DRAFT

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RAPPAHANNOCK COUNTY
PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
October 29, 2026
at Rappahannock County Library, 4 Library Road, Washington, VA 22747

Victoria called the meeting to order at 4:30pm.

Confirmation of Quorum: In-person attendance were members of the Board of Trustees: Victoria Fortuna, John Beardsley, Bonnie Jewell, Michael Chamowitz, Patti Peterson, Kit Johnston, Liz Conley, Cole Johnson and Jen Cable. Also attending: Library Director Amanda Weakley, FOL Representatives Ruth Welch, Rappahannock News Reporter Ireland Hayes and Trebor Martin and members of the public

The meeting agenda was amended, as approved, and was approved as presented.

The minutes of October 1, 2026 of the Board Meeting were approved.

FOL Report: Ruth Welch from FOL reported that their tent sale raised about $800. The FOL has lost some members and is looking for more members.

Public Comment:
Christine Smith presented a petition in favor of not moving the Library. KC Cromwell said there is nothing wrong with the library services and was concerned about more taxpayer money being spent. Nancy Freeman stated that none of the reasons for the move make sense and is concerned about a lease as compared to owning the Library building. Deak Deakins said something stinks and that the Library improvements could be done in phases and is opposed to move. Carolyn Brown stated that she is opposed to the move and that the LIbrary Board should resign and that the Library doesn't need a Board. Matthew Black appreciated the thoughtful comments from members of the community but did not like the negative tones of comments and supports the move to the Rush River as he does not want to see the Library's resources used up and it is a good offer from Black Kettle. Barbara Black was in favor of the move to Rush River at the last meeting but then comments had made her question her choice but in the end does support the move and the opportunity of a new Library. Bill Tieckelman does not think the offer is generous and said the new Library will be in a swamp and books will be flooded and believes it is better to have ownership than lease and library projects can be done in phases. Terry Dixon stated that he is not in favor of leasing over ownership and compared it to the All Points Broadband deal and is suspicious of a free lease. Brenda VanNess said there is too much conflict and should table the issue as there are more critical issues in the county at the moment. Donna LaPre stated that the arguments for keeping the Library in its current location are concrete and the voices for moving the Library are not concrete. Derek Capezi thanks the board and the public for their comments and does not distrust the offer and the Board and said it is a strong financial offer for the future and supports the Board's decision. Laura Grigsby stated that she knew the donors for Library and they would not be happy with the move and also compared to the All Points Broadband deal and there are also more important issues in the county. Steph Ridder stated that the Library is

not losing a building but gaining a building built to specifications and no reason to think that Black Kettle or the Board has ulterior motives. George Lee stated that he works in the county and see signs to improve Library throughout the county but does not see any signs to move the library anywhere and he does not think it will work in the Rush River site and repairs should have been made to Library and he has also heard of other developments for the current Library such as a restaurant and says no to moving the Library. Marlena Lee said that she thinks it is a great Library building and is opposed to the Rush River move and respects all of the people in the room and their right voice and have their opinions. Sheila Gresinger said that the building has been there for 35 years and it needs to be expanded and it is aging and that the Board has done a good job for the children and future of the county. Kathy Frazier agrees with all the reasons that have been stated as to why to not move the Library and there should not be a rush to vote and put a vote on hold. Jess Settle stated that when she filled out the survey about the Library that she thought of it as a dream / wish list. Amanda Weakley asked the Board to listen to the public and stated that many of those supporting relocation are not active library patrons while many supporting staying are active library patrons and to recognize that with the community – emotion, connection and nostalgia are important and that it is not just a business decision but the future of the library and that she values that people care about the Library and the community deserves the best Library and services, wherever its location. Susan Babcock asks for people to get together and not move the Library and turn down the offer from Black Kettle and leave the Library alone. David Konick said he gave money and his name is on the plaque for the current Library building and agrees with opinions that the Library should not be moved. Ruth Welsh stated that she has offered to help raise money as she has experience with non profits and there is money in the county and she is concerned about the Library being on private land and compared to Sperryville Trail and Avon Hall Nature Trail and the lack of access to them for the public.

Vote: Following public comments, each board member addressed the board and the public how they weighed the issues and their intention to vote for or against the motion to accept the offer made by the Black Kettle LLC. There was consensus among board members that the process to reach a vote had been thorough and appropriate.

Victoria then put forth a motion to the Board for the following resolution **(in bold)** to propose that the Board accept the Gift Lease offer from Black Kettle and that was seconded by John.

