

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
ALABAMA PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE
NOVEMBER 20, 2025**

The Executive Board of the Alabama Public Library Service (APLS) met on November 20, 2025 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 John Wahl called the Executive Board Regular Meeting to order at 1:04 p.m., in the Tallapoosa Conference Room, with prayer by Pastor Troy Counts. He prayed for wisdom; the scripture was taken from Philippians 4:8; followed by the pledge of allegiance. Roll was taken. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated he is honored to have them.

The following Board members were present: John Wahl, Ron Snider, Angelia Stokes, Jerria Martin, Debra Windsor, Amy Minton, and Kasandra Stevens. APLS staff members present: Kelyn Ralya, Katie Bailey, Ryan Godfrey, Matt Sponsler, Jay Mims, and Vanessa Carr. Visitor attended: Ben Albritton, Office of the Attorney General.

Participants Approved to Address the Board

Autumn Zellner	Samantha Webb
Alyx Kim-Yohn	Angie Hayden
Dallas Baillio	Amber Frey
Dr. Jim Vickrey	Elaine Witt
Toni Kornegay Vaughn	Erin de Jager
Susan Stewart	

Chairman Comments – Public Comment Period - Tallapoosa Conference Room

- Fairhope Public Library - This Board never took a vote not to give state aid funding to Fairhope. That was actually something found in state code, that if it goes beyond the third quarter, which was the June 30 deadline. If the library is not compliant with state code, state aid funds cannot be distributed. There is nothing negative to Fairhope from this Board. I look forward to working with the leadership to try to make sure they are in compliance for FY2026 or until they become compliant.
- Threatening funding for libraries – I am a strong supporter of guaranteed funding for our local libraries.
- Polling – It is overwhelming in favor of the code change and removing sexually explicit materials from youth sections under 18 years of age. The poll showed upper 80% with Republicans but 2-to-1 among Democrats.

Let parents decide whether their children do or do not have access and that is not censorship. People are going to have different ideas, perspectives, and world views, that's ok. We should embrace that, open discussion, open debate and listening to different opinions. The parents who want their children to have access to sexually explicit or transgender materials should have that right. The parents who don't want their children to be exposed to this material without their consent have that right. We need to respect both and there is no easy way for government to do this. We have standards since the beginning of time, society across all cultures have protected children from hard subjects. This is a cultural standard that is not unusual and not out of place. We listened to public comments and there were over 8 thousand written comments submitted and there were oral comments. I will recommend to the Board that we amend. I oppose direct censorship and I believe in the First Amendment. Take a five-minute recess and we will go to the Board Room for the regular meeting. The comment period ended at 1:43 p.m. The meeting reconvened in the Alabama Room at 1:56 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

Chairman Wahl asked if there were any additions to the Agenda. It was recommended to omit **D. Participation**, since it had been done prior to the Board Meeting in the Tallapoosa Conference Room. Ms. Martin made the motion for the update. Debra Windsor seconded the motion. Members voting in favor by saying "aye" are as follows: Kasandra Stevens, Amy

Adoption of Agenda (continued)

Minton, Angelia Stokes, Ron Snider, Debra Windsor, and Jerria Martin. No “nays.” Vote taken, all in favor. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Wahl asked if there were any corrections or edits to the Minutes. An edit was done prior to the Meeting. Mr. Snider made the motion to approve the Minutes as written. Ms. Martin seconded the motion. Members voting in favor by saying “aye” are as follows: Amy Minton, Angelia Stokes, Kassandra Stevens, Debra Windsor, Jerria Martin, and Ron Snider. No “nays.” Vote taken, all in favor. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Chairman’s Report

I very much enjoyed the public comment period. It highlights how much misinformation there is out there on this subject. I am going to try to do a better job of communicating in a better way. It may be futile or a waste of time, but it’s something I am committed to do. I ask members of the media to do the same thing. It does not help if the actions of this Board is misrepresented while only one side is told. I think it’s important that if we want to create a better society and create a better understanding between groups; it has to be done through open communication.

Unfinished Business**Discussion continued on Fairhope Public Library**

Ron Snider - I think the Board owes an apology to Fairhope because at that meeting the action of the Board postponing a decision until you reviewed some books clearly implied to them that their funding of the remaining \$20,000 would still be available to them and subject to approval. When you found out that was not in fact the case, I think we owe them an apology in terms that vote was the vote to deny their funding of approximately \$20,000.

