

**Pope County Library System**  
**Board of Trustees' Regular Meeting**  
Russellville Public Library  
Heritage Hall

**Minutes**  
May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016

**I. Call to order**

Karen Womack called to order the regular meeting of the Pope County Library System Board at 4:02 p.m. on Wednesday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

**II. Roll call**

The following people were present: Karen Womack, Chair, Bob Hardin, Mariola Payne, and Kay Sunderland. Others present: Charlotte Goodwin, Kevin Massey, and Krista Willard Staff Representatives; Jenn Terrell, *Courier News*, Dr. Van Tyson, *Atkins Chronicle/Dover Times*, and Shawn Pierce, Director.

**III. Motion to approve the April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016 minutes.**

Motion: Hardin

Second: Sunderland

Approved: Unan

**IV. Motion to approve the Financial Report.**

Motion: Payne

Second: Sunderland

Approved: Unan

**V. New Business**

Library Director Shawn Pierce gave an update on financials and then discussed the upcoming City Zoning Hearing in regard to a Casey's convenience gas and

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snack store bidding on the old Rally property at 311 W. Arkansas Avenue. The possible rezoning effect on the Russellville Public Library (RPL) and future downtown revitalization efforts was presented.

### **Maintaining Downtown Revitalization**

Pierce shared how Russellville has worked toward revitalization of the Downtown Russellville, and expressed concern if these properties are changed from C-1 (Central Business District) to C-2 (Interstate Commercial), it could change the course of the Downtown Revitalization effort.

Pierce said, currently, Russellville is working to turn around and fortify the downtown area which includes the Russellville Public Library. Anytime that a town or city wants to turn around an area, studies have shown that when a library is put in, the area comes back. When a library leaves, the area either dies, or does not do as well.

Pope County Library System's (PCLS)'s strategic planner has recommended expanding the Russellville Public Library from 13,000 ft<sup>2</sup> to between 54,000 ft<sup>2</sup> – 68,000 ft<sup>2</sup>. The properties in consideration, take up ½ of the block. Pierce is concerned, "If the library is to stay in this area, we will need to have the full imprint of the block. If the zoning is changed, and the property is sold, we will not be able to expand, or stay in this area."

### ***Effect on Surrounding Businesses***

#### **Traffic Congestion**

The Board heard that the last two businesses at 311 W. Arkansas have not done well in that location due to traffic congestion, or the inability to get into and out of the business. It was pointed out that RPL serves 400 – 700 patrons per day. With the addition of a gas and food store, traffic on Arkansas Avenue and Fourth Street will be an incredible challenge as would parking. Due to the size of the store, and amount of traffic, Casey's General Stores are generally located just off of Interstates.

#### **Loss of Other Businesses**

The Board discussed how the zoning change would bring one business in, but would affect two businesses: potentially running the Exxon gas station out of business and cause the RPL to reduce services, or move. Additionally, the ripple effect in loss of sales to the Country Cupboard, and Tobacco store could be affected, not to mention surrounding property values.

Pierce expressed that it has long been the goal of the Pope County Library System to purchase these properties, and now has the funds to purchase the tax assessed value.

The land at National Home Center is not an option due to Prairie Creek running under it, and multiple property lines in the center of the building.

Bob Hardin pointed out that the alley to be closed is the one between the Rally's and Cogswell Motors, not the alley by the Heritage Hall.

Pierce has requested a speed bump for the corner of Third and Boston Place streets to reduce traffic speeds and wrecks and near misses. City Engineer, Kurt Jones, has agreed to do a study on the area to see if a speed bump or speed hump is warranted.

The meeting concluded with explaining how advocacy efforts got PCLS's FY2017's Arkansas State Aid reinstated through Governor Asa Hutchinson's emergency funding. The Library System hopes to get its 2018 regular state aid back at that time. Other topics will include: a branch services report and the upcoming Craft and Bake Sale (June 4<sup>th</sup>) along with Summer Reading Program kickoff (June 6<sup>th</sup>) with Brian and Terri Kinder at the RPL.

## VI. Adjournment

**Meeting adjourned at 4:43 p.m.**

Motion: Sunderland

Second: Payne

Approved: Unan

Minutes submitted by: Shawn Pierce

Minutes approved by: \_\_\_\_\_

*The next Library Board meeting will be at 4 p.m. Wednesday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
at the Dover Public Library.*

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