



## State Library Board

### Meeting Minutes

**Date:** May 22, 2025  
**Time:** 10:30 a.m.  
**Location:** Virtual and in-person at 1500 Senate Street

#### Board Member Attendance:

---

Ms. Alanna Wildman	Present
Ms. Deborah Hyler, Member	Absent
Ms. Anna Claire Dando, Member	Present
Ms. Loretta Green, Member	Absent
Ms. Jennifer Cunningham, Member	Present
Ms. Andrea Kelly, Member	Absent
Mr. Mark Herring, Member	Present

**Other Attendees:** Ms. Leesa Aiken, SCSL; Ms. Charlotte Dunn, SCSL; Ms. Faith Line, APLA; Ms. Breanne Smith, SCSL; Mr. Chris Yates, SCSL

#### A. Board Business and Approval of Minutes

1. Motion: Anna Claire Dando made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 21, 2024, Board meeting. Jennifer Cunningham seconded the motion; all present approved the minutes.
2. The Board discussed two resolutions proposed by SCSL Board member Mark Herring:
  - a. Resolution to Remove References to the American Library Association (ALA) from the South Carolina State Library Website—Mr. Herring stated that he started this and the following proposed resolution last year to regain public trust lost over the past five to ten years. He stated that the American Library Association has taken partisan positions that are “untenuous.” He stated that the studies he has read demonstrate the embrace of transgender books for minors does irreversible damage. He stated that by passing both this and the following resolution shows that the State Library Board is serious about regaining public trust. Mr. Herring stated that as an unofficial member of the York

County Library Board and in his work with the Department of Education in South Carolina's school libraries, everyone asks him about this issue. He went on to say that when the former ALA President said she wanted to queer all libraries in America, it wasn't good. Ms. Leesa Aiken stated that approving this resolution would affect the State Library's everyday business as so much library professional development and important sub-organizations are through ALA. Ms. Faith Line pointed out that United for Libraries, a library advocacy group that provides guidance and classes for public library Boards and trustees, is associated with ALA. Ms. Aiken explained that ALA is the professional organization for librarians and that most standard library practices are set with ALA's guidance. Ms. Aiken reminded the group that there were over 10 million visits to South Carolina public libraries last year and over 24.4 million items borrowed from the libraries and that South Carolinians are using their libraries. Ms. Dando asked to confirm if the State Library had already broken its institutional membership with ALA, and Ms. Aiken confirmed that this had already happened several years ago. Mr. Herring stated that ALA is tarnished due to activist positions; breaking entirely with ALA would signal to the public that the State Library does not support ALA's activism. Ms. Cunningham inquired if there was another way to show that the State Library does not support progressive activism without totally removing the library's relationship with ALA. Ms. Aiken reiterated that eliminating the library's institutional membership already completed that goal. Ms. Alanna Wildman stated that ALA is the only professional organization for libraries and that there is no other alternative in terms of large-scale organizations or continuing education providers. Ms. Aiken agreed and reminded those present that sub-groups of ALA include vital organizations like ARSL (The Association for Rural and Small Libraries), United for Libraries which provides Library Board training used across the State, ABOS (American Bookmobile and Outreach Services) along with other usual information for librarians to use professionally, such as: programming, collection development, research and library topics. Mr. Herring stated that he wants an asterisk on the State Library's website saying that while the State Library uses ALA's resources, it does not agree with ALA's ideology; he also wants the full text of his proposed resolutions on the State Library's website. Ms. Aiken noted the resolutions would be part of the Board minutes. Ms. Wildman stated it sounds like we're cutting off a huge resource if the State Library eliminates ALA from its resources; Ms. Aiken agreed. Ms. Dando stated they would not vote on the resolution regarding ALA but would come up with language to be discussed at the next meeting for the potential asterisk on the website.

3. Resolution to Remove References to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) from the South Carolina State Library Website—Mr. Herring stated that everything Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives have attempted to do is already covered by federal law; having additional DEI initiatives on top of given federal protections shows redundancy and creates mistrust. Ms. Aiken pointed out that she was unaware of a DEI reference on the State Library's website, but that it is a goal of all libraries to serve all members of their

community. Ms. Dando motioned to remove references to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) from the website, and Ms. Cunningham seconded the motion. All Board members present voted in favor of removing references to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) from the website. Ms. Aiken clarified that the individual words “diversity,” “equity,” and “inclusion” will still be used on the website, but the words “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion or DEI” will not appear together as a phrase. The group agreed that this was the intention.