Chairman Wahl – I feel bad for anyone who misunderstood the situation but I would apologize for any lack of information or unclarity. I do think it’s important to note that the delay – taking the time for this Board to review those books are a very important process. If we approve something without doing our due diligence, that will reflect on us. The Fairhope Board took from the March meeting until August to do their review process. Naturally, we want to do our due diligence. That is the responsibility of any Board. I think it’s also important to note that the deadline was not the September meeting, it was June 30, 2025. That funding, no matter what action the Board had taken at the September 18 meeting, would not have affected the loss of the funds.

Ron Snider – That should have been made clear to them because the implication was that our action would make a decision that they would receive those funds. That’s how they perceived it.

Chairman Wahl - I want to highlight two things. An e-mail was sent a year from June after the deadline of that year with code changes to all library directors referencing the June 30 deadline and letting them know if they were not in compliance, they would not have it. It was not that communication did not happen. I understand that it was months prior and was in an e-mail. It was not as if the information wasn’t communicated. This is not something new in this process. APLS grant funding always have that June 30 deadline. Nine libraries this year did not meet standards. Fairhope was the only one that was based on the requirement of sexually explicit. Eight other libraries missed other requirements and did not receive state aid funds. This is not an uncommon thing. I know APLS staff works with libraries to make sure they are in compliance by that June 30 deadline. This is not something new that this board voted on; this is actually an Administrative Code, funding code for the state, it’s not an APLS Code. I’m sorry for any misinformation or for people’s misunderstanding. I think we should make this a priority. Kelyn, make this very clear for next year; if you’re not in compliance by the June 30 deadline, you will lose funding.

I have been working very hard to review the materials, the books they submitted. The library director made a public challenge in the press that this Board would not actually review the materials. I took that negative insinuation towards the Board very seriously and is something I decided to do. I have the books; some are audio books that I have not finished. I want to make it clear with the drama surrounding this that if we do delay this vote, it will not affect FY2026 money because that will not be at risk until June 30, 2026. This will not be a question of them losing any money, but I have not finished those books. If the Board wants to proceed with a

Discussion Fairhope Public Library (continued)

vote, that is your right, but I would ask that we wait until I finish reading all the books. That would be my request, but that is up to this Board.

Ron Snider – John, are you becoming the "censor-in-chief" for Alabama that you are reading books that this local board ...

Chairman Wahl – Ron, we just talked about not trying to create misinformation. The fact is the Chairman of the Fairhope Public Library made a challenge for me to read all the books. I am accepting her request. That is not censorship, that is trying to work with the other party.

Ron Snider – That's censorship. I will make a motion. We heard what Fairhope has done. I think that they have more people with Master's Degrees than this Agency does. They reviewed those books, they told us that two board members read each book; they reported to us that some of those books they did move, some they thought was inappropriate. As I said before, it is not the role of this Board to second guess local library decisions for local communities for us to get into the business of the 226 public libraries in this state to reviewing what books they have in their libraries. So, I will again move that we restore Fairhope's funding now. Mrs. Stokes seconded the motion. Members voting in favor by saying "aye" are as follows: Angelia Stokes and Ron Snider.

Kasandra Stevens – As a Board, yes, we were challenged to read books and I think we should when we're making decisions; that is a good thing. I also agree with what he's saying, we're not doing it to become censors of libraries, we are doing it to become informed. My question is: how many books are we talking about and is it a question of whether or not these books meet the definition of sexual material. Does that affect the new policy which is going to be clarified. Is any of that affected by this?

Chairman Wahl – It will not be affected by the new policy. The new policy is not in place – even if the Board votes in favor of the new policies today, they have to go through another level with the Legislature before they are actually implemented. Nothing here is in discussion with the new policy changes. I believe there were seventeen (17) books in question that the parents in Fairhope challenged. Of those, Fairhope moved seven after their review process, that leaves ten (10) books parents requested be moved, but the Fairhope libraries didn't move. The question is do those ten books meet the definition of sexually explicit under state code.

Kasandra Stevens – My follow-up question to that will be, going forward with all the we have in the state and if certain libraries say this meets the definition and we're going to move it and it's placed in a restricted area because it's sexual material. Other libraires read it and say, no, that's not sexual at all. Is there a process where it goes through APLS, not the Board specifically, has that been set up? There should be some consistency you can't say some libraries can and others can't.

