



Administrative Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Date: August 18, 2025

Location: Durant Public Library

Time: 2:00 pm

Meeting Room

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System Board of Trustees was held on Monday, August 18, 2025 at the Durant Public Library. Trustees in attendance were Chairperson Rhonda Porter, Winston County; Tim Deason, Attala County; Saddie Stallworth, Holmes County; and Martha Ramzy, Leake County. Also in attendance were staff members: Lea Ellis, Durant Librarian; Tammy Bell, System Business Manager; and Josh Haidet, System Executive Director.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Rhonda Porter. She welcomed newly appointed board members Tim Deason (Attala County) and Saddie Stallworth (Holmes County) and expressed appreciation for their willingness to serve on the board and contribute to the future success of the library system.

SETTING THE AGENDA

No changes were made; the agenda was adopted as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the previous meeting's minutes was tabled until the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were received.

REPORTS

A. Librarian's Report – Lea Ellis, Durant Librarian

B. Financial Report – Tammy Bell, Business Manager

The financial report was presented. Motion to approve by Martha Ramzy; seconded by Saddie Stallworth. Motion approved unanimously.

C. Director's Report – Josh Haidet, Executive Director

(See attached report.)

OLD BUSINESS

A. Attala County Library Digital Sign

The board revisited the issue of the malfunctioning digital sign at the Attala County Library. Replacement bids for a new digital sign were cost-prohibitive, so bids were instead sought for replacement lettering on the front of the building. Four bids were received. Motion by Martha Ramzy to accept the \$4,000 bid from MN Tech Shop (Louisville, MS), noting that although the Fast Signs bid from Hattiesburg was slightly lower, MN Tech Shop was

local and provided competitive pricing without potential added travel costs. Seconded by Tim Deason. Motion approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Executive Session

Motion to enter executive session by Martha Ramzy; seconded by Saddle Stallworth. Motion approved unanimously. Motion to return to open session by Martha Ramzy; seconded by Saddle Stallworth. Motion approved unanimously.

Actions taken following executive session:

1. Motion by Martha Ramzy to assign Tchula Librarian Miriam Davis to Lexington Public Library to work her full schedule until Tchula repairs are complete. Seconded by Tim Deason. Motion approved unanimously.
2. Motion by Martha Ramzy to grant Duck Hill Librarian Dena Rainey a medical exemption from the July/August service report to the Montgomery County Supervisors. Seconded by Saddle Stallworth. Motion approved unanimously.
3. Motion by Saddle Stallworth to increase Carthage Assistant Librarian Amanda Dowdle's annual salary to \$33,500, retroactive to April 2025. Seconded by Tim Deason. Motion approved unanimously.

B. Updating Bank and CD Authorized Signers

Motion by Martha Ramzy to remove former trustees Terry Jones and Flora Pilgrim from all accounts/CDs, and to add Treasurer Tim Deason as a signer on the system checking account. Seconded by Saddle Stallworth. Motion approved unanimously.

C. Kilmichael Shelving

Motion by Martha Ramzy to approve a \$43,569.72 shelving/end panel purchase from Chris Pizzuto ("The Library Furniture Guy"), based on state contract pricing. Seconded by Tim Deason. Motion approved unanimously.

D. West Shelving

Motion by Martha Ramzy to approve the \$29,285.82 shelving/end panel quote from Chris Pizzuto based on state contract pricing, with directive to minimize final cost if possible. Seconded by Tim Deason. Motion approved unanimously.

E. Carthage Hours and Staffing

Director Haidet reported on staffing changes related to budget cuts and the extended medical leave of the branch librarian. Motion by Martha Ramzy to retain two part-time positions in FY26 funded through the library's reserve CD account. Seconded by Tim Deason. Motion approved unanimously.

F. Durant Public Library Building

Discussion held regarding outstanding concerns and pending evaluation by the City of Durant to the Durant Public Library. A \$4,000 bid from Smithers Engineers + Consultants (Flowood, MS) was presented for information. Item tabled pending further discussion with city officials.

G. Tchula Public Library Temporary Closure

Motion by Tim Deason to continue the temporary closure of the Tchula Public Library until all repairs are completed and the building is verified as safe for occupancy through testing conducted by the Mississippi Department of Health or another qualified governmental or professional organization. Seconded by Martha Ramzy. Motion approved unanimously.

H. Extend FY25 Budget

Motion by Martha Ramzy to continue operating under FY25 budget levels until FY26 budget approval. Seconded by Saddle Stallworth. Motion approved unanimously.

I. MMRLS Database Maintenance

1. Motion by Martha Ramzy to delete inactive accounts five years past card expiration with no activity annually in September. Seconded by Saddle Stallworth. Motion approved unanimously.
2. Motion by Martha Ramzy to cancel unpaid bills three years or older annually in September. Seconded by Saddle Stallworth. Motion approved unanimously.

J. Computer and Internet Policy

Motion by Martha Ramzy to approve the revised Computer and Internet Policy (updated from 2020). Seconded by Saddle Stallworth. Motion approved unanimously.

