credit cards for membership payments.

X. Newsletter

Darlene Pilcher was not present. Articles for the Spring 2025 newsletter need to be submitted to Darlene by April 30th.

XI. Publicity

Suzanne Carter stated that she has been maintaining the Facebook page and providing current information for the website. She submitted the book sale notice to the Towns County Chamber of Commerce e-blast and \$50 gets us included 4 times. She will write an article for the newspaper and newsletter reporting the statistics shared by Jim Reynolds.

XII. Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

XIII. New Business

Scholarships for HS Students: Kathy Day introduced the idea that FOLTC look into sponsoring a scholarship for a Towns County High School graduating senior next year. The idea was enthusiastically supported and interest was expressed that it would be for a graduate attending any post-secondary institution. She will begin researching further what is required to set this up, manage, and maintain it.

\$300 to Ferst Readers: A motion was made by Rose Carter to support Ferst Readers with a \$300 donation. The motion was seconded by Marcia Aunspaugh; motion carried.

Commissioners matching grant: Jim Reynolds said he would check with Heath Lee and/or Commissioner Bradshaw about the status of the check from the county.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m. by President Rose Mary Crook. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, June 10th, 1:00, at TCPL.

Respectfully submitted by Kathy Day, Recording Secretary

APPROVED June 10, 2025.