Chairman Wahl – There needs to be consistency. The issue with Fairhope is when parents went to them and tried to work it out on the local level, the library refused to readdress the books the parents submitted after the code changes. That really left this Board with no choice, in my opinion.

Ron Snider – Fairhope did the procedure; they looked at all these books. Ms. Wright told us they assigned two board members to read each of those books.

Chairman Wahl – This was after the funding was suspended – after this Board told them they were not in compliance.

Ron Snider – Before we acted on the last meeting. The local board read these books – they agreed some of them should not be in that section. The rest they agreed should stay in the section. Who are we to say John Wahl is going to read those books and say I think this is inappropriate. We have 226 libraries and we can't get in the business of trying to be the censor.

Chairman Wahl – I didn't want to read all ten books the only reason I am doing it is because I take it very seriously. If I am going to advocate for policies and I have someone who is affected by those policies who challenges me and say we read them and I doubt you can do it in a

Discussion Fairhope Public Library (continued)

negative way, I take that challenge very serious. This is out of respect for them this is something they asked for. It would be disrespectful if I didn't read them

Kasandra Stevens – It was my understanding that they said these books were reviewed under the previous policy before that policy was adopted and they wouldn't re-review them. That was my understanding.

Ron Snider – No. They reviewed them under the current definitions after their funding was suspended. They reviewed these books they moved some and kept some and they made a decision. That's why I believe we should restore their funding. We need to leave decisions like this to local boards in terms of what is appropriate as opposed to adopting a state rule where we can have 226 people in 226 communities coming to us because they disagree with local decisions.

Kasandra Stevens – So that puts my question back out there. If we're putting explicit rules, who is the judge on that and how do we have consistency without us doing this. No body wants to do this; no one wants to say where books should be housed, so what is the standard going to be?

Amy Minton – One thing I will say, I feel they are complying with the obscenity part but the rest of the policy says sexually explicit. They are not moving the sexually explicit according to the definitions we all voted for. Why do we have policies and definitions that this Board voted for if we are not going to follow them? What is the point of that? I can give you an example of that. This book, "Doing It". This is one of the books they chose to keep there. It talks about a sexual relationship with a teacher. It tells graphic sexual information in this book. So, you can say it's not obscene, but it is sexually explicit. Look it up, read it, have you read it? They viewed the books on obscenity not sexually explicit.

Ron Snider – No, that's where we differ. I don't think that's our role to review books. The local board reviewed those books.

Chairman Wahl - That's why it's important for this Board to be involved because we do have a situation where a board, by its own admission, moved several of the books that they refused to remove before after the code change had passed. They were refusing to remove books now that they admitted do not meet the code. Every library in the state, Fairhope is not the only library that parents have reached out, it's the vast majority. Those who have contacted me. I never say bring it to the state, we want to be the censors of the state, like Ron is submitting I am. It's quite the opposite. Every chance I get, I take those people and get them in touch with their local libraries whether it's the director or the local board members. I try to create peace. I want this board to become the board of peacemakers, who treat people with respect, who demand accountability, and who don't turn a blind eye if there are bad actors. If a library is trying to do the right thing and they are trying to work with their local patrons, and trying to follow state code, you will never hear me talk about trying to put restrictions on them or hit them over the head. We're going to give them the time they need; we're going to work with them. That is the difference here; Fairhope openly refused to listen to parents, to hear their redress grievances, even after they were asked to multiple times; and that really didn't leave this Board with no decision but no negativity towards Fairhope but they moved seven (7) books they admitted their guilt of disobeying the state Code.

Kasandra Stevens– So, what do you feel their action needs to be to be in compliance?

Chairman Wahl – I think the question is do those ten (10) other books contain material that is against state Code.

Ron Snider – The Fairhope Library Board is determined that they are in compliance and what we're saying is we are going to second guess a local board and 226 public libraries.

Chairman Wahl– You can call it second guessing or you can call it accountability.

Kasandra Stevens – What is the process going to be? I don't think nobody on this board want anybody's funds withheld? We all want our libraries to be funded. What is the process going to be to determine if this book is reviewed by any library and it is determined that sexually explicit,

Fairhope Public Library (continued)

is there a standard policy where it's implemented statewide so we're not doing this every meeting and no one wants to do this.