4. Ms. Aiken presented the Board with the new Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) Model Policy Online system. She explained that it is the new state policy for performance management but must still be reviewed and approved by the Board. She also stated that the new system is more streamlined and other state agencies will also be moving to the new system to evaluate their employees. Ms. Dando motioned to approve the new EPMS policy; Ms. Wildman seconded the motion. All Board members present voted in favor of using the new EPMS system for employee performance management.
5. Ms. Aiken advised that the meeting notes from the March 27, 2025, Board meeting will be placed with the normal Board meeting documentation, but are not required to be approved via the standards set forth by Robert’s Rules of Order as a quorum was not present when the meeting occurred.

## **B. Director Report**

### **1. Agency Administration**

- a. Ms. Aiken gave the most recent findings from the Legislative Conference Committee budget hearings. She stated that an additional \$.25 millage was added to the state aid package; the State Library also received approximately \$487,000 in personnel funding. There are no additional positions that will be used with this personnel funding; instead, there will be increases in salaries and existing vacancies will be filled. However, the library still needs preservation and digitization staff. Ms. Aiken will request additional positions next year.
- b. Ms. Aiken provided updated information regarding Proviso 27.1 and library funding for the FY25 legislative session, as well as the Oath of Office Proviso. The version of Proviso 27.1 that passed the previous day stated that public libraries will receive funding from the State Library twice a year in equal parts and must certify regarding minors’ access to prurient materials. Public libraries must also have a reconsideration request policy in place, in addition to the usual budget and MOE agreement. Mr. Herring stated that the new young adult literature written in the past ten years is egregious and has too much language about sex. He stated that we need to teach kids about preventing sex but we shouldn’t give them instruction. Ms. Aiken reminded him that the State Library has, and continues to, provided guidance to public libraries on how to label materials appropriately (e.g., Young Adult versus Teen), but that

information is ultimately up to each individual library system's Board. She emphasized that those decisions are local decisions: the State Library can certify that public library systems meet certain requirements in order to meet state aid but that the State Library cannot audit their collections. Ms. Aiken informed the Board that the Oath of Office Proviso did not pass but that she is waiting to hear from the Secretary of State.

- c. Ms. Aiken provided a statewide infographic which details that there were 130 books requested for reconsideration in an 18-month period: 31 counties had those requests, with just a few counties consisting of the majority of those requests.
- d. The State Library was initially notified that we would receive a partial IMLS grant award for FY2025; however, Ms. Aiken stated that the library has received notification that most, if not all, of the full \$3.2 million award will be awarded.
- e. The State Library launched an E-card in January 2025 so that patrons could access digital resources faster without having to come to the library to get a card. Ms. Aiken reported the program has been incredibly successful, with 3,500 new patrons signing up for an e-card since the program began.
- f. The State Library received the SC Human Affairs Commission Award for being an Equal Opportunity Employer for the third year in a row. The State Library achieved 100% of the Affirmative Action Goals set by the state. Ms. Aiken noted pride in the employment practices by the State Library and winning of the award.
- g. The State Library received the KeyMark Productivity Beast Award for the category Best in Courage! KeyMark is a vendor that the state of South Carolina uses in our IT systems. The award was for the State Library's determination in pushing boundaries in process automation as we continue to create and innovate. Matt Guzzi of the State Library was instrumental in the State Library receiving the award. Ms. Aiken recognized Mr. Guzzi's contributions at a staff meeting.
- h. The Notable State Documents Awards Ceremony was held on March 19, 2025, with great success. There were twelve winners from agencies across the state, including the Department of Consumer Affairs, First Steps, and the Darla Moore School of Business at USC.
- i. The Read-In was held on April 3, 2025, with great success. Over 2,000 people participated, and the State Library lion mascot, Dewey, was popular with the children.
- j. The South Carolina Talking Book Services (TBS) Art Gallery reception was held on April 24, 2025, with great success. There were over 50 participants in the competition this year, and the artwork will remain on display at the State Library until the end of May.
- k. Employee Appreciation Day will occur on Monday, June 2, 2025. Employees will enjoy a day at the South Carolina State Museum and will also have a staff meeting while there.
- l. Ms. Aiken highlighted a visit from Chris Mundy from the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) to the State Library. Mr. Mundy has extensive experience working with the NLS recording studio, as well as studios across the country that record NLS publications. He was very complimentary of the State

