

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING  
ALABAMA PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE  
MAY 16, 2024**

The Executive Board of the Alabama Public Library Service (APLS) met on March 21, 2024, at the Alabama Public Library Service building in Montgomery, Alabama. A quorum was present and prior notice was given as required by the Alabama Open Meetings Act and Act #2022-421.

Chairman, Ron Snider called the Executive Board Regular Meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., and roll was taken. The Chair welcomed everyone to the Meeting.

The following Board members were present: Ron Snider, Michelle Hughes, John Wahl, Debra Windsor, and Amy Minton. Members attending via videoconference: Angelia Stokes and Jerria Martin. APLS staff members present: Nancy Pack, Kelyn Ralya, Jessica Everingham, Jennifer Holman, Ryan Godfrey, Matt Sponsler and Vanessa Carr. Visitor attended was: Tara Hetzel, Office of the Attorney General.

**AGENDA**

Mr. Snider asked if there were additions to the Agenda. Under Participation, Bishop Jim Lowe's name was removed. Elizabeth Stewart and Roy Mattison names were added as participants. Mr. Wahl made the motion to adopt the Agenda as amended. Mrs. Minton seconded the motion. Members voting in favor by saying "aye" are as follows: Michelle Hughes, Jerria Martin, Amy Minton, Ron Snider, Angelia Stokes, John Wahl, and. No "nays."

**MINUTES**

The Minutes of the March 21, 2024 meeting were presented to the Board for approval. There was one correction on page 17. The correction is as follows: **Mr. Snider – All in favor of that motion. Members voting in favor by saying "aye" are as follows: Mr. Wahl and Mrs. Minton. Members voting in opposition by saying "nay" are as follows: Mr. Snider, Mrs. Hughes, Mrs. Debra Windsor and Mrs. Stokes. The motion failed.** The corrected version is as follows: **Mr. Snider – All in favor of that motion. Members voting in favor by saying "aye" are as follows: Mr. Wahl, Mrs. Minton, and Mrs. Windsor. Members voting in opposition by saying "nay" are as follows: Mr. Snider, Mrs. Hughes, and Mrs. Stokes. The motion failed.** Mr. Wahl made the motion to approve the Minutes as amended. Mrs. Minton seconded the motion. Roll was called and members voting in favor by saying "aye" are as follows: Michelle Hughes, Jerria Martin, Amy Minton, Ron Snider, Angelia Stokes, John Wahl, and Debra Windsor. No "nays."

**Participation**

Mr. Snider welcomed all the participants to the meeting. Two persons were approved to address the Board. Bishop Jim Lowe did not participate. The following names were added: Elizabeth Stewart and Roy Mattson.

Elizabeth Stewart –Good Morning, I am Elizabeth Stewart, a resident of Athens City in Limestone County. The topic today is the Athens-Limestone Library Board and its significant inconsistencies between daily operations of the Board and what has been written in daily policies, and by-laws within the past fifteen (15) years. I recently contacted APLS in regards to a public effort request and was able to work directly with Assistant Director, Jessica Everingham. I sent each of you a copy of what was e-mailed to me on April 2023. I will read directly. In an earlier e-mail you asked if we could send the operating policies and by-laws. In the official Athens-Limestone file, we have the following documents:

- Material collection policy
- Material reconsideration form
- Athens Limestone by-laws

In the e-mail you also asked for the date these were received. The first two documents were updated were on October 2023, APLS does not have a recent date for the by-laws. The documents on file with the agency are these two things – official policy that's been available for decades in Athens. Within it on page 6 is the by-laws that Ms. Everingham sent to me. It states the Athens-Limestone Public Library Board of Trustees has five members. Three to be appointed by the city of Athens; two to be appointed by Limestone county. Board members serve four years; no trustee may serve more than two consecutive years. This policy was pulled

