Hamblen County Library Board of Trustees

Minutes for September 22, 2026

This meeting of the Hamblen County Library Board of Trustees was called to order in the George S. Hale Community Room by Library Board chair, Christy Cowan, at 5:35 pm.

Attendance: Christy Cowan (Chair), Amanda Baysinger (Amanda B), Cindy Davis, Betsy Dobbins, Sara Egan (Regional Services Representative), Kim Fox, Amanda Hale (Amanda H), Cindi Husk, Debi Hyder, Linda Raines, Mike Richardson. Patron Speakers: Paula and Larry Carey. Observer: Liu Chan.

Secretary's Report:
The minutes from the meetings held on August 25, 2026, and September 8, 2026 (called meeting), were reviewed and each was approved as written with motion by Betsy with second by Debi.

Treasurer's Report: Debi reviewed the financial report, highlighting electronic database expenses, the replacement of a 50-gallon electric water heater, and the stripping and waxing of flooring in the downstairs Friends' room and Children's Room bathroom. The Treasurer's Report was filed for audit.

Public Comment Regarding Request of Agenda Items Only:
- None

Committee Reports:
- Finance- Amanda Hale, Chair
  - None
- Personnel- Chris Capps, Chair
  - Amanda B reported the children's librarian position remains vacant.
    - Position has been offered to part-time employees, but no one has applied.
    - Amanda B is considering working with Walters State Community College to arrange for a part-time work-study student (20 hours/week).
    - Position will be posted if the work-study arrangement does not work out.
- Policies- Debi Hyder, Chair
  - Amanda B requested that the Policy Committee (Debi, Chris, Betsy) meet to look at policies which are overdue for review. Policies include the personnel, technology use, and collection development policies and the bylaws.
  - Smoking Policy clarification
    - Amanda B will reword the policy to clarify that smoking is prohibited anywhere on the library property.
- Long-Range Planning- Mike Richardson, Chair
  - Amanda B requested the Long-Range Planning Committee meet with her to clarify the responsibilities of the committee.

- Building and Grounds- Mike Richardson, Chair
    - A number of HVAC companies have inquired about submitting bids to replace two faulty units (bidding closes October 9, 2026).
    - Mike requested that bids include a good-better-best presentation.
    - Mike is awaiting a call from Tim (usual service man from J & F Mechanical); Amanda B to contact Mike when he calls.
- Nominating-Public Relations- Kim Fox, Chair
    - Slate of officers is in place.
- Purchasing- Amanda Hale, Chair
    - None

Unfinished Business:

- Cindi motioned that a children's free library be established in honor of Phyllis Ehresman, long-time Hamblen County teacher, former Library Board member, and member of the Friends of the Library. Second by Linda. The motion passed unanimously.
- Amanda B reported that the Will & Trust group has moved on.

Public Comment- General:

- Christy read the *Opening Statement Made by Chairman Prior to Public Comments*.
- Larry and Paula Carey submitted their *Request to Appear Before the Library Board* in a timely manner and were allowed to speak.
    - Their concern centered around the distribution of a free children's book to patrons by librarians.
        - A number of copies of "Popcorn Bob" were placed in the book drop by an unknown person.
        - The book included a main character who had two dads, which Mr. and Mrs. Carey stated they objected to on religious grounds.
        - The librarians gave the books away to patrons without any staff review of the contents.
        - Sara Egan will clarify the book vetting process at other libraries.

Morristown-Hamblen Library Director:

- Missing items (2013-2024)
    - Items included: 44 audiobooks, 1,317 children's books, 1,098 DVDs, 1,482 adult books, 90 large print books, 82 paperbacks, and 467 young adult books. Amanda B is currently calculating the cost of the items.
- Collaboration with the Humane Society
    - Amanda B is collaborating with Simone Collins from the Morristown Hamblen Humane Society to allow her to use the Community Room for training classes for volunteers fostering animals.
    - A supply drive for the animal shelter is also planned.
- Adult Summer Reading Program
    - Library staff coordinated 13 programs with 719 participants.

New Business:

- None

Regional Library Report:

- Sara Egan, Regional Services Representative, provided an update.
    - The 2026 Tennessee Trustee Workshop will be held on Wednesday, September 23, 2026, at the Jefferson City Public Library. Christy plans to attend.
    - Amanda B is participating in a Regional Library book club.

Friends Report:

- The Friends will meet on October 14, 2026.

Imagination Library Report:

- Next meeting is in October.

Adjournment: With all business completed**,** this meeting of the Hamblen County Library Board adjourned at 7:30 p.m. The next meeting will be held on October 27, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy Dobbins
Secretary