Library's studio and gave feedback to our staff who are interested in recording for TBS and NLS. Mundy is recommending two of the magazines SCSL records for national publication: *Garden & Gun* and *South Carolina Wildlife*.

m. Ms. Aiken reported that the State Library's updated preservation area is setting the tone for where the library is headed in the future with the purchase of two pieces of equipment:

1. The phasebox machine will make items for preservation, including custom, acid-free boxes for items which are fragile, rare, old, or not easily otherwise storable.
2. The humidification chamber will allow items that are rolled up to unroll without the use of weights and will allow the library to handle items with greater care when necessitated.

## 2. Partnerships

- a. Mr. Chris Yates provided the Board with updated information regarding the State Library's partnership with the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO). The State Library recently entered into a partnership with GPO to become Preservation Stewards. The print titles selected for perpetuity are ones of which the State Library already had a large collection; they include Agricultural Statistics and the Congressional Directory.
- b. Ms. Aiken provided information regarding Operation Bookdrop. The project is a collaboration between the State Library, the South Carolina Department of Veterans' Affairs (SCDVA), and South Carolina Humanities to provide reading materials to veterans' homes across the state. To date, the SCDVA Veteran Village residents in Florence and the Patriot's Village in Sumter have received materials; the goal is to continue the program so that all state-run Veteran home facilities have a resident library.

## 3. Projects/Programs

- a. SC Plants the Seed Project (SCPTS), a project funded in part by IMLS and the State Library, has ten libraries participating this year.
- b. For the upcoming sescentennial of our country, the State Library will be honoring South Carolina's pivotal role in the Revolutionary War. Ms. Aiken stated that the State Library hopes to partner with organizations around the state to provide programming to commemorate some of the over-200 battles fought in South Carolina during the Revolutionary War. Already, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) Tombstone Digitization Project completed by the State Library includes tombstones of Revolutionary War soldiers.
- c. Center for the Book:
  1. Several nominations for the new South Carolina Literary Landmarks program have been submitted through the library website. Anyone can nominate a landmark, and it will be considered as long as it meets the qualifications set forth by the Center for the Book. Ms. Aiken stated that she would like the Library

Board to take on this project and proposed that they vote on one or two per quarter. She suggested that they vote on one landmark at the next Board meeting. Information on submissions received was included in the Board packet.

2. The SC250 Grant Class provided specific grants training for the upcoming sescentennial celebrations that groups will provide across the state of South Carolina in the coming year. Reference Librarian Dawn Mullin provided the group with the training.
3. The National Book Festival was recently placed on hold, but if anything changes, the Board will be notified. The State Library's two Great Reads picks for the National Book Festival are *Okra Stew* by Natalie Daise and *How to Sell a Haunted House* by Grady Hendrix.

#### **4. Personnel**

- a. The State Library currently has the following open positions: Public Information Coordinator and Director of Library Development.
- b. Kira Nessel will be joining the State Library this month as the newest Public Services Librarian.

#### **5. Past and Upcoming Events**

- a. Speaker at the Center: Mike Watts "Pond Fishing with Papa" and "Riverbank Memories"—06/05/2025 at 3 p.m.
- b. Speaker at the Center: "Reflections of South Carolina" with Robert Clark and Tom Poland—06/19/2025 at 3 p.m.

#### **6. Public Libraries**

- a. Ms. Aiken reported director vacancies in the following counties: Chesterfield and Richland.

### **C. APLA Report**

Ms. Line stated that APLA is currently following the changes to Proviso 27.1, as well as the oath-of-office information regarding the Charleston County Public Library Board of Trustees.

### **D. Finance**

Ms. Aiken discussed the financial report. The budget is on target for this time of year, with nothing of merit to highlight. No additional questions were asked by the Board.

### **E. Adjournment**

Ms. Dando made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:35 a.m.; Ms. Cunningham seconded the motion. All present approved. The next Board meeting is scheduled for July 24, 2025.