**Participation (continued)**

down from the public a few weeks ago. It was told by the library chair it was out of date and not current. This was re-iterated by Athens City attorney, Shane Black, who stated in a legal memo, May 2 that the policy was removed because it contained inaccurate board information, inaccurate term limits and inaccurately states the county commissioners have any role in appointments. He is correct, what has been stated for many years in this policy is not an accurate depiction of what is going on in the Athens-Limestone Library and Board. Here are the problems: In 2009, per public records request, the city council unilaterally took over all appointments. Every single appointment is an Athens City appointment. They re-named it the Athens City Library, and the by-laws were never submitted to this state agency. In 2018, new by-laws solidifying these new appointments were drafted by the current chair and vice-chair these were also not submitted to this agency, per records request that Ms. Everingham sent. Neither the 2009 or the 2018 by-laws was just incorporated into this policy, it still remains that it's a joint board. In addition, the chair and vice-chair are in their third and fourth consecutive terms. The chair has been there fourteen (14) years. The county commission released a resolution in January asking to adhere to the current posted policy including term limits. Also, last fall tried to get a county appointment. They denied multiple county people and re-instated the vice-chair for a third consecutive term. I have an Attorney General's determination request I brought with me by a Limestone county house representative. This is an illegitimate library board for all of these reasons. What they are claiming before the city and the county taxpayers and before the state agency is not what they are actually doing. I am asking that this Board put a hold on state funding until a legitimate board can be placed. A lot of policy decisions are happening and they are being made by a board that is not legitimate and hasn't been for again fifteen (15) years. That's my request to please look into this Board's situation. This has been going on since October of last year. It has involved the Attorney General's Office, the House delegation in Limestone county, and the County Commission. I have all the legal documents if necessary.

Mr. Wahl – Did the request for the Attorney General's Opinion come back?

Ms. Stewart – The request for the Attorney General's Opinion did come back to the House Representative. I have it. It has to be submitted by the city, the county, or this particular state agency. They changed the rules that the House and Senate representatives may not do a request like that anymore.

Mr. Wahl – Ok. So, he didn't get a determination.

Roy Mattson – Good Morning Chairman Snider, board members and guests. My name is Roy Mattson, I am a retired air force colonel who taught ethics and world religion for the U.S. Air Force Academy, and currently teach at college level in Huntsville. I live in Athens-Limestone county. You probably know that Limestone county has been the fastest growing county in Alabama for the past five years. Its population has grown approaching 120,000 of which is one quarter (1/4) live in Athens City. The Athens-Limestone Public Library is the only public library in the county. The library is jointly funded by the state, the city of Athens and the Limestone council. The Library's policy and by-laws that have been submitted to this Board annually for the last decade or so has been long neglected and ignored. Not only has the Athens-Limestone Board failed to update its policies, it has maintained a board composition that clearly violates its published policy. The policy and by-laws submitted annually state explicitly that the board is a joint city-county board. It's supposed to be comprised of five (5) members; three appointed by the city and two appointed by Limestone county. Despite that clear guidance, the board has long consisted of five (5) trustees appointed by the Athens City. Last year, Limestone county nominated two persons to the board and the city rejected them and re-appointed an Athens City trustee. This was troubling not only because it rejected a legitimate county interest in the board, but it also violated clear policy description on serving more than two consecutive terms. The policy submitted to the state board and currently made available to the public says no trustee may serve more than two consecutive terms at one time. Please note the following quotes from the purpose and objectives of the Athens-Limestone Public Library. The purpose of the Athens-Limestone Public Library is to serve its patrons and citizens from Limestone County and Athens City. This is a joint library, most of its patrons are county residents not city residents. The policy also reads, the responsibility for the direction of the library must belong to a regional library board appointed by the appropriating bodies. The appropriating bodies includes, the county. No policy re-writes which eliminate the county's role in this library is legitimate. The state board should immediately withhold all state funds to the Athens-Limestone Board until the Board is

**Participation (continued)**

entirely replaced by trustees who will do their jobs and are appointed by the appropriate county or city representatives. Please exercise your leadership role and insist on competence from the Athens-Limestone Library Board.

**Chairman's Report****Letter to Representative Danny Garrett and Senator Arthur Orr – March 28, 2024****Letter To Finance & Taxation Education Committee - April 8, 2024****Letter to Members of the Legislature – April 12, 2024**

Mr. Snider - As you've all seen, the budget proposed by the Governor which included a 1% increase in the operating budget for this Agency of \$4,170,000.00. The House reduced that by approximately 18% and half of that was restored by the Senate. The result is still a 9% reduction. It's going to cause tremendous harm to this Agency which only has an approved staff of 40 people. What we are going to do is have Dr. Pack and Jennifer Holman report to the Board at the next meeting what cuts need to be made in terms of both programs and personnel. It is a tragedy in terms of what this Agency does, and what we are being asked to do more and more of, that our operating budget is being cut 9%. I know John at our last meeting you were hopeful of level-funding. As you can see, I had multiple letters to various Representatives and Senators trying to convince them to appropriate the budget at the level recommended by the Governor. For a small agency, a 9% cut is a devastating cut, so there is nothing else really to be said about that.

Mr. Wahl – I definitely agree and I worked hard to communicate with everyone that I could on the importance of this Board and the value it provides to local communities. I'm glad that was cut in half.

