

CONSTITUTION
for the
SOUTHWEST GEORGIA REGIONAL LIBRARY SYSTEM

ARTICLE 1

This organization shall be known as the Southwest Georgia Regional Library System.

ARTICLE II

The headquarters for the Southwest Georgia Regional Library System shall be in the Decatur County-Gilbert H. Gragg Library, Bainbridge, Georgia.

ARTICLE III

The purpose of the Southwest Georgia Regional Library System shall be to offer a full program of library services to all citizens of the participating counties to meet their informational, educational, and recreational needs; to acquire and purchase library materials; to circulate materials to the public through the headquarters library or by other appropriate means of library extension; to develop existing libraries, and to establish and develop branch libraries, deposits, and bookmobile service as appropriate to the needs; to build a reference collection adequate to provide current and reliable information of a reference nature as demanded by the needs of the communities comprising the area served; and to promote the use of libraries by means of instruction, library centered programs, exhibits, and other public relations media.

ARTICLE IV

The Southwest Georgia Regional Library System shall serve all citizens of Decatur, Miller and Seminole Counties, and such other counties or municipalities as may become part of the region, through the headquarters library, branch libraries, and bookmobile and other extension services. Membership in the Southwest Georgia Regional Library System provides the citizens of Decatur, Miller and Seminole Counties with reciprocal borrowing privileges in all libraries in the system. Any county or municipality within the vicinity of the headquarters library not otherwise served by a regional library, or otherwise eligible to receive State Aid for public libraries may become a part of the Southwest Georgia Regional Library System either by contract or agreement with the library's Board of Trustees, and by payment of an amount agreed upon for such participation, based on the cost of providing service in said county or municipality. Counties comprising the Southwest Georgia Regional Library System at the inception of this constitution consist of Decatur, Miller and Seminole.

ARTICLE V

The governing body of the Southwest Georgia Regional Library System shall be composed of 12 members who are appointed to the regional board by each county library board as specified in

the by-laws and state law. The governing body of the Southwest Georgia Regional Library System shall consist of a Board of Library Trustees composed of 6 members serving on Decatur County Library Board, 3 members serving on Seminole County Library Board and 3 members serving on Miller County Library Board who are appointed to the Southwest Georgia Regional Library System Board by each county library board as specified in the bylaws and the state law. The operation of the regional library system is legally vested in this Board under the provisions of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Article 2, Chapter 5, Title 20. County board members shall be appointed in writing by the governmental agencies financially supporting the libraries on a regular basis after consultation with the regional director and the library board of the respective county. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as appointments and appointees shall complete the unexpired term. Those members who are currently serving on the regional board shall fill out their unexpired terms. The term of office shall be three years, with starting and ending dates corresponding to the state fiscal year. A maximum of three consecutive three-year terms may be held. It is the duty and responsibility of board members to attend board meetings. Board members shall be removed for just cause or for failure to attend three consecutive meetings. Board members may not be appointed by the Southwest Georgia Regional Library System Board.

Section 1. Officers. Officers of the Board of Trustees shall consist of a Chairman, Vice Chairman and Second Vice Chairman (one each from Decatur, Miller and Seminole Counties), Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. The officers shall be elected annually from the board members. A subsecretary may be appointed by the director to take the minutes at the meeting. The secretary then will review them for final submission to the board and sign. An officer may succeed himself. The Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Chairman, and staff authorized to handle funds shall be bonded for an amount commensurate with the amount of funds handled, and a copy of the bond filed with the Office of Public Library Services of the State Board of Regents.

Section 2. Standing Committees. Standing committees shall be the Finance Committee, Building and Grounds Committee, Nominating Committee, Constitution/Policy, and Collection Development. Other special committees may be appointed by the chairman as needed.

Section 3. Executive Committee. An executive committee, composed of the Chairman, First Vice Chairman, Second Vice Chairman, Board Secretary and Treasurer shall be entrusted to govern in the name of the Board of Trustees between meetings of the board.

ARTICLE VI

The Southwest Georgia Regional Library System may enter into cooperative endeavors with other library systems, either by sharing personnel, materials and/or service; both by confederation or by merger as seen fit by the governing bodies of both library systems, providing the resulting cooperative endeavor is conducive to mutual growth and development of the library system.

