

CATAWBA COUNTY LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Minutes of August 12, 2025

The Catawba County Library Advisory Board met on Tuesday, August 12th, 2025, 12 noon, in the genealogy conference room of the Main Library in Newton.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Morgan Williams-Board Chair, Donna Reese- Vice Chair, Carmen Isenhower, Katie Perkins, Jeanne Lebens Siobhan Loendorf, Library Director

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Pam Cansler, Ed Sain

CALL TO ORDER

at 12:04 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public attended.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Carmen Isenhower and seconded by Jeanne Lebens to approve the minutes from the previous meeting in May. Everyone present voted to approve the minutes.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Staffing Update

- a. Veronica Williams was hired and began in June as the new Branch Manager at the St Stephens Branch Library. Veronica comes to us from the Iredell-Statesville School system where she was a school media specialist for many years.
- b. Arthur Dollard was hired and began in August as the Library Services Specialist II at St Stephens. Arthur comes to our system with about 5 years of experience working in a public library in Colorado.

Programming –

1. September is National Library Card sign up month. Please encourage people you know to sign up or renew their library card.
2. Every Child Ready to Read Storytime programs
 - a. Tiny to two
 - b. Preschool
 - c. Sensory friendly – moved to Wednesdays and has been more successful.
 - d. Spanish Bilingual storytime
3. Teen programming – kandi beaded bracelets

4. Adult programming
 - a. Interplay Learning –we have 5 licenses or seats
 - b. Adult Steam & Crafts – needle felting, knitting, DIY hand scrub, and DIY ornaments –
 - c. Health and Wellness – Yoga, Zumba, Mindful movement, Qi Gong you can join live from home by getting added to Ruthie’s list.
5. Collections –we are still building the collection with the audio easy books and we are in the process of ordering the decodable books.
 - a. Spanish language bookbaggers – still working on building this collection
 - b. Book Clubs- five book clubs that meet at the library, online and out in the community.
6. Technology – we have 69 hotspots we have seven people waiting to get a hotspot.

Summer Learning Recap

The Library’s Summer Learning programs are for all ages and are intended to keep people engaged in learning and reading throughout the summer. The theme for this year was Color Our World and we are just wrapping up the event with end of summer parties at all our branches. This past summer we had 1,567 kids, 416 teens and 693 adults signed up for the program. We hosted the last Finale party at Newton on Saturday, and we are still collecting reading records and handing out prizes.

End of Year Outcome Report – see attached

Awards

The library was awarded three NACo Achievement awards this year. One for the Pre-K Steam program, one for the Master Chef Jr, and one for the Spanish Language Bookbagger program.

Grants

1. LSTA Planning Grant: Stronger by Design

This is a strategic planning initiative to align library services with the evolving needs of the community. Since the last strategic plan (2019-2020), significant societal changes, such as digital expansion and shifting workforce demands, have highlighted the need for a refreshed, data-driven approach. This project will engage directly with community members through surveys, focus groups, and targeted outreach to ensure a comprehensive, user centered planning process. With guidance from expert consultants, the library will develop a five-year strategic plan and a one-year implementation roadmap with clear goals and measurable outcomes. Through this process, the library will strengthen its ability to support literacy, workforce development, health and wellness, digital access, and civic engagement. The resulting well-structured plan will enhance services, inform advocacy efforts, and expand partnerships, ensuring the library remains a vital community resource.

The grant appropriation was approved at the last Board of Commissioners meeting and we are processing the paperwork and will be getting started with planning with the consultants.

2. Digital Champion Grant with the NC Dept. of Instruction Technology. Two

We have two bilingual digital navigators who are conducting outreach throughout Catawba County with a focus on teaching digital literacy to seniors, veterans, those for whom English is a second language, less advantaged people, and recently incarcerated individuals. They have a mobile computer

lab with 15 laptops, outfitted with Microsoft Office and wireless mice. They have a projector and projection screen to use.

Since they began, they have hosted 114 digital literacy workshops, assisted 32 people with individualized assistance or a one-on-one session, and participated in eight information sessions to raise awareness of the program reaching nearly 1,000 people. Topics covered during workshops and one-on-one assistance sessions include the following:

- Computer basics including internet searches, introduction to Word and Excel, more advanced Word classes, basics of how to use a computer, using a mouse, keyboard basics and shortcuts.
 - Computer basics part two with more advanced Word and Excel, and internet privacy and security.
 - Facebook, Canva, Typing, Coding, etc.
 - Avoiding Spam: reporting and blocking spam callers and messages.
 - Smartphone basics, updating smartphone software, downloading apps, online shopping safety, find my iphone, calendars.
 - Helped with a FAFSA program where families learn how to complete the “Free application for Federal Student Aid” The navigators helped people with their computers and navigating the aid site.
3. LSTA grants from last fiscal year:
- a. Updated Children’s Space and sensory friendly story times at Newton.
 - b. Updated meeting spaces around the county.
4. Kenneth and Suzanne Millholland grant through the NC Community Foundation to create a new collection of Decodable Readers for families. The books are all cataloged and ready to go out into the collection. First, we will conduct staff training to teach them about decodable books and how best to promote them with families.

Library Endowment

The Library’s Endowment is managed by the NC Community Foundation (NCCF) <https://www.nccommunityfoundation.org/> NCCF meets the highest standards for philanthropic excellence among community foundations, having been accredited with Community Foundations National Standards since 2007.

Our current balances are:

Endowment Amount:	\$ 124,905.05
<u>County account</u>	<u>\$ 655.00</u>
Total:	\$ 125,560.05

OTHER BUSINESS

EcoExplore

The library is launching a new EcoExplore program in partnership with the County Parks. The EcoExplore program is an incentive-based program where children K-8 can earn badges and prizes for participating. They have lots of cool prizes including go pro cameras, bat detectors and badges. There are Hot Spots – place where kids can look at nature and wildlife, like our parks including Riverbend, St. Stephens, Mountain Creek, and Baker’s Mountain.

There are Loan Spots – place where kids can check out one of the EcoExplore backpacks. All our library locations are a Loan Spot in the EcoExplore brochure. The goal is for children to See It! Snap It! And Share It! - they will see the nature item, take a picture of it and then share it on the EcoExplore website.

The staff from the Arboretum will then review the data shared by the kids and they will forward approved submissions to the iNaturalist Network which is used by real scientists!

Each of the EcoExplore backpacks contain binoculars, a bug net, a trail cam, an insect holder with magnifying glass lid and a bird caller. Please note the bird caller may look a little like a whistle but it is NOT a whistle. The bird call works by replicating bird sounds when you twist the wooden piece. It is recommended that if kids want to set up the trail camera and leave it somewhere, they only leave it unattended in a place where no one else will find it. It is likely best to only leave it unattended at their own home.

LOTE for Kids

Lote for Kids is a new online database of picture books in Languages Other Than English. How to use it and promote it with patrons.

www.lote4kids.com search for Catawba County Library to log in. There are over 90 other languages and lots of titles. This could be a great complement to the Spanish Language Bookbaggers program as students and teachers can access this from home.

NEW POST MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The State Library of NC is offering FREE training for Library Board of Trustee members. One of the available options is here in Catawba County at the Southwest Branch Library on Saturday, September 13 from 1-4 pm. Please see the attached flyer for registration if interested in attending.