Mr. Snider - The tragedy is that we as a Board had recommended the changes that the Governor requested, so we thought we were being responsive to the Governor's request. It was particularly disheartening to have the House adopt an 18% reduction in budget for an agency this small. Still, 9% is a big cut that will have long range negative effects on what we can provide to the people of Alabama.

**Amendments to the Administrative Code**

Mr. Snider – As everyone knows, we had a public hearing on April 30, 2024. Eighty-seven 87 participants spoke to us. I know that Debra Windsor, Amy Minton, John Wahl and I were there for parts of the presentation. Dr. Pack has submitted a report on the letters received which were over 6,000 and the report shows the following:

- Support Governor Ivey' recommendations at a minimum level – 187
- Support the Alabama Library Association recommended changes – 1,608
- Eagle Forum recommended changes – 2,179
- Various others

As I've said at multiple meetings, when we have had people addressing this Board, everyone is sincere in their views. We don't question the sincerity of what their positions are. As I've said before, all of this dissention has hurt the libraries of this state generally, in terms evidenced by the cut in our funding. I think that having heard all of this, and I know Mrs. Minton you suggested amendments to what the Governor had recommended. My view is that we should not adopt any amendments for several reasons:

- We all are aware that the Prattville Library is now in litigation in federal court over the proposals they adopted that are substantially similar to what you have suggested. I would hate for this Agency to be involved in litigation with respect to that.
- I am also aware that when the APLS budget was approved, the line item for AVL including funding, was contingent on AVL developing rules as Governor Ivey proposed to the APLS Administrative Code. We are the fiscal agent for AVL; it goes through our budget, but it has a separate board of fifteen (15) members, comprised of various officials in the Department of Education, and Higher Education, and who actually make the selections available in the AVL.

**Amendments to the Administrative Code (continued)**

All that's to say, I think we should adopt the Governor's proposal as we submitted it for public comment. I ask for a motion on that and we can have a discussion. Mr. Wahl made the motion to accept the Governor's amendments. Mrs. Minton seconded the motion. Mr. Snider asked for further discussion. At that time, Mr. Wahl gave a report on the subcommittee meeting. Handouts were given to each Board member. A copy was forwarded to board members joining via videoconference.

- Report - original of what Amy Minton submitted to the Board at the March Meeting; and
- Report from the Subcommittee

Mr. Wahl – I did quite a bit of work on this, anytime you're dealing with the state code you want to get it right. I wanted to make sure that we did due diligence, listening to the public comments and hearing the discussions. I have spoken with many people involved, including Representative Garrett with the wording that was in the bill that was passed, the Governor's Office, and the Attorney General's Office, I took this responsibility very seriously. Through that process, there is quite a bit that has changed from what Mrs. Minton had originally submitted, including one thing that was very important to me. The Governor's recommended changes were not touched in any way and; therefore, not risked any potential funding with that bill that was passed. The second thing is providing for good policy that gives our local libraries direction. That's what I heard from the public comment period from both sides. There were really two sides. I stayed for that entire public hearing, enjoyed hearing from the public, thought it was very educational hearing different perspectives. You grow through hearing open dialogue and from hearing debates on issues. What I heard the two main sentiments were:

1. From the opponents of the change – It did not provide direction to librarians to know exactly what it meant, or what they needed to do
2. On the other side, I heard the same thing – there was not a direct provision; they didn't know exactly what it was going to do and; therefore, wanted something stronger; a stronger language

I believe that the amendments to this provide direction for both of those concerns. I actually think that it is something that can be useful in providing direct communication from this Board and a policy change that will allow librarians to know exactly what's expected of them; not having them worry about getting in trouble. I am giving them that clarity; they will know. Also, listening to the public; saying we do not want sexually explicit materials in the children's sections. I think you all know that's been very important to me, hearing some of the materials that have been read before this Board, and before other boards, the only word I have for it is sadness. I hope the vast majority of us can agree that material is not something we want a child stumbling across accidentally. That's the goal behind the change in the amendments that I made to Mrs. Minton's original. At this time, I will submit this and make the motion to amend the Governor's original changes with the amendments here. This is only section 2; all of the amendments are within section 2. On the handout, the Governor's original changes are in blue, the recommended amendments are in yellow. That did receive a favorable vote from the subcommittee. At this time, with that favorable vote from the subcommittee, I will make the motion to adopt these amendments to the rule change. Mrs. Minton seconded the motion.

Mr. Snider – I guess first we have a proposed amendment to the Resolution. I am not in favor of the amendment. I think we should adopt what the Governor submitted. I thought it was a thoughtful approach leaving it to the discretion of each library these decisions.