ARTICLE VII

The constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Board of Trustees by a two-thirds vote of the members present, provided that notice is made in writing at least two weeks (14 days) prior to the meeting and provided that a quorum is present and each county is represented.

BYLAWS

1. DUTIES OF THE BOARD

Section 1. It shall be the duty of the board of trustees to appoint the regional director and to delegate to her/him the employment and dismissal of all other staff members. The regional director must meet state certification requirements.

Section 2. The board of trustees shall adopt all policies, acting on the advice and guidance of the director. The board shall adopt an official policy on such matters as the following:

- a. Hours open, holidays, etc.
- b. Basic policy regarding book selection and purchase
- c. Charges for lost books, fines on overdues, etc.
- d. Service to schools
- e. Service to specialized groups
- f. Service to ethnic and minority groups
- g. Methods of extending services (new branches, bookmobile, etc.)
- h. Acceptance of gifts
- i. Leaves of absence and vacation for personnel
- j. Payment of expenses of personnel to attend professional meetings
- k. Supervision over the library building and all other library properties
- l. Policies regarding use of multi-purpose room and other library facilities
- m. Presentation of financial and progress reports to governing officials and to the public as required by law
- n. Notification to the library director in advance of all meetings of library boards and committees in all counties as required by state law.

2. DUTIES OF OFFICERS OF THE BOARD

Section 1. The chairman of the board of trustees shall preside at all meetings, appoint all committees, authorize calls for any special meetings and generally perform the duties of the presiding officer.

Section 2. The vice-chairman shall preside in the absence of the chairman, and act for the chairman in the event the chairman is indisposed, out of town or otherwise unable to perform his duties.

Section 3. The second vice-chairman shall preside in the absence of both chairman and vice-chairman.

Section 4. The secretary shall keep a true and accurate account of the proceedings of the board of trustees and each board member shall receive a copy prior to the next regular board meeting. Official copies of all minutes and correspondence with the board shall be kept on file in the library at all times. The board chairman shall be responsible for

notifying the secretary of the expiration of the term of office of a board member at least two months prior to the time of expiration so that the secretary in turn can notify the participating agencies. With this notification should go suggestions for replacements. The director shall report changes of membership to the Office of Public Library Services of the State Board of Regents.

Section 5. The treasurer or assistant treasurer shall sign all checks approved by the regional director. When neither the treasurer nor assistant treasurer is available, the chairman or regional director shall sign checks that have been approved by the regional director. The treasurer shall also present to the board twice yearly (April and October) an itemized financial statement. Official copies of all financial reports and the treasurer's books shall be kept at the library at all times.

Section 6. The building and grounds committee shall keep in close touch with the director regarding the library's needs in terms of building maintenance and repair, expansion, addition of permanent equipment, and upkeep of grounds. The committee shall make recommendations to the board of trustees and to the finance committee whenever indicated, and shall report at each meeting of the board on the condition of the building and grounds.

Section 7. The finance committee shall make a careful study annually of the library's needs and approve a budget prepared by the director to be presented to the board of trustees at the annual meeting. The finance committee shall recommend the need for increases in library appropriations, and assume responsibility for the presentation of the library's fiscal needs to the supporting agencies. The committee shall report any negotiations or transactions at each meeting of the board of trustees.

Section 8. The executive committee shall periodically review the library's constitution and bylaws, and bring to the board's attention any matters that need revision in order to maintain a progressive organization and to ensure that the library's official documents are up to date. The committee will present a report to the board of trustees when pertinent.

Section 9. The nominating committee shall present a slate of officers for the coming year every January to be elected in April and take office in July. If a vacancy occurs during the year the nominating committee shall recommend person(s) for that position.

Section 10. Members of the board of trustees shall receive no compensation; provided, however, that such members may be reimbursed for any reasonable and necessary expense incurred in the performance of library business or if stipulated in terms of any bequest or gift. Dues or fees for membership in local, state, regional, and national library associations may be paid from operating funds.