Chairman Wahl– It's very hard because new books are being written all the time and that's why the code doesn't list the books, you have to list the content. The same with R rated movies, you have the content that's what turns a movie into an R rated movie. It's the same thing with a book, it's the content of the book that decides whether it is or not sexually explicit. You can't put together a list of books because that is ever changing.

Kasandra Stevens – Fairhope has a young adult section where these books that are sexually explicit can go, correct? I see both points and my concern is we don't want to become censors. I wish there was a way either through APLS staff to say once a book is brought before the Board's attention, it doesn't have to be the Board, it can also be APLS, that's sexually explicit, then other libraries will know that it should be housed in the young adult so we're not policing.

Ron Snider – That's where they were put; yet we're saying that's not enough.

Chairman Wahl – I'm not reading these books to just read them. I was challenged not to censor someone; it's the opposite. I am reading them out of respect.

Kasandra Stevens– I think that is honorable and a good thing to do to be knowledgeable to know what we're talking about. I don't think that's a bad thing you're doing.

Chairman Wahl– Moving forward, there should be a review type process and it can be cross-referenced with the definitions passed by the state to give libraries more clarity, that will be very helpful. That's a discussion for later. It's not in effect now and that is not going to help us with this decision today, but I think that is something positive we can talk about in the future.

Kasandra Stevens– I wouldn't know how to vote on this - I am torn on this – I agree with both things. Fairhope's funds are not going to be restored for FY2025 because they have already exceeded the deadline so what is the point in voting?

Ron Snider – We are in a new fiscal year and it's for a quarterly payment.

Chairman Wahl– It's a quarterly payment, but all of it can be refunded as long as they are in compliant before June 30, 2026.

Ron Snider – The way that we're going to decide they're not in compliance is this Board is turning itself into a board of censorship. It's going to second guess the decisions made by highly respected board members in Fairhope.

Chairman Wahl – Once again, by a board who admitted they made a mistake, they were wrong about the books. I don't want to be negative but you are pulling me into this. We don't want to be a Board of censorship, we want the experts to make the decision, but we have experts saying yes, seven of the books that we said were ok are not ok.

Ron Snider – Now they are saying the remaining ten were reviewed separately by their professional librarians, two board members read each of those and they determined they should stay. We are kind of repeating the same things. So, there has been a motion and a second, now there needs to be a vote of those in favor of restoring funding to Fairhope Public Library.

Kasandra Stevens - I want to delay the vote simply until it has been not been determined whether the ten books may or may not be sexually explicit. I think someone has to review them to say they are or aren't sexually explicit to know what we're talking about.

Kasandra Stevens made the motion to delay the funding for Fairhope until the next meeting. The motion had to be amended. Chairman Wahl asked for a vote on restoring Fairhope's funding. Members voting in favor by saying "aye" are as follows: Ron Snider and Angelia Stokes. Members abstaining as follows: Kasandra Stevens and Jerria Martin. Members voting "nay" are as follows: Debra Windsor, Amy Minton, and John Wahl.

Discussion Fairhope Public Library (continued)

Chairman Wahl - I am going to make a report on the books – I am not making a decision – this Board will make that decision. As with any library in the state, they bring a request to me, I try in good faith to honor that request.

Kasandra Stevens– I agree with what Ron said; we don't want to be the policeman of libraries. It would be very nice if a review committee made up of library directors, and APLS directors, to do this so the Board won't have to.

Administrative Code Public Hearing – The Board will make a decision on updates to the Code – Hearing, Report of Testimonies, Summary of Letters

Chairman Wahl - I know we've been thinking about this, I know I have spent a great deal of time going over the written and oral comments and listening to the different perspectives. I spent a great time going over the contents, and going over what people are arguing about their differences. I do think some amendments are healthy and needed based on the public comment period. I have a draft of what my recommendations would be (a copy given to all in attendance). The yellow is new, unhighlighted is old. Three main differences in what was originally submitted:

1. The only significant change is taking out “positively depicts” because I felt like that was under the wording listening to the concerns in the transgender community that would allow materials negative towards them. I don't think that was ever the intent and I think it's very healthy that we should not be allowing negative content and not positive content. This should be about parents making the decision what children are exposed to and consistent across the board and not just required movement of positive depiction that's the major change in that section