Mrs. Minton – The reason the amendment was added because of the public hearing. This in no way affects what the Governor recommended; this just strengthens it. We all support that, I believe, what the Governor says, this just adds to it.

Mr. Wahl – I want to say this. I worked very hard. I want to thank the Governor for caring about this issue and for being proactive and recommending these changes to the Board. The amendments here are to compliment her changes and make some clarity for local libraries to follow her recommendations.

Mr. Snider asked for a vote and roll was called. Members voting in favor of the amendment by saying "aye" are as follows: John Wahl, Deborah Windsor, Angelia Stokes, Amy Minton, and

**Amendments to the Administrative Code (continued)**

Michelle Hughes. Members voting in opposition by abstaining is Ron Snider and Jerria Martin. The amendment passed by majority decision.

Mr. Snider – I guess what we have to do is to certify the Administrative Code?

Tara Hetzel – You are going to do a certification of the rules and send it back to Legislative Services Agency (LSA) for a holding period of forty-five (45) days, and it will be published again. No comment period, it's just a process.

Mr. Wahl – We also have to submit a report on why we made the amendment.

Mrs. Hetzel – That's part of the certification process.

Mr. Snider – Do we need a motion to move the certification process? Is that what we need to do now?

Ms. Hetzel – You made a vote on the amendment; but you need a vote on the final rules. Mr. Wahl made a vote for the adoption of the rules as amended.

Mr. Snider - Do we need a roll call on that.

Mrs. Hetzel - We never did a roll call on the adoption.

Mr. Wahl – We did a roll call on the amendment – now we need a roll call on the final adoption.

Dr. Pack – What have you done? Are you voting on the Governor's recommendations now?

Mrs. Hetzel –The amendment has passed so now that will be incorporated into the final rules with the Governor's changes that was made. This will be and make that final, certified to LSA and finish the process. Roll was called, members voting in favor by saying "aye" are as follows: Michelle Hughes, Jerria Martin, Amy Minton, Angela Stokes, John Wahl, and Debra Windsor. Mr. Snider abstained from voting. The motion passed by majority vote. The Rules will be sent with paperwork to LSA for finalization.

Mr. Snider – Do we need to take any action?

Mrs. Hetzel – That was the action.

Dr. Pack –The certification must be in by May 17, 2024, to meet the May 30, 2024 deadline for publication in the Administrative Monthly. Other actions can be taken within forty-five (45) days of it being posted. After that, July 17, 2024, it should be totally certified and APLS should receive notice.

Mrs. Hetzel – It will become effective.

Mr. Wahl – July 17.

**APLS Education Trust Fund (ETF) Budget – FY2024-2025**

Jennifer Holman - This is the budget for FY2025 that Mr. Snider spoke about earlier. Everything else remains the same. The language is as follows: to be distributed to public libraries within the State. In fiscal year 2025, in order to receive funding from this program, a public library must be in compliance with the Governor's proposed amendments to Administrative Code Rule 520-2-2-.03.

Mr. Snider – As I stated earlier, at the next meeting, I want you and Dr. Pack to come up with recommendations as to how we will deal with a 9% cut.

**Parent's Inappropriate Book List on the APLS Website**

Dr. Pack – We have no additions since the report at the last board meeting in March.

**Status of Hiring Process – Blind & Physically Disabled Division (BPD)**

Dr. Pack – There is another resignation – now there are four (4) vacant positions. We have not gone forth with filling the position because we were not sure about the budget. I will have a full report at the July Meeting.

**Baldwin County Cooperative Library’s Dissolution – Report to the Board**

Dr. Pack met with Roger Rendleman, Administrator at Baldwin County. Mr. Rendleman wanted to understand the process of Baldwin County Cooperative Library (BCCL) receiving state aid. The unincorporated areas of Baldwin County state aid went to BCCL. Normally, the county judge or whoever is over the county determines where the incorporated state aid money goes. If BCCL is dissolved, those funds will be re-distributed to libraries in the county. BCCL thought that money would continue going to the county for their use to support libraries

**Bill of Rights/Statement for Public Library Use**

Dr. Pack - It’s a draft statement for public libraries to add what they need to do. This is what the Board asked me to develop.

Mr. Snider – How does this compare to the previous bill of rights statement. I know we never adopt the controversial ALA bill of rights statement. There was another statement from a number of years ago, how does this compare to that statement?

Dr. Pack – It’s totally rewritten differently. It has the same intent to have information facilitating formats of knowledge and intellectual pursuits. Libraries only refer to the ALA bill of rights when they have challenges. This document would be available for any public library to use as a template to write their own core values.