K. Emergency Response Plan

Motion by Martha Ramzy to approve the expanded systemwide Emergency Response Plan. Seconded by Saddle Stallworth. Motion approved unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Martha Ramzy; seconded by Saddle Stallworth. Motion approved unanimously.

NEXT MEETING:

Monday, October 27, 2025 – 2:00 p.m. at the Attala County Library

Director's Report MMRLS Administrative Board Meeting August 18, 2025



Library Renovations - Kilmichael Public Library



West Public Library



West Public Library

- Work progressing with estimated finish date now end of August/early September
- Concrete floor has been poured, IT closet has been constructed
- Drop ceiling and plaster walls have been removed.
- Colors of painted areas will be various shades of light green
- Concrete floor will be stained, color to be determined



Pickens Public Library

- Recent fundraisers, donations, and a matching grant from the Mississippi Arts Commission have raised enough money to complete Phase 2 of the renovation of the former Pickens United Methodist Church building.
- Fundraising and planning have largely been conducted by the Friends of the Pickens Public Library, and Belinda Stewart Architects out of Eupora, MS.
- According to the architects, following the completion of Phase 2 the building will be move-in ready for the library, though additional phases will remain to complete the project.
- In the coming months we will begin the process of getting quotes for needed furniture for the new library location.

MMRLS Staffing News

Acquisitions/Programming

- Pam Chadick, MMRLS Acquisitions Coordinator, will be retiring at the end of October. Pam has dedicated a total of 26 years to our library system—serving from 1991 to 2003, and again from 2011 to the present.
- Current Programming and Marketing Coordinator Lisa Breazeale will be taking over the Acquisitions duties, while continuing to maintain her marketing duties as well.
- Outreach Librarian Raine Beckman will be taking over programming duties for the system.
- This change will reduce the amount of travel that is possible for programming and will save the system a significant amount of money every year.

Attala/Carthage

- Current Carthage-Leake County Youth Services Librarian Alyssa Hays has been selected as the next Assistant Librarian at the Attala County Library.
- Her replacement is Jennifer Stevens, who comes to the library with over 17 years experience as a teacher's aid in Leake County. She will start on August 18.

- Part-Time Library Clerk Shelby Cuny has resigned her position at Attala due to scheduling conflicts. She will continue to work Saturdays through the end of August. We are currently conducting a search for a replacement.

Carthage-Leake County Librarian Jennifer Thornton

- Jennifer was released from the hospital in early July and will now be able to continue her therapy in Carthage.
- She is currently able to walk with assistance and the use of a walker and is determined to be walking independently by Christmas.
- She also expressed her gratitude for all the cards and asked for your continued prayers.

Grant Updates

- The MMRLS Mobile Library has been selected as a recipient of the 2025 Bookmobile Grant Program from the Lois Lenski Covey Foundation.
- We will receive a \$3,000 grant to purchase children’s books specifically for our mobile library collection.
- LSTA Grant funding this year totals \$7,500.00.
- MMRLS will use \$5,000.00 to supplement our Hoopla budget, with the additional \$2,500.00 to be used to purchase adult books for the mobile library’s collection.

State/Federal Funding Update

- MMRLS patrons no longer have access to LearningExpress Library, which provided online test prep resources to help patrons improve academic skills, prepare for college, join the military, obtain occupational certifications, and more.
- This resource, which was previously funded for the state by the Mississippi Library Commission, has been cut from their budget.
- Though use by MMRLS patrons was low, with just 468 sessions in the past year, this was a valuable resource, as a backup to our collection in areas like exam prep, where it can be challenging to keep the most current materials on hand.
- We received a quote to continue the service independently, and it was \$3,500.00 a year.

Winston County Library Digital Sign

- The install of the new digital sign for the Winston County Library should be coming up very soon
- The vendor has informed us that the projected ship date is 08/18/25.



MLC Visit to Winona/Mobile Library

- Representatives from the Mississippi Library Commission visited the Winona-Montgomery County Library for their Adult Crafting program on August 7 to highlight materials purchased with LSTA grant funds, and the library's services.
- They also rode along with Outreach Librarian Raine Beckman on a visit to Middleton Oaks Health & Rehab Center in Winona. Many mobile library materials used for checkout were also purchased with LSTA funding.



Librarianship 101

- Winston County Library Clerk Jennifer Wright has been selected as a participant in the 2025 Mississippi Library Commission's Librarianship 101 institute.
- The institute, which will run from September 10-11, provides paraprofessional public library staff the opportunity to examine core concepts of public librarianship, examining library history, law, and more.

Important Upcoming Dates

- August Staff Meeting Cancelled Due to Ongoing Branch Renovations
- August 21-22: MLC Director's Meeting (Virtual)
- September 1: MMRLS Closed (Holiday)
- September 15: Municipal and county budgets to be finalized
- October 27: MMRLS Administrative Board Meeting at the Attala County Library