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE RAPPAHANNOCK COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of the Rappahannock Public Library has determined that the Library needs additional library collection and meeting space;

WHEREAS, from 2019 to 2025, the Board explored the expansion and renovation of the existing Library facility, and studied the financial capacity of the Board and the community to fund such expansion and renovation;

WHEREAS, Black Kettle, LLC, the owner and developer of Rush River Commons

located in Washington, Virginia, has offered to donate to the Board a long-term leasehold at Rush River Commons, and to construct on the lease premises, at Black Kettle, LLC's cost, a new Library facility that will provide the needed additional library collection and meetingspace;

WHEREAS, the Board appointed a negotiating committee to negotiate with Black Kettle, LLC the legal agreements needed to accomplish the gift;

WHEREAS, the Board's negotiating committee has completed the negotiation of (i) a Gift Lease, pursuant to which Black Kettle, LLC donates a long-term leasehold to the Board, and (ii) an Operating Agreement, which governs aspects of the operation of the leased premises and Rush River Commons. The negotiating committee has provided the forms of the negotiated Gift Lease and Operating Agreement to the Board for consideration;

WHEREAS, pursuant to Code of Virginia Section 42.1-35.A, the Board has the right to accept donations of real estate for the establishment and maintenance of the Rappahannock free public library system; and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined that it is in the best interest of the Library to accept the gift from Black Kettle, LLC and to execute the Gift Lease and Operating Agreement.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as follows:

1. That the Board accepts the gift from Black Kettle, LLC of a long-term leasehold and a new Library facility to be built by Black Kettle, LLC on the lease premises.

2. That the Board is duly authorized to execute and deliver the Gift Lease and Operating Agreement in the forms provided by the Board's negotiating committee.

3. That the President of the Board is duly authorized, on behalf of the Board, to execute and deliver, without necessity of attestation or joinder of any other officer, the Gift Lease, the Operating Agreement, and any additional documents necessary or desirable to effect and carry out the gift transaction described in the Gift Lease.

The Board Members then voted as follows:
Victoria Fortuna - yes
John Beardsley - yes
Patti Peterson - yes
Liz Conley - yes
Jen Cable - yes
Michael Chamowitz - yes
Cole Johnson - yes
Bonnie Jewell - no
Kit Johnson - no

There was then a short recess / break at 5:55 and the meeting reconvened at 6:15

Report of the President: No report

Report of the Library Director: Amanda thanked Steve Cox of Softwash HydroClean for professionally cleaning the library exterior at no charge. She also expressed gratitude to the William Cage Library Trust for a $500 donation to the library. Additionally, she thanked the PATH Foundation for a donation of $1500 to the library in appreciation of the hospitality she provided when welcoming their Board and staff for a tour and talk earlier this month.

LibPass, a reporting requirement for State Aid, is now open, and she will be working on the report in the coming weeks. She shared that the library received a Virginia Public Library Directors Association Silver Award for Library Excellence at the Virginia Library Association Conference, displaying the plaque for the Board. She also noted that library programs are going very well.

Amanda will attend FOIA training in November. Patti asked if a FOIA training session could be conducted/put on the agenda for the Board at the January meeting and the Board as a consensus thought that would be a good idea. Amanda reminded board members that FOIA resources were also provided in their appointment/reappointment letters and that she could forward them that information at any time.

Report of the Treasurer: Treasurer Debbie Knick was absent and the report was presented by Bonnie. The report is through the date of September 30th.. The Virginia Investment Pool Report was also through the end of September 2026.

Committee Reports:

Negotiating Special Committee: None

Communications Committee: Liz stated that she has been tracking all the public comments via email and will send out a report. Suggested a possible letter to the editor to express thoughts and look to the future of the Library. Also maybe set up focus groups to explore the use of the new space. A fundraising committee needs to be set up and will discuss at the next Board meeting.

Expansion/Renovation: None

Buildings and Grounds: None

Finance: None

Policy: None

Personnel: Amanda's review process will move to July 1 to be in line with other county employees and the fiscal year as they have made that change.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Code Amendment -
Michael and Bonnie advised that current law authorizes library boards to accept donations and to hold donated real property, but there is no authorization to sell or lease real property. To clear up ambiguity, they suggested seeking an amendment to section §42.1-35 of the Code of Virginia enabling any library board to pursue, convey, and lease real property for the public library's benefit provided its proportionate share of the net proceeds of such conveyance or lease of real property be used for library purposes. A motion was made and approved by the library board to convey the proposed amendment language to our state legislative representative, Delegate Webert.

Open Discussion: Liz wanted to thank Victoria, Negotiating Committee and Amanda during this Library Expansion / Possible Move process. John thanked Amanda for her time and efforts during this difficult time. Michael also thanked Amanda for her efforts, comments and communication in this process.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55pm

Submitted by Jen Cable, Secretary

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Victoria Fortuna, President Date