Mrs. Minton – I want to make a motion that we table this so I can look over this and speak with my librarians about this. I need to study this with my librarians if that’s ok. Mr. Wahl seconded the motion. There are a few things in here that just jumps out at me that I would like to see a little different. Particularly in Section IV and it reads as follows:

- **Section IV- The selection and availability of materials and services in libraires should be guided solely by professional considerations, without being influenced by political, moral, or religious biases. Acquisitions should be tailored to meet the distinct needs of the community.**

Mr. Wahl – We need morality in decision making - I am not comfortable with moral being in that list.

- **Section V– Libraries must ensure equal accessibility to their materials, facilities, and services for all users, without any form of discrimination based on race, creed, gender, age, or any other factors.**

Mr. Wahl - I want to add religion there. I ask that board members be sent an electronic copy so we can look at.

Ms. Martin – Are we also proposing to develop a committee to work with Dr. Pack to update it or are we using individual updates?

Dr. Pack – If they are voting to table it, then the chairperson has to bring it off the table.

Mr. Snider – I think the intent of the motion is to table it until the next meeting. I don’t know if we need a committee – we can each look at it. I frankly thought that it should be some acknowledgement of what we’ve adopted in terms of their putting books in different areas, age appropriate needed to be part of this.

Mrs. Minton – That is my question too. In Section V – does the word “age” still stay in there. That’s what I am questioning.

Mr. Snider – We have a motion to table and a second for that. Is there any other discussion? Roll was called for those in favor of tabling the statement until the next meeting. Members voting in favor by saying aye” are as follows: Debra Windsor, John Wahl, Angelia Stokes, Ron Snider, Amy Minton, Jerria Martin, and Michelle Hughes. No “nays.”

**Legislative Update – FY2024-2025**

Mr. Snider – I think I've already given the legislative update.

**Legislation Passed that Impact Libraries – HB 89, Act 2024-122**

Mr. Snider - That was in our materials concerning Shelby County.

**Open Meetings Act - Committee Meetings**

Mr. Snider - We were advised recently that committee meetings with two or more people needs to be publicly noted. I think that is something in twenty-five (25) years we never knew that was a policy.

Mr. Wahl – I think that's fairly new. That changed recently.

Mrs. Hetzel – That changed in 20ish.

Mr. Snider – We have never been advised – quite frankly, you have attended most of our meetings and we've had subcommittee meetings.

Mr. Wahl – I think only if the subcommittee is going to make a recommendation to the Board on a final passage item. It's not always required for a subcommittee.

Mr. Snider – Is that the correct interpretation?

Ms. Hetzel – Yes.

Mr. Snider - I would ask if you would send us something detailing what those requirements are in writing to put on the next agenda.

**Athens-Limestone Public Library**

Nancy Pack – The documents that were requested by Elizabeth Stewart are on file at APLS. However, when a library is established, the probate judge or communities establishing the library determines how they will appoint the board. September 2018, we received a signed document saying the city of Athens would be making all the appointments. Whenever a library is created, it's up to the City or County to determine the funding of it. In the case of the operation of the library, Athens provides 60% of the funding and the county provides 40% of the funding.

Mr. Wahl – When you say county judge, is that the probate judge?

Dr. Pack – The county judge, I am not sure.

Mr. Snider – I will assume it's the probate judge.

Dr. Pack – The one who can make laws. All we do is look at the establishing documents.

Mr. Snider – Right now, there is a controversy going on in the county. Where does that stand. It's the city and county position. Do we have anything in writing on the county or city's position?

Dr. Pack – I understand the Board of Limestone County Public Library had a meeting and I'm not sure what happened.

Mr. Wahl – This is my home library. There is definitely a discrepancy between the city and county government. That's become pretty heated. The County Commission in January, passed a Resolution asking for proportional representation on the Board. The original by-laws filed with APLS as well as the website included that. The County Commission is upset about it. The City is taking the position that they passed something at some point that gave them the full authority to take it away from the County. There are definitely two sides that are in disagreement.

Mr. Snider – I guess that's how I initially viewed this when I heard about it is the County and the City needs to get together. When do we do the next state aid distribution? My point was, that we are not going to be distributing state aid for many months now. It gives the people time.

**Athens-Limestone Public Library (continued)**

Dr. Pack - Fourth quarter will go out because the certification has not happened. They are meeting all the requirements of attending meetings, having board policies, whether we agree or disagree with them.

Mr. Wahl – When do you think the consideration on a practical level, when do you think that will be?

Dr. Pack – What do you mean?

Mr. Wahl – You said probably December. I know it's a lot of work, who gets what, their needs, that type of thing. So, when do you think that will be going on?

