

**LAKE WALES LIBRARY BOARD
MINUTES FROM MEETING HELD ON**

MONDAY, August 11, 2025 AT

4:00 PM

LAKE WALES PUBLIC LIBRARY – SCHOENOFF MEETING ROOM

Members in attendance: Brandon Alvarado, Kathy Manry Smith, and Jodie Schmidt

Staff in attendance: Belle Reynoso and Christine Runyon

~~~~~

The meeting was called to order by Kathy Manry Smith.

**Review of the Meeting Minutes for June 2025**

A motion was made by Kathy Manry Smith to approve the minutes for the June 2025 Lake Wales Library Board meeting. There was no meeting in July 2025. The minutes were approved by Kathy Manry Smith and seconded by Brandon Alvarado.

**Library Updates**

The Library Board meeting begins. Library Director Belle presents her Director's Report.

The Youth Services Department's Summer Reading Program did not have as much attendance as last year. From our understanding, the lower attendance numbers are happening everywhere, not just in Lake Wales.

Belle also suspects foot traffic is less than normal because of the ongoing renovation. Currently the library is highlighting a lot of its e-resources that are still available. Patrons are also still able to order books from other Polk County Library Cooperative libraries within Polk County. The library is marketing more through social media, fliers, and the newsletter. Belle is unsure when the renovation will be done.

As for Books by Mail (BMail), they had a new Summer Program. It went with the theme of Arts Color Our World. They had a 30 day reading log and a drawing for prizes.

Belle mentions that the six members of BMail and Bookmobile have been laid off. The existing staff will take on the BMail service. Every library within PCLC will be doing their own local BMail service. PCLC determined that the cost of Bookmobile and BMail was too high to continue, which is why this is happening. The cost of circulation has increased and this factored into their decision. Belle fought for her employees all she could, but in the end it was PCLC's decision.

Belle reads her Impact Statement that she presented to PCLC, detailing and summarizing the effects of the decision, especially the negative impact it would have on employees that would be laid off.

Belle wishes they would have been given more notice, but we are moving forward, still offering BMail to the patrons. Morale has not been the best since the announcement.

The Library Board members inquire about the cost of Books by Mail and Bookmobile for the year. Belle confirms that it is \$350,000 a year to run Books by Mail, and \$175,000 to run the Bookmobile. This has not changed since Belle has been here (since August 2023). The money will now be used by PCLC to support the member libraries.

The Library Board members ask if they can do anything to help. Belle confirms that all questions and concerns go to Gladys of PCLC, who is the Coordinator for PCLC. The Governing Board of PCLC approved two new open positions. In addition, the Bookmobile got approved to be parked at Kathleen, but they are getting transit vans for outreach. Bartow will house these two new employees for PCLC.

Gladys reminded Belle that these services were started because of the unincorporated areas, so it is concerning they are taking the service away from these areas.

The Bookmobile serviced over 5,000 people. Belle had only recently closed the contract with Solivita. That first day there saw 80 people visit the Bookmobile and the number kept going up. It took over a year to get that contract signed. Over 150 people use BMail in the surrounding area alone. It is a sad time for the library. Belle is working on doing a farewell party, but not sure how it will look at the moment.

Belle moves on to Renovation Updates. Brycen from Qualis sent the library a Hold Harmless agreement. Stated in the agreement is that if any employees go into the construction area, Qualis cannot be held accountable if something happens. In addition, if there is any damage to the carpet, or if any damage happens to the books, they cannot be held accountable. Right now there is a 39 day delay; it has gone from an October end date to November now.

Belle discusses the library's newest service, the Braille and Talking Library. If someone has a vision disability and cannot get to the library, they can fill out an application and will then be sent programs that have braille, talking books, and audiobooks. This is at no cost to the library and the library will begin advertising next week.

Belle continues. She has contacted AARP for seniors, they are looking at moving to the library. They were very happy when the library called. Belle thinks she might give them the room downstairs.

The library has a new resource called Tutor.com. It is live tutoring from 2 – 10PM every day. From Kindergarten to College assistance is available. This will be a helpful resource for homeschooling families to improve their child's education, as we have many homeschooling children coming into the library.

The library board members agree that these are great resources for patrons.

### **Other Business**

No Library Board meeting will be held in September or October. The next Library Board meeting will be held at 4 PM on November 4<sup>th</sup>, in the Lake Wales Public Library's Schoenoff Meeting Room. If you are unable to attend this meeting, please email [library@lakewalesfl.gov](mailto:library@lakewalesfl.gov).

There was no further business. The meeting was adjourned by Kathy Manry Smith.

Submitted by:

Allison Kapphan, Chairman

Christine Runyon, Library Administrative Assistant