2. Clarification based off of public comment on youth library cards.

I struggle with this because I know there are low-income libraries in this state that don't have a good library card system. I don't want to add to their burden; at the same time listening to reports of libraries in the state of Alabama that when a parent come in they are forcing that parent to only have the option of choosing an adult card, that's tragic. To those on the other side of the debate, who says these are our parental rights and we're the ones restricting it, I called an absolute foul. That is incorrect. If you have parents come in and you have the ability in your system to grant both youth library cards for only the youth section and the adults and told no, you don't have the right to protect your children from this content; you only have one option to force your child to get an adult library card with access to the adult section. That goes against everything this original code change represents. It takes away parental rights, parental freedoms, and it shows just how disingenuous some people really are about in this debate. This is about returning power to the parents, power to the people. The bad actors, the libraries who have done this, I am sorry they have sought to undermine parental rights and have forced us to take this step which will undoubtedly cause some hardships to some libraries but it's because of the bad actors that have refused to follow state code. This is just closing the loophole – the intent is the same, it's just closing a loophole that some libraries were exploiting to not allow parents to give them access to both options.

3. The final change is a new item on the list – this was created because thousands of the letters received requested that we insert the definition of sexually explicit into state code. While I understand the desire for that, I don't see any other definitions in state code. I don't think that's not where definitions are put in; definitions are passed by this Board which are legitimate, but I think this listens to that request and it adds a line to make sure everything is clear for both the public and for our libraries. We are saying yes to the definitions must be followed passed by this Board which is common sense. We all know it but it does not hurt to listen to the public comment period with those thousands of requests. This is the way to recognize those requests during the public comment period and put it in the code. Those are the major changes and recommended changes, and my recommendations. The Board makes the final decision if you have any edits or ideas.

Kasandra Stevens – I just want to mention that I received information from the focus group of library directors on the restricted cards. I think this is very important and I spoke to a lot of library directors about implementing this and how that procedure goes. There was universal feedback from our library directors. If the APLS Board chooses to mandate restrictive cards, the language of the code must clearly express the Board's intent while also preserving the flexibility

Administrative Code Public Hearing – The Board will make a decision on updates to the Code – Hearing, Report of Testimonies, Summary of Letters

libraries need to best serve their individual communities. I agree with that and I think this language does that. I think the way it was written before is the same intent; it's not changing, but the difference is it closes the loophole that libraries can't force parents to sign away their right to have a restricted card. Some libraries were saying, yes, you can have a juvenile card but you must sign this form saying the juvenile card is completely unrestricted and you're going to police your children's reading materials. So, this is closing that loophole saying you can offer an unrestricted card, but you must offer parents the choice.

Angelia Stokes – I object to you saying there are bad actors. I don't think there are any bad actors. I think people have different ideas and they are trying to be compliant, but it's been confusing.

Chairman Wahl - I think anyone who tells parents you can only have this are forcing parents into a box.

Angelia Stokes – That doesn't mean they are bad actors, they're unclear, and they're confused.

Chairman Wahl – Yes. I can see that – bad actor may be the wrong word. I have talked to some and tried to explain the Code and they talked to me in ways that I would now classify them as bad actors. You may not have had those conversations - there is a difference in opinion there. The sad part about this whole thing is the vast majority of Alabama's 226 libraries across the state are not having any problems. I want to highlight that because it is so sad to me those pushing back on this. The idea of giving parents a choice on whether their children have access or not is a good thing. We should all agree on that. When we have libraries that are intentionally forcing parents into one box, saying you have to give your children access to these materials; that's the problem. The vast majority of Alabama's libraries care about their patrons, they care about parents, they want parents to be in the driver's seat.

Debra Windsor – As a Reading Specialist for almost forty (40) years, I taught school, and I read books before I presented them to my students. I worked with librarians and they are amazing. Parents sign off on stuff every single day, so it's not hard for them to sign. The majority of parents don't mind signing, saying I want my child to have access. The ultimate goal is for our kids to love to read. We want them to be readers and to be good citizens of our great state. We set the example for that.

Chairman Wahl – No one is going to say, no I don't want to make that decision for my child to have this – either way, if they want their child to have access or not for a library card.

Amy Minton – I would like to say a big request to the media. This is based on public comment, almost 9,000 letters in public comments. So, please when you write your articles, this is not just an APLS decision, this is not my decision. People had to sign their addresses, their names, this is what the majority of people in Alabama want. Eighty percent of the people want this policy. This is not something a minority has asked for. Everyone had the opportunity to make oral or written comments.