Mr. Snider – State aid is not a lot of work. We don't have any real discretion on that. It goes out according to population. We don't really say yea or nay.

Mr. Wahl – You don't pick winners or losers. It's for anybody that's in line with the requirements receives a check.

Mr. Snider – That's right. We don't decide, for example, if Athens-Limestone is going to get an extra \$100,000.00.

Dr. Pack – If you have two or three libraries in a county the judge already decided who will receive the money from the unpopulated areas, those are placed into the formula. We already have a schedule of state aid available for libraries if they meet the qualifications.

Mr. Snider – State aid will not be distributed until sometime later this calendar year. It would be my hope that during that period of time, the City and County can work that out among themselves, which is certainly the more appropriate thing to do.

Mr. Wahl – I know we heard there was a state representative trying to do a request for the Attorney General's Office that was rejected. Would it be appropriate for this Board to ask the Attorney General to look into that issue?

Mr. Snider – I think it would be better for the County and the City to request that, instead of again getting us more in the middle of it because it does look like to me, it's almost an inner family dispute that is going on between the County and the City.

Mr. Wahl – Sometimes, that's when you need outside mediation the most. That's the hard part. I agree with you, and I was hoping over the next six (6) months they will be able to do that.

Mr. Snider – I think it's more appropriate for one of them to ask for an opinion in respect to that instead of us requesting an opinion. If they haven't resolved it by the Fall, we can decide whether we want to get in the middle of that. I would prefer that we not get into the middle.

Mr. Wahl – I do feel that we have a stake in this because policies are required and state code is submitted to us. If they are not operating in line with those, they are not in properly established forum in the policies that's been submitted.

Mrs. Minton – So couldn't we make a request to the Attorney General's Office to get an Opinion on it?

Dr. Pack – The Chairman, Mr. Snider, has asked that the County and City ask for the Opinion. We are advisory only. It will come to APLS and we can say the Attorney General made this Opinion. It took us ninety (90) days to get an opinion when we requested one.

Mrs. Minton – How will APLS advise if we don't have an Opinion – If we don't know? That's why I am saying, can we not request an Opinion?

Dr. Pack – We do know what the Opinion is, they need a judge to step in and take care of this and not APLS. This can be worked through the Probate Judge. They have legal authority to determine this.

**Athens-Limestone Public Library (continued)**

Mr. Wahl – Every library would have something on file with the Probate Judges or with a judge's office on the original set up of the library?

Dr. Pack – There's an agreement and establishing documents on file with every library who chooses to be a part of the APLS network.

Mr. Wahl – Do we have copies of those?

Dr. Pack – We have copies of them and they go back to the initial establishment of the library.

Mr. Wahl – Have you looked up Limestone County?

Dr. Pack – Yes. I did. Our files indicate that the City does all of the appointing to the Board.

Mr. Wahl – So you are saying in 2018 Athens-Limestone Library reinstated

Dr. Pack - They made a name change – the documentation is in our files and I will be glad to get it for you, but it's date stamped 2018 as the original and it has signatures on it. The only way you will know is to go back to your city council minutes and your county commission agreements to see what happened, that's the legal research.

Mr. Wahl – I know the County Commission never passed anything in agreement with them not giving board appointments. I am a little confused. What I heard from Ms. Stewart, if I am correct, you did not receive a copy of the 2018.

Ms. Stewart – I received an unsigned copy. I am curious, does this state agency have the 2009 original by-law change when Athens City took over the Board and appointments? If you look at what Ms. Everingham submitted to all of us, the by-laws you have in the official file, on page 3, actually states that each appointment by city and county until 2009; and that's when the city (I brought the legal document with me) referenced in the policy on page 6, the city took over the board and took over the appointments. Notice, they never submitted that to this agency. So, when 2018 happened, the chair had already served over two consecutive terms when he passed that. This actually goes back ...

Mr. Wahl – Was the 2018 document a re-organization document or a copy of the by-laws?

Dr. Pack – The library board sets the terms and write the by-laws. The city and county implement those. A record of appointments is usually on file with library, City, and County. Ms. Stewart did not ask Ms. Everingham for the establishing documents, she asked for the policies.

Ms. Stewart – I have those documents. It was established in 2001, the county/city board until 2009. The request was, did they ever submit that to the state?

Mr. Wahl – It's in state code, in order to receive state aid, a library must have written by-laws governing its functions. That would be something we require to have on file. What exactly was the document we received in 2018?

Dr. Pack – It was a document saying that the City would do all the appointments.

Mr. Wahl - What was the document? Was it by-laws?

Dr. Pack – It was not by-laws it was from the city/county notifying a name change and who would be appointing.

