

Board members in **Attendance** were Christian Mash; Fred Fox, via Teams; Tina Buckel; Alison Sweitzer, via Teams; Karen Malecki; and Nancy Brady. Staff members present were Thomas Vose, Library Director; and Nicole McCullough, Executive Assistant. Also present via Teams was Chris Lehman of SB & Company, LLC.

Christian called the **Meeting to Order** at 4:01 pm.

The Trustees reviewed the **Meeting Minutes** from the November meeting. Nicole proposed an amendment to correct the date of the next regularly scheduled meeting. Karen moved to approve the minutes as amended, and Nancy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Trustees reviewed the **Financial Statements** for the period ending November 2025. Tina inquired about the service fees being over budget. Nicole explained that these costs were \$25 wire transfer fees incurred while paying the contractor for the Friendsville project. Nicole suggested that these fees be coded to a different account for better tracking. The Board agreed to recode the fees to a designated Friendsville account, and Nicole confirmed she would make the necessary changes. Tina moved to accept the financial statements as presented, Karen seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. The statements were subsequently filed for audit.

The **Director's Report** was reviewed. Thomas represented the library at several key community meetings, including sessions with the Garrett County Commissioners, the Our Town Theatre Board, the Head Start Policy Council, and the Community Action Board. Thomas is currently pursuing a project to digitize the Garrett County Mountain Democrat. However, he noted challenges due to limited holdings and the poor physical condition of the archives. He joined the Executive Leadership Cohort for the State Library and is planning outreach presentations for parents based on "The Enchanted Hour: The Miraculous Power of Reading Aloud in the Age of Distraction." The library's trivia events have expanded to two locations: The Green Room in Oakland and the Mountain Grape Tavern in Grantsville. All branches reported a high volume of successful programs and activities throughout the month, including: a Lego Boat float at Accident, a turkey zip line Challenge at Kitzmiller, Retro Gaming and Dungeons & Dragons in Oakland, Nostalgic Childhood Recipes at Friendsville's Culinary Connections Cookbook Club, and 136 participants in a fall scavenger hunt in Grantsville. In the Library Issues Corner, Thomas reported that the IMLS federal funding was released in full due to a recent court ruling.

**Old Business** was discussed:

- **Audit**- Chris Lehman of SB & Company, LLC presented the completed audit report to the Board of Trustees. The presentation included an overview of the audit's scope and objectives, as well as a summary of findings and conclusions. Mr. Lehman reported an "unmodified opinion," indicating that the financial statements were found to be free of material errors or misstatements. The report provided a comparative analysis of financial activity between the current and prior years. Mr. Lehman guided the Board through specific sections of the audit, noting that the organization complied with governmental auditing standards. He further confirmed that the audit identified no deficiencies in internal controls considered material weaknesses, nor were there any instances of fraud. Following the review, Mr. Lehman stated that the final audit would be sent to Thomas upon receipt of the required Management Representation Letter. Due to time constraints, the Board decided to conduct a formal vote to accept the audit via email once the final version is received.
- **Community Trust Foundation**- Thomas reported that the library received formal notification from the Community Trust Fund (CTF) regarding a new endowment established by Ms. Dixie Moore. Ms. Moore, described as an avid reader and passionate supporter of the library, created the fund in memory of her daughter, Jill Hammond. Starting in January 2027, the endowment will provide \$7,000 annually to be used for adult fiction and children's books. Thomas is currently coordinating with the CTF and the family to extend the Board's gratitude and arrange for appropriate public recognition of this generous gift. In related news, it was announced that Karen will be stepping back from her roles on the Planned Giving Committee and her treasurer duties to allow for more travel. The Board discussed the need to explore a replacement for these positions and to evaluate the future direction of the committee, particularly in light of the growing relationship with the CTF.

- *Friendsville Updates*- Thomas provided a status update on the Friendsville construction project, noting an estimated completion date of mid-February 2026. The project is progressing smoothly; the building is now "dried in," and internal work, including wiring and plumbing, is underway. Thomas noted that the library received an updated notice of assessment from the county regarding the current value of the property, though this has no immediate impact as a final assessment is expected once construction is finalized. Additionally, notification was received from the architectural firm, Murphy-Dittenhafer, stating that because the project has extended beyond the original contracted duration, all future construction administration services will be billed at an hourly rate. Looking ahead, Thomas mentioned that the Board would soon need to approve the purchase of owner-supplied equipment, such as appliances and computers. While these items are already factored into the budget, the purchases will be finalized as the building nears its opening date.
- *Credit Line*- Due to potential cash flow fluctuations associated with the Friendsville project, quotes for a line of credit were presented from First United Bank & Trust and First People's Community Federal Credit Union. Thomas and Nicole advised the Board that while state reimbursements are currently up to date and there is no immediate liquidity crisis, a need for a credit line is anticipated as the project progresses into its final stages. The Board reviewed both proposals. Tina moved to enter into an agreement with First People's Community Federal Credit Union, noting it was the more competitive offer. Nancy seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. Due to a conflict of interest arising from their respective employment, Karen and Alison recused themselves from the discussion and abstained from the vote.

**New Business** was discussed:

- *New Board Members*- A resume for Jennifer Theriot was submitted for consideration regarding the upcoming Board vacancy. Thomas noted that Ms. Theriot is an English teacher at Northern High School (NHS) and highlighted her strong academic and literature background. He also shared positive feedback based on her performance in previous collaborative work projects. Karen moved to nominate Jennifer Theriot to fill the vacancy created by the expiration of Fred's term. Nancy seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.
- *Christmas Bonuses*- Christian noted that the Board traditionally provides an acknowledgement to the staff for the Christmas holiday. Nicole reported that in the previous year, the Board approved a bonus of \$225 net pay for each employee. Nancy moved to maintain consistency with the prior year and provide a \$225 holiday bonus to each employee. Tina seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.
- *Farewells*- Christian thanked Tina and Fred for their long-standing commitment and service to the Board and the library system, presenting them each with a plaque in honor of their contributions. Thomas announced that the library would be purchasing "book nooks" for display in the library to further commemorate their service. Thomas shared his personal gratitude for their dedication, specifically noting that Tina was the final remaining Board member from the group that originally hired him. He thanked her for the opportunity and for her years of support.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on January 8, 2026 at 4:00pm at the Oakland Branch.

The open session was adjourned at 4:50 p.m., at which time the Board entered into a closed session to discuss personnel and legal/financial matters. Nancy moved to adjourn the closed session at 5:00 p.m. The motion was seconded by Karen and carried unanimously.

Minutes taken and respectfully submitted by Nicole McCullough.