Ron Snider - We have five million people in Alabama - not all had requests from the Republican Party.

Angelia Stokes – You can't say 80% of the people responded – you can't say the whole majority.

Chairman Wahl – If we want to take the activist groups out of the equation. So, anything not submitted on the final day was still 70/30.

Ron Snider – With five million people to say we're doing something on the basis of a thousand or whatever that number is taking the activist from both sides, it's ludicrous from my standpoint.

Chairman Wahl – No offense, but that's what those who don't win the numbers game say. There's a reason we do public comments, and it's because we want feedback. This Board, the agency, the press, all reported that we want to hear from everybody.

Administrative Code Public Hearing – The Board will make a decision on updates to the Code – Hearing, Report of Testimonies, Summary of Letters (continued)

Ron Snider – We saw during public comment today on the same issues that was unanimously against the same issues we’re debating.

Chairman Wahl– This was not a public comment period today. The public comment period was for the October hearing. We gave 45 days for the public comment period. The press reported on it, the press had the opportunity to see it and those who responded were overwhelmingly in favor of this code changes. That is a very fair statement. I also want to highlight to those who want to make us say the wording was already done and finished before this event happened. That is not true and you can see it based on the edits, the amendments based on the public comments. That’s why it’s so important to learn from people. I’m actually excited about the public comments. My recommended edits come from both sides of the argument, not just one, and I think that’s important to remember this was not a process done from the beginning. This is a working process where you did receive input from the public and we made the code changes better based on their input.

Amy Minton – What about the words “sexual identity”? Is that going to be included or not? I know that was included in a lot of the letters but I don’t see it here.

Katie Bailey – That was not in the original proposal.

Amy Minton – Correct. That was not in the original proposal but it was in the wording of the letters. Not sexual orientation, sexual identify.

Chairman Wahl– Is that an amendment you would like to add? We have a recommended amendment that will be in the second highlighted paragraph after gender ideology, add sexual identity for children.

Angelia Stokes – Is that the same thing as gender ideology? It’s the same thing. That was just a different term for it.

Chairman Wahl – Would you like to make that motion?

Kasandra Stevens – Gender ideology is the same as sexual identity.

Amy Minton withdrew the motion to add sexual identity to the code updates. Chairman Wahl asked for a motion to adopt updates to the Code. Members voting by saying “aye” are as follows: Jerria Martin, Amy Minton, Kasandra Stevens, and Debra Windsor. Members opposed and voted by saying “nay” are as follows: Ron Snider and Angelia Stokes. Vote taken, majority in favor. Motion passed by majority vote.

Certification of Administrative Code - Kelyn Ralya

Since updates were approved, the time frame for the certification process is forty-five (45) days. There is a legislative committee that reviews the updates and make changes. Once that is over, then there’s an effective date in mid-February 2026.

Status of Director Search

Kelyn Ralya and Katie Bailey exited the meeting.

Chairman Wahl– The Board voted at the last meeting to fill the director position. Kelyn Ralya has been acting as Interim Director. The board voted to open the position so applicants could apply for the position to make a final decision at a certain time frame. The board voted that I review applications submitted at my discretion to pick the top three candidates to the board for a final decision on the best qualified for the position. Thirteen (13) applicants applied for the position and I appreciate their desire to want to be a part of this agency. The three names I submitted are current employees at APLS. I did that because experience is important at the top and I appreciate the work they have been doing here. I am actually a big fan of Kelyn. I’m going to be honest about it. I don’t agree with her on everything, but she’s a peacemaker and I value peacemakers. There is not enough of those in this world.

Status of Director Search (continued)

Amy Minton – I have two motions to make. I did speak with Pennie Broussard in Human Resources. I make a motion to officially make Kelyn Ralya, Director of APLS. She has done a great job in this difficult season. She has the experience, she understands LSTA grants, and she has all the qualifications. Jerria Martin seconded the motion. Ron Snider stated that he was surprised when he asked the Chairman for copies of all the resumes.

Ron Snider - Certainly, I identified two of those, I can't remember their names, who seemed like they would be very good for this Board to consider. I've known Kelyn for many years and she is good at what she does. I don't believe that she is qualified to be the director. She is fine in her current position. I think it would be better to look outside the agency with some of the resumes the other ten (10) you sent after I requested them. I think we're making a precipitous decision. I can't support it.

