

CONSTITUTION
for the
OHOOPEE REGIONAL LIBRARY SYSTEM
Established 1966

(Constitution written April 1, 1977; Revised Constitution adopted January 3, 1990)
(Amended September 25, 1991; May 27, 1992; July 25 2001; January 21, 2004)

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of the library shall be the Ohoopée Regional Library System.

ARTICLE II - HEADQUARTERS

The Headquarters for the Ohoopée Regional Library System shall be in the Vidalia-Toombs County Public Library.

ARTICLE III - PURPOSE

The purpose of the Ohoopée Regional Library System shall be to furnish library services to the people of the region under the laws and regulations governing public libraries as set forth by the State of Georgia.

The Ohoopée Regional Library System shall offer a full program of library service to all citizens - regardless of race, creed or national origin - of the participating counties in order to meet their informational, educational, and recreational needs by:

acquiring and purchasing library materials;

circulating materials to the public through the member libraries or by other appropriate means of library extension;

developing existing libraries, and establishing and developing branch libraries, deposits, and bookmobile service as appropriate to the needs of the service area;

building and maintaining a reference collection adequate to provide current and reliable information as demanded by the needs of the communities comprising the area served;

promoting the use of libraries by means of instruction, library-centered programs, exhibits, and public relations.

ARTICLE IV - CONSTITUENCY

The Ohoopée Regional Library System shall serve all citizens of Toombs, Tattnall, and Montgomery counties, and such other counties or municipalities as may become part of the region, through the headquarters library, branch libraries, bookmobile and other extension services. Membership in the Ohoopée Regional Library System provides the citizens of Toombs, Tattnall, and Montgomery Counties with reciprocal borrowing privileges in all

libraries in the system, as well as the rights, privileges and responsibilities of membership in such other regional, state or national cooperatives joined by the Oohoopee Regional Library System for the betterment of the region and its patrons.

Any adjoining county or municipality within any county that is a member of the Oohoopee Regional Library System may become a part of the Oohoopee Regional Library System either by contract or agreement with the Library's Board of Trustees or by payment of an amount agreed upon for such participation, based on the cost of providing the service in said county or municipality, and by the provisions of Chapter 5 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. Existing libraries are located in the cities of Glennville, Lyons, Mount Vernon, Reidsville, and Vidalia.

ARTICLE V - LEGAL AUTHORITY

The legal authority for public libraries and boards of trustees is described in Chapter 5 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated.

ARTICLE VI - GOVERNING BODY

Section 1. The affairs of the Oohoopee Regional Library System shall be entrusted to a Board of Trustees comprised of the seven members of the Toombs County Board, two members appointed from the Montgomery County Library Board and three members appointed from the Tattnall County Library Board; one appointee shall preferably be the Chairman of the said Board. The terms of office on the Regional Board shall correspond with their terms on the county boards.

Section 2. Board members shall be removed for cause or failure to attend three consecutive regular meetings of the Board. In either event the Chairman shall declare such position vacant and request the County Library Board to fill said member's unexpired term.

Section 3. Upon a vacancy on the Board, either by resignation prior to completion of term or by expiration of term the Board shall notify the appropriate appointing County Library Board so that a person may be appointed to complete an unexpired term, or to a full term. An unexpired term of which more than half the term remains, shall be considered a full term.

Section 4. Board members shall receive no compensation. They may be reimbursed for any reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of library business, or if stipulated in the terms of any bequest or gift.

Section 5. In the event a member of the Regional Board ceases, for any reason, to be a member of his local library board, his term on the Regional Board shall end at the same time, and the local Library Board shall appoint a new representative to the Regional Board.

Section 6. Additional representatives may be added from any library system that may affiliate with the Oohoopee Regional Library System in the future.

ARTICLE VII - OFFICERS

Section 1. Officers of the Board of Trustees shall consist of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer. The duties of the Secretary may be delegated to a person who is a non-Board member. In such case the Secretary is not an Officer and does not have a vote. The Treasurer, the Chairman, the Director, staff members, and other members of the Board of Trustees authorized to handle money, as determined by the Board and entered in the minutes, 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, a unit of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.

Section 2. Officers shall be elected at the July meeting for one-year terms. An officer may succeed himself.

ARTICLE VIII - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

An Executive Committee, composed of the officers of the Regional Library Board, shall be entrusted to govern in the name of the Board of Trustees between meetings of the Board. In the absence of a Secretary, the Board may approve a member appointee to the Executive Board.

ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEES

The Chairman shall appoint committees of one or more members each for such specific purposes as the business of the Board may require. A committee shall make progress reports to the Board and be considered discharged upon completion of the purpose for which it was appointed. Unless otherwise granted by the Board a committee will have advisory powers only.

ARTICLE X - INTERLIBRARY COOPERATION

The Oohoopee Regional Library System may enter into cooperative endeavors with other library systems, for the purpose of sharing personnel, materials, and/or services by confederation or by merger as seen fit by the governing bodies of both library systems. Such cooperative endeavors must be within the limits of funds available to the Boards of Trustees, conducive to mutual growth and development of library services, and not in violation of state or federal laws, regulations, or other agreements, contracts, or Library Board policies.

ARTICLE XI - CONTRACTS

The Regional Board shall have authority to make and enter into such contracts or agreements, for all or any part of the regional library system, as are deemed necessary and

desirable under the provisions of Chapter 5 of Title of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated.

ARTICLE XII - AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Board of Trustees by a two-third vote of the members present, provided that notice is made in writing at least one week prior to the meeting, and provided that a quorum is present. All amendments to this constitution shall be filed with the Office of Public Library Services, a unit of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, immediately upon adoption.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I - DUTIES OF THE BOARD

The Regional Board of Trustees is the legal governing body of the Ohoopsee Regional Library System. It shall be the duty and responsibility of Members of the Board to:

- (a) Appoint the Director of the library system, and such other professional staff members as are recommended by the Director of the Regional Library System as needed in the efficient operation of the library system. Boards of Trustees of member counties are delegated the employment and dismissal responsibilities for non-professional staff of their libraries.
- (b) Establish policies for library programs and for the receipt and administration of gifts of money or property.
- (c) Approve budgets prepared by the Director and, together with the local Boards of Trustees, assume responsibility for the presentation of the system's fiscal needs to the supporting agencies. Boards of Trustees of member counties are delegated the activity of preparing their own budgets, in close cooperation with the Director, and to request funds. Such transactions are to be reported to the Regional Board or its appointed financial representatives (See Constitution VII: 1) as necessary for ratification of the Regional Board. The Director and the Regional business office will maintain a record of all finances and disperse funds and payments as necessary on behalf of all member counties.
- (d) Attend board meetings.
- (e) Present financial and progress reports to governing officials and to the public.
- (f) Notify the Director in advance of all meetings of the Board and of committees.

ARTICLE II - DUTIES OF OFFICERS OF THE BOARD

Section 1. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees shall preside at all meetings, appoint and serve on all committees, authorize calls for any special meeting and generally perform duties of the presiding officer. The Chairman shall have the authority to countersign library checks as prepared for payment by the appropriate financial employee.

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 the duties of his or her office.

Section 3. The Secretary shall keep a true and accurate account of the proceedings of the Board of Trustees, and of attendance at Board meetings. Official copies of all minutes and correspondence with the Board shall be kept on file in the Library at all times.

Section 4. The Treasurer, or appropriate employee or officer as designated or appointed, shall maintain a record of all monies in the depositories designated by the Trustees to the Library's account. He shall approve all bills prepared for payment by the Regional Library Director, who shall prepare an itemized monthly statement of funds. The Treasurer shall, with the Director, countersign all checks, and shall ensure that a report is presented at each regular Board meeting detailing the Library's financial condition. The accounts shall be audited at the direction of the Board and according to State Aid Criteria and other State and/or Federal laws or regulations. Official copies of all financial reports and the Treasurer's books shall be kept at the Regional Library headquarters at all times.

Section 5. The following positions and officers shall be bonded according to proper auditing principles and state law: The Chairman of the Regional Board; the Treasurer of the Regional Board; the Director of the Ohoopsee Regional Library System, the Bookkeeper for the Region; the appropriate officers of the affiliate Boards.

ARTICLE III - DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR

Section 1. The Director must hold at least a Grade 5(b) Librarian's Professional Graduate Certificate as defined by the State Board for the Certification of Librarians.

Section 2. The Director shall be the administrative head of the library system under the direction and review of the Board, and shall have the authority to represent the Board and library system in the application, administration and distribution of any appropriate contracts, grants or funding opportunities, including signature authority as needed.

Section 3. It is the duty and responsibility of the Director to:

(a) Recommend for employment or dismissal other professional staff members, as necessary, in compliance with applicable laws and the availability of funds, and to employ and dismiss other staff members as authorized by the Regional Board.

(b) Attend all meetings called by the Office of Public Library Services, a unit of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, or send a substitute approved by that Office.

(c) Prepare any local, state or federal annual budgets.