Ms. Stewart – It was signed by the library chair and the vice chair. It was never signed by the city or the county, neither was the 2009.

Mr. Snider - Again, I think it more appropriate that we table this until the next meeting and give them more time to try to work this out among themselves.

**Athens-Limestone Public Library (continued)**

Mr. Wahl – Or if the county has an issue, we can request the county to request an Attorney General's Opinion.

Mr. Snider – Yes. We can do that. But I think it's more appropriate that they do that as opposed to our getting involved.

Roy Mattson – May I make comments on this?

Mr. Snider – Sure.

Mr. Mattson – The job of the board is to have accurate documentation. Clearly, regardless of who provides the documentation; if there's a documentation that says the City does all the nominations, that should be submitted annually to this Board, right. They never updated their policies or their by-laws for about fourteen (14) years then in 2018, they send something from the City. That board wasn't a legitimate board. The documentation you've been getting year after year, they haven't been abided by. That should be a concern to you, that you have a board that is not providing you accurate information.

Mr. Wahl – Yes. Something I would like to do here is. I am comfortable with having the County Commission ask for an Attorney General's Opinion. I would like from APLS something written to the Board, a report, on what documents were received from Athens-Limestone Library, when we received them, what they were, and what was accomplished.

Mr. Snider – Kind of a chronological list.

Dr. Pack – I would like to explain three things to the group here:

- They have had three (3) library directors within the past five (5) years. Paula Laurita was the last director
- Athens - Limestone has built a new library; which the files may have been lost or misplaced when they were moving or transferring files.
- Another director was there for two (2) years and she would call and say I can't find any policies and procedures. They had an Interim director for six (6) months, now they have April Wise.

All I'm saying is three directors within the time period we are looking at, and a new building being built, who knows where their files are. It's a black eye on them.

Mr. Snider – Exactly.

Mr. Wahl – Paula is a good friend of mine. What I would like to have is a report of what we received in chronological order, when we received it, what those documents are, and what they did.

Dr. Pack – Ms. Everingham has already given you documents.

Mr. Snider – Why don't we do this. On one piece of paper, a chronological listing on what we received, when we received it, and what it does. That will make it a lot easier than going through these documents. Mr. Wahl, you made a motion that we ask the county and/or city to request an outside Attorney General's Opinion in terms of what this is. Ms. Martin seconded the motion. Mr. Snider asked for any discussion.

Mrs. Minton - Will this be discussed at the next meeting, the results of that?

Mr. Snider – Yes. Roll was called and members voting by saying “aye” are as follows: Debra Windsor, John Wahl, Angelia Stokes, Ron Snider, Amy Minton, Jerria Martin and Michelle Hughes. No “nays”

**APLS Financial Update – Jennifer Holman**

In the board packet, there is a budget as of April 30, 2024 as of that date, we were at 75% obligated in state funds. We are right on track with spending.

**APLS Financial Update – Jennifer Holman (continued)**

Mrs. Minton – Just so I understand how this works, state aid and finances. Is it public when a library submits their policies so we will know our libraries will be taken care of. How will we know the policies have been submitted from each library so we can know they will get their funding, because I want to make sure ours get their funding in my district.

Mr. Snider – I don't recall we have never not funded any library according to population. Periodically, we would have a request for a waiver, almost all the waivers concern are requirements for local government support that decline. Most of the waivers we have local governments for one reason or another have financial difficulties or they give another form of support not meeting that. Most of it is small towns that would have dropped fairly to minimal money and I think we have historically approved almost all of those. Years ago, we may have declined some because we thought it was getting too consistent.

Mrs. Minton – When is the deadline they have to have their policies updated and into you?

Dr. Pack – They can wait until next year, but they won't receive their first, second or third quarter checks.

Mr. Snider – In order to get their first quarter checks, they must have the policies in by December.

Mrs. Minton – I thought the checks were cut in October, are they not?

Dr. Pack – That's what they usually are, but none of our libraries will be in compliance with state aid unless they write their policies in July, August or September. We will not have certification approved until July 17, 2024 by LSA and there are some steps in there that may be taken that might interrupt that certification. By July 21, 2024 the certification will be through the process and it will be over.

Mr. Snider – After July 21, libraries could submit new certification so they will be in line for state aid.

Mrs. Minton – The libraries will know this, even the small libraries, you will send out the ...

Dr. Pack - Yes ma'am. APLS will have an Administrators' Meeting in July to address this and we hope to work with someone from the Governor's office to interpret what the Governor wants.

Mrs. Minton - Even the small libraries – everybody will know.

Mr. Snider – Dr. Pack, did you address the competitive grant status?