Angelia Stokes – I know when I first got on this Board Dr. Pack was new and she fought tooth and nail to keep things professional and ongoing. Whereas the structure for the audits had been let go. Nobody knew where equipment was, nobody knew where pencils were kept, people didn't come in when they were supposed to, people didn't stay as long as they were supposed to in their jobs during the day, they took time off and never told anyone about it, and I just think that's part of that crap. Kelyn is good at what she does, her reports have always been faultless. Before that, we never had successful audits – except within the past few years because Dr. Pack was so professional and ongoing with supervising people.

Chairman Wahl – I would say, no offense, for those people who were here... I find it ironic that you talk negatively about me saying bad actors and you call people crap. We should treat people with respect.

Angelia Stokes – I agree and I do treat people with respect but some people have reached their limit in management.

Jerria Martin – I'm sorry. I'm not understanding. Are you saying some people are complaining about Kelyn?

Chairman Wahl – She's talking about pre-Nancy Pack there were problems.

Angelia Stokes – Kelyn requested to have her name in the hat for the director's job before and she was not selected. I don't know anything about that because I was not here but I know since Dr. Pack was here that things had improved professionally and everything has been orderly and in its place.

Chairman Wahl – I have watched Kelyn before she was Interim Director with the grants process do a phenomenal job. She is organized - if you miss out on an audit it will not be in federal grants that's where you want to put someone who has things in order and we have a record of that. I don't think it's fair to take a past administration and hold that against Kelyn because I think that's very disingenuous.

Jerria Martin – If someone has some type of proof you want to bring before the Board that has happened recently these past months under her leadership, if you have anything to bring to the table on that, I would definitely entertain it.

Amy Minton – She has been here 30 plus years working under this administration and she has more experience.

Jerria Martin – The workers came to us because they were very fearful about this process because they didn't want another stranger coming in or someone who didn't know the processes

Ron Snider – There were reasons. I think we're making a mistake not to interview someone from the outside. It may be an ultimate decision. Some of the applicants were very good.

Chairman Wahl – I find it very uncomfortable for me to saddle someone with someone else's guilt. Everything that I've seen from Kelyn has been exemplary, hard -working and she does a great job of creating peace.

Status of Director Search (continued)

Angelia Stokes – I don't want things to slip back like they were before Dr. Pack came and that was unorganized.

Chairman Wahl– That is understandable. There may be some safeguards that can be put in place with that too. We know that we do have her position to fill and we can bring someone from the outside who potentially could help with office management.

Anelia Stokes – That will be difficult because Kelyn will be that person's supervisor and there is no incentive for that person's suggestions be taken.

Amy Minton – One thing I will say about Kelyn, when I made this motion to open up the floor and take applications, what I respect and really appreciated about her is the next day she called me and said is there something she's done, is there something she can work on for me to open it up and not immediately just appoint her. I appreciate that because she wanted to get better and wanted to know why I did that. She asked what can she do to get better. That would be hard for me to do and she did it and I appreciate that.

Chairman Wahl – The director's position is an at-will position. If she fails an audit and it starts falling apart, we will.

Angelia Stokes – That is some of the things we need to pay attention to.

Jerria Martin – I say we give her a chance.

Amy Minton made the motion. Jerria Martin seconded the motion to appoint Kelyn Ralya as Director of APLS. Members voting in favor by saying "aye" are as follows: Debra Windsor, Kasandra Stevens, Jerria Martin, and Amy Minton. Members opposed and voted by saying "nay" are as follows: Ron Snider and Angelia Stokes. Motion passed by majority vote.

Amy Minton – I have a second motion. After speaking with Pennie Broussard, I want to propose a chief of staff position. The same applicants that applied for the director's position can be selected for this position. The funding is there and this person's primary responsibility will be to work with our libraries so there is continuity across the state with policy implementation.

Chairman Wahl – The position can safeguard any potential lack of organization and create a check and balance.

Amy Minton – This position is not a state-based position, but an at-will position. Once Kelyn is appointed effective December 1, applications can start for this new at-will position. It will be equal to the director but not assistant director. The responsibility would be the things we talked about. This person will be the contact person with libraries for new policies so it wouldn't come to the Board. New responsibilities will be typed up; and I've already spoken to Pennie about that.