(d) Notify the Board of Trustees and the Office of Public Library Services, a unit of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, of any failure to comply with:

1. Policies of the Board
2. Criteria for State Aid
3. State and federal rules and regulations

4. All applicable local, state, or federal laws

(e) Administer the total library program, including all affiliated libraries, in accordance with policies adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Ochoopee Regional Library System.

(f) Attend all meetings of the Boards of Trustees of the Regional Library and of the local libraries in the region, or designate a person to attend in his place.

ARTICLE IV - MEETINGS

Section 1. The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees shall be held on the 4th Wednesday in the months of January, April, July, and October at 4:00 P.M. at the Vidalia-Toombs County Library, or such place and time designated. If necessary, appropriately advertised and members notified, the day and time may be changed in order to obtain a quorum or meet exigencies. A quorum shall consist of seven members or the number represented by a majority of current active appointed members.

Section 2. The Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees shall be held at the time of the July meeting.

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. No business other than that for which the meeting was called may be discussed or conducted at a called meeting.

Section 4. Prior to each regular or called meeting, the Director shall notify each member of the date, time, and place of the Regional Board meeting.

Section 5. Meetings are subject to Chapter 14 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated and must be open to the public according to the provisions of the law. The Regional Board may enter into a closed session for the discussion of proposed or pending litigation, deliberation on acquisition or sale of real property, or hearings of discussions on the appointment, discipline, or dismissal of an individual employee, without restricting the employee's right to public hearing if requested. If the Board enters into a closed session, no formal action will be taken. All decisions shall be formally moved and adopted in an open Board meeting according to the provisions of the above named law.

Section 6. Each member of the Regional Board shall have one vote. The Chairman shall not vote except in the case of a tie vote, at which time the Chairman shall vote to break the tie.

Section 7. Except as stated in Article VIII of this document, a simple majority affirmative vote of those present and voting shall be necessary to approve any action before the Board. Absent members may assign a proxy vote, as necessary, which will be noted in the minutes and unused if a quorum is present. The quorum number shall be seven or in the event of

member openings unfilled at the time of the meeting, a majority of sitting, appointed members.

ARTICLE V - REPORTS

The Regional Library system is responsible for all reports as deemed necessary by local, state, and federal funding agencies. An Annual report of activities, income and expenditures shall be filed with each funding agency. All other reports necessary to obtain funds or meet requirements of the law shall be filed with the Office of Public Library Services, a unit of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia

ARTICLE VI - PENALTIES

Employees or agents of the Oohoopee Regional Library System may cause the arrest, fine, and/or imprisonment of persons who borrow, and fail to return, books and other property owned by the Oohoopee Regional Library System; deface, damage, steal, or otherwise improperly use and or abuse library property; or commit other violations as described in Chapter 5 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, or other applicable federal, state or local laws and/or library policy.

ARTICLE VII - DISSOLUTION OF OR WITHDRAWAL FROM THE REGIONAL LIBRARY SYSTEM

Section 1. The Regional Library System may be dissolved by reversal of the procedures followed in its original organization. A majority of the Board members in a majority of the counties must agree to the dissolution of the system.

Section 2. One county may withdraw from the system if a majority of the Board members vote to do so in accordance with the policies and procedures as outlined in Chapter 5 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. Notice of withdrawal must be sent to the Chairman of the Regional Board of Trustees and the Regional Library Director at least six months prior to the end of the state fiscal year. This notice must include reasons for the withdrawal and the method by which the decision was reached. The Office of Public Library Services, a unit of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia must be notified of the receipt of the letter of intent within five working days.

Section 3. The Regional Library System must elect to expel a member county upon the following conditions:

- (a) Failure of the county to maintain the agreed level of support to the regional system as in the most recent system participating agreement; or
- (b) Failure of the county to meet criteria that may jeopardize the system's eligibility for state or federal funds.

Section 4. Notice of expulsion shall be sent not less than six months prior to the end of the state fiscal year to the chairman of the County Board of Trustees, all funding agencies party to the participating agreement, the Director of the Regional Library System, and the Office of Public Library Services, a unit of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.

Section 5. In the event of the withdrawal of a county from the regional system, all equipment and materials purchased with state or federal funds for use in the library or libraries in that county shall remain in those libraries. After the notice of withdrawal has been received by the Regional Library Board, there is no obligation on the part of the Regional Library Board to purchase books, equipment, supplies or other items for the use of the library or libraries in the withdrawing county, other than the fair share of items in the existing Materials and Maintenance and Operations budgets of the current year.