**Director's Report on Activities**

Activities and meetings were listed for Dr. Pack from March – May 2024.

**Competitive Grant Status**

Dr. Pack – Unless you are eligible for state aid, you cannot be awarded an APLS competitive grant using funding from LSTA. After July 17, 2024 with the addition of these amendments, no library will be eligible until new state aid policies are provided.

**Completion of Building Projects**

Dr. Pack – It's taken seventeen (17) months to get a frame and glass for the door downstairs and that project will be completed by June. We also have a project going to finish up the last portion of the building with painting, wall paper, ceiling tiles and new lighting. The money was obligated from last year's money so I don't know how much we will be able to do. You will have a report in July, but right now we are going through the bid process to get finalized costs.

**Staff Activities**

Ken Herston – APLS consultant attended the Evergreen virtual- conference on April 22-26, 2024

Alex Perry – APLS consultant attended the 2024 GPLS Tech Boot Camp in LaGrange, GA on April 24-25, 2024.

### Discussion on Other Topics

Dr. Pack - I attended an interesting meeting in Marion, AL on Friday. The head of the USDA, State Rural Development, Nivory Gordon discussed grants for total communities. Libraries could benefit from USDA Rural Development especially in the black belt. I explained that APLS will have to stop our hotspot circulation program due to budget cuts. He and I plan to get together and talk about possibilities of working with libraries.

Mr. Snider – Sixty-six (66) mainly rural libraries benefitted from that program.

Dr. Pack – Yes. The other thing that was interesting was Representative Terri Sewell was there. I asked her about the appointment of the IMLS director. I also talked to her about reauthorization of the LSTA Act to include construction of libraries when it comes in 2025. She was very supportive of our agency and stated her mother enjoyed serving on our board, and that she will always support libraries as much as she could in Congress. I also mentioned to her that some of our libraries will not have funding to buy books because our competitive grants may be in jeopardy. She reminded me of a program that the Library of Congress has that a legislator can recommend two to three libraries for the Library of Congress free book program. Library of Congress books will be available if your representative recommend your libraries go and be a part of that program. She asked that I pick out some libraries, write her a letter, and she will be glad to do recommend the libraries to the Library of Congress.

I think you need to know that APLS is the host of Chief of State Officers of State Libraries (COSLA) Convention in Huntsville, Alabama in October. We have been working with Chief Officers to develop a program. It will be a four-day conference in Alabama for the first time in forty (40) years. The COSLA meeting rotates to different states each year.

Mr. Snider – Talking about LSTA construction grants. When I was first on this board, LSTA appropriated money for construction grants. We had a maximum grant of \$100,000.00 that helped a lot of small libraries to be able to construct new facilities.

Mr. Snider - We talked briefly about the language and the legislation dealing with AVL and the adoption of recommendations by the Governor to the Administrative Code. I mentioned that there are fifteen (15) members of AVL, we are only one of those five (5) agencies that are members of the AVL governing board. We basically are the fiscal agent for this program.

Dr. Pack –The five agencies are: Education, Post-secondary Education, Higher Education, ASA, and APLS. We each have three representatives that are appointed to the Board to select databases and other formats.

Mr. Snider asked Dr. Pack to convey to AVL that the Board would like by the July meeting, their advising us on how AVL can comply with the Governor's recommendations in the spirit of those recommended to APLS. Because we get in an awkward situation as the paying agent. If AVL says they can't comply with it, I'm not quite sure how we would distribute the money. I want to put it back on the AVL Board

Mr. Snider –We do have a duty as the paying agency. I want AVL to advise us in writing how they will comply with that so that we can make the distributions. I don't think we need a motion on that, but I think we need something in writing to make sure we are complying with the statutes.

Mr. Snider asked if there was anything else that should come before the Board. Mrs. Minton gave members a handout. She was asked to pass out a letter from Dr. Perry, Pediatrician who spoke at the Administrative Code Hearing.

### Adjournment

Mr. Snider asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Wahl made the motion. Ms. Martin seconded the motion. Roll was called for adjournment: Members voting in favor by saying "aye" are as follows: Michelle Hughes, Jerria Martin, Amy Minton, Ron Snider, Angelia Stokes, John Wahl, and Debra Windsor. No "nays."

Mr. Snider thanked everyone for attending the meeting and thanked Mrs. Stokes and Ms. Martin for making the effort to attend virtually. Meeting adjourned at 11:23 a.m.  
The next meeting will be held on July 18, 2024.



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Ron Snider, Chairman



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Nancy C. Pack, Ph.D., Director



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Vanessa E. Carr, Recording Secretary