Amy Minton made a motion to create a chief of staff position at APLS effective as soon as possible with a thirty days window. Jerria Martin seconded the motion. Members voting in favor by saying "aye" are as follows: Angelia Stokes, Ron Snider, Kassandra Stevens, Debra Windsor, Jerria Martin, and Amy Minton. No "nays." Vote taken, all in favor. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Kelyn Ralya and Katie Bailey returned to the meeting.

Chairman Wahl - Kelyn, it is my pleasure to inform you that you are no longer Interim Director but permanent director of APLS. We are so grateful for your service.

New Business**Waivers of the State Aid Rules for FY2026 – Rule 520-2-2-.04 - Funding**

- Armstrong-Osborne Public Library - The director accidentally reported the money and it didn't exist. There were issues with the director and the board and those issues have been worked out.

- Chelsea Public Library - The library's mortgage was paid off so the funds were removed from the library's budget. The library's budget is \$106,574.22 less than the previous year. The library's operating budget decrease will not affect funding for the upcoming year.
- Emma Knox Kenan Public Library - The library's budget was reduced by \$12,056.00 less than the previous year.
- North Shelby Library – The FY2026 local appropriation is less than the previous year's budget due to a decrease in revenue from homestead exemptions of persons over 65. The board approved to increase the attorney's letters fees so district residents pay the fees.

The Board approved the waivers of the state aid rules for the above-mentioned libraries. Jerria Martin made the motion. Debra Windsor seconded the motion. Members voting in favor by saying "aye" are as follows: Ron Snider, Amy Minton, Angelia Stokes, Kasandra Stevens, Debra Windsor, and Jerria Martin. Vote taken, all in favor. Motion passed by unanimous decision. No "nays."

Angelia Stokes – I am requesting reports on whenever we have waivers, the Board needs to know the past records, how many times they requested the waivers, and why.

Ron Snider – In the past when a library requested a waiver, a form accompanied the waivers saying the last time a waiver was requested and the reason. Sometimes they request waivers over and over again and the form is used for that purpose.

On Another Topic

Chairman Wahl received a phone call from a patron in North Alabama. She is having trouble with the newsletter sent in braille. She is working with the Talladega School for the Blind, and is excited about getting the newsletter and appreciates the library for the blind. When she requested the newsletter, it's for one month, but she wants that time extended. There needs to be a permanent list when someone signs up for the braille newsletters. It was suggested that the newsletters be given to patrons for one year, instead of monthly. It reminds me of the good things that goes on in this building that don't always get recognized or appreciated.

Director's Report

APLS Financial Update – Kelyn Ralva

APLS is right where we need to be at the beginning of the year. The FY2027 budget request we submitted is in your packet. APLS asked for a small increase in state aid (\$1.35). since we have been level-funded for the past few years. As the population goes up, the per capita comes down. An increase was requested for operations to cover merit raises and benefits costs for this upcoming year. AVL did their own budget request. APLS acts as a pass-through for them.

APLS Building Update – Kelyn Ralva

We are working on the bathroom renovations – the bids open last week. The cost is approximately \$195,000.00 which is more than we thought. C.W. Smith is the contractor for the renovations and will begin construction early next year.

Front Desk Receptionist Statistics for September, October 2025

Statistics for the front desk activity was available for the Board's review.

Summer Reading Kickoff – Barbara Curry

The Summer Reading Kickoff will be held at APLS on January 13-14, 2026. Barbara Curry, APLS Consultant, is the coordinator for this event.

Administrators' Meeting – January 22, 2026

The next meeting will be held on January 22, 2026. OCLC will be the guest speakers. The meeting will be hybrid or possibly virtual depending on the bathroom renovations.

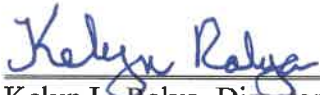
Service Certificates and Pins**10 Years****Eric Bair****20 Years****Tim Emmons**

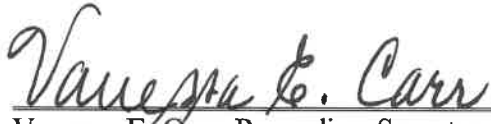
Eric Bair is not available to attend the presentation; however, Tim Emmons was presented a service certificate and pin for 20 years of service to the state of Alabama.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 3:08 p.m., by unanimous decision.



Chairman

Kelyn L. Ralya, Director

Vanessa E. Carr, Recording Secretary