3. FINANCIAL RECORDS

Section 1. The fiscal year shall be from July 1st – June 30th.

Section 2. All suggested items of expense shall be submitted to the regional library director for approval and signature, and all purchases must be made by him/her. The regional director shall approve all bills for payment.

Section 3. Bills paid will bear number of check and date issued and will be filed in the headquarters library.

4. MEETINGS

Section 1. There shall be not less than four regular meetings of the regional library board during each twelve months. These meetings shall be held in the headquarters library in Bainbridge at 3:00 p.m. on the third Wednesday of April and July, and at the same time in the library in Colquitt in January and in Donalsonville in October. The time and place of meetings may be changed at the discretion of the board. A quorum with representation from all counties will be required to transact business. A simple majority with representation from each county shall constitute a quorum.

Section 2. The annual meeting of the board of trustees shall be held at the time of the July meeting. Annual reports of Seminole and Miller Counties shall be given at the yearly meeting in each of these counties.

Section 3. Special meetings may be called by the chairman, or upon the written request of three members, for the transaction of business stated in the call for the meeting.

Section 4. The order of business shall be a call to order, approval of minutes, committee reports: finance/treasurer's report, executive, building and grounds, nominating, constitution/policy, and collection development; county board reports; unfinished business; new business; Director's report, and adjournment.

5. LIBRARY DIRECTOR

Section 1. The library director, as the appointed administrative head of the library system shall be considered the executive officer of the board of trustees, and shall have sole charge of administration of the library, including all branches, under the direction and review of the board. The director shall be held responsible for the care of the regional building, for the employment and direction of a competent library staff, for the efficiency of the library's service to the public, for ordering books and supplies for the system, and for the operation of the library under conditions set forth in the annual budget.

Section 2. The director shall report to the board at regular meetings activities of the regional library. She/he shall submit recommendations for increase in efficiency. He/she shall also submit a written annual report to the regional library board and send copies to the Office of Public Library Services of the State Board of Regents.

Section 3. The director shall attend all meetings of the board. The director shall attend all meetings called by the Office of Public Library Services of State Board of Regents or send a substitute authorized by the division director.

Section 4. The director shall prepare any local, state or federal annual budgets.

Section 5. The director shall notify the board and the Office of Public Library Services of the State Board of Regents of any failure to comply with policies of the board, criteria for state aid, state or federal rules and regulations and all applicable local, state or federal laws.

6. LIBRARY STAFF

Staff members shall include assistants, both professional and clerical, as needed to provide an effective program of library service. These assistants are to be employed or dismissed by the director in consultation with the board.

A staff manual, governing policies, working conditions, and duties of the staff shall be set up.

7. AUDIENCE WITH THE BOARD

Any staff member, upon a written request to the library director and consistent with personnel policies may be granted the privilege of an audience with the board of trustees at a regular meeting, to present his or her views, in case of dissatisfaction or malicious charges that might be brought against her/him, either inside or outside the library organization.

8. EXPULSION OF A MEMBER COUNTY

Southwest Georgia Regional Library System may elect to expel a member county upon the following conditions:

1. Failure of the county to maintain the agreed upon level of support to the regional system as in the most recent system-participating agreement;
- or
2. Failure of the county to meet criteria which may jeopardize the system's eligibility for state or federal funds.

The proper notice shall be sent not less than one month prior to the end of the state fiscal year. This notice must be sent to the chairman of the county board of trustees, all funding agencies party to the participating agreement, the system library director, and the Office of Public Library Services of the State Board of Regents.

9. DISSOLUTION

In the event of dissolution, procedure as outlined in Official Code of Georgia, Annotated 20-5-51 shall be followed.

10. AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the board of trustees providing announcement of the proposed change is made preceding the meeting and all members have been notified of the proposed change. All amendments shall be filed with the Office of Public Library Services of the State Board of Regents.

11. EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

The president of the Friends of Decatur County-Gilbert H. Gragg Library and the chairman of the Decatur County-Gilbert H. Gragg Library Foundation Board be invited to attend the Decatur County-Gilbert H. Gragg Library Board meetings. As there is no regular funding from these organizations, they would not be voting members.

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