

**Minutes of WFPL Board of Governance
Regular Board Meeting
Monday, November 17, 2025, at 4:00 pm
Pensacola Library, 239 N. Spring St.
Pensacola, FL 32502**

Board Members:

- Dr. Kenneth “Blaine” Wall, Chair
- John Bullock, Vice Chair
- Liza Campbell, Member
- Dr. Joyce Hopson, Member

County Administration:

- Wesley Hall, Community and Administrative Assistant County Administrator

Library Administration:

- Christal Bell-Rivera, Interim Director of Library Services
- Tricia Sheridan, Director’s Aide
- Elena Throckmorton, Senior Librarian

Absent:

- None

I. Call to Order

- Dr. Wall called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.
- Proof of Publication was received.
- Quorum was met.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

- Dr. Wall led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States.

III. Public Forum

- C.J. Lewis
- Lori NeSmith

IV. Approval of the Agenda

V. Approval of Minutes

- Mr. Bullock made a motion to approve the minutes from the special meeting on November 10, 2025, with changes. Ms. Campbell seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

VI. Chair's Report

- Dr. Wall offered congratulations to the library staff for their involvement in the Greater Gulf Coast Arts Festival.
- He asked about the status of the air system. Interim Director Bell-Rivera stated the boiler is fixed now, but the chiller broke. However, the part is under warranty and is in the process of being fixed.

VII. Branch Manager's Report

- Elena Throckmorton introduced herself as the Senior Librarian that oversees the adult reference and genealogy department. She shared her staff work hard and she enjoys working with them. Circulation numbers are between 100 and 200 per week. Her department hosts jazz and genealogy events throughout the year. Ms. Throckmorton stated the adult reference printer is down and the desktop stations are old but will be changed soon. Interim Director Bell-Rivera recognized her for her work on the collection development for audio and e-books. She also pointed out that Ms. Throckmorton oversees the Interlibrary Loans (ILL) and her team has been instrumental in assisting with the ILL changes.
- Linda Williams, Vice-President of Friends of West Florida Public Library, spoke from the public area and asked if the embroidery machine the Friends purchased for the library has been used. She stated that she had been told there was no thread for it. Interim Director Bell-Rivera stated she will look into it.
- Dr. Wall asked if there is a rotation schedule for the PC replacements. Interim Director Bell-Rivera said there is a proposal in the budget to have over 100 computers replaced and she is also working with E-Rate on additional projects that will start next month.

VIII. Library Interim Director's Report

- Interim Director Bell-Rivera had provided a written report in the packet and focused her time on discussing the financial reports for FY25 and FY26.
- Postage for 2026 will be different because of the change in funding for ILL.
- The day after the report she provided was run, E-Rate reimbursement was received. It will show in next month's report.
- Personal services were higher in FY25 because most positions are now filled.
- Operating expenses were higher than last year because of the normal increase in costs of goods and services.
- Just 70% of the book budget was spent and this reinforces the digital demand. An extra \$716,000.00 was spent on digital and audio resources.
- 76% of the operating expenses were spent. It would have been 100% but the procurement process is lengthy. Mr. Bullock asked about the \$5,000.00 spending threshold. The Interim Director added this will be changing but the County and Clerk of Court need to settle on the terms.
- Interim Director Bell-Rivera attended the BCC meeting and there was a discussion on roll-back taxes. All departments have been tasked with justifying their budgets.
- Discussion as to when the Board needs to start working on the budget.
- Dr. Wall asked who filled the Division Manager position and Interim Director shared it has been filled by Eric Grote, the Branch Manager from Bellview. She added that two offers have been made to fill the Century Branch Manager and there was a "no response" and a decline.
- Mr. Bullock questioned the status of Insignia. Discussion followed regarding functionality and contract terms.

IX. New Business

- Policy Review and Meeting Date Calendar was reviewed. Mr. Bullock made a motion to approve the calendar as-is and not accept the proposed date changes to the election of the chair and vice chair. Dr. Hopson seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

- Ms. Campbell made a motion to remove the strike out for the Policy Review and Meeting Calendar in November and change it to “Draft the Policy Review and Meeting Calendar”. Mr. Bullock seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.
- The Bylaws were reviewed. Discussion about the alignment of the Director’s draft job description with HR versus the job description in the Bylaws regarding the state grant application. Dr. Wall asked how much the library receives from the grant and what the board’s role is. Ms. Nesmith stated it is the board chair that signs the application. Interim Director Bell-Rivera stated that the library receives \$80,000 to \$100,000 and that the County Administrator is the authorized signature and has signed previous contracts. No changes were made to the Bylaws.
- Mr. Bullock requested the state grant application be added to the calendar for completion in September and review in November before final submission. Mr. Bullock made motion to approve the calendar with the addition of the state application. Dr. Hopson seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.
- The Bulletin Board Policy was reviewed. Mr. Bullock made a motion to remove the word “biased” from the seventh paragraph. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.
- The Exhibit Policy was reviewed. Dr. Hopson made a motion to approve the policy with no changes. Mr. Bullock seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

X. Old Business

- Dr. Wall passed out draft 30-minute and 60-minute interview questions for the Director’s position and there was a brief discussion about them. He stated the goal is to keep working on them at each meeting so there is not a rush at the end. Asked the board to email any changes or bring hard copies to the next meeting.
- Dr. Wall requested the final job description for the Director’s position be included in the minutes.

XI. Open Board Discussion

- Dr. Wall brought to the table the issue of Ms. NeSmith having been removed from the board by the Mayor via email. Ms. NeSmith passed a copy of the email to all board members, a copy of the State Aid application, and her personal business card. Dr. Wall stated it was a personal privilege working with her and thanked her for her years of service. He was surprised by her departure and felt the board is stronger because of her. He sees NeSmith's situation as a problem since there is no explanation.
- Mr. Bullock stated that "Lori has been the best of us" and this dismissal is entirely unjustified. He asked about contacting the Mayor. Ms. NeSmith stated she had tried and there is no response. She also shared a statement from Ms. Alison Rogers, Escambia County Attorney, regarding the mayor being the appointing authority and can issue a removal.
- Dr. Wall is concerned about getting calls about a "rogue board".

XII. Next Meeting

- The next special board meeting will be held on Monday, December 8, 2025, 4:00 p.m. at the Pensacola Library, 239 N. Spring St., Pensacola, FL, 32502.

XIII. Adjournment – Mr. Bullock made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Campbell seconded the motion. Dr. Wall adjourned the meeting at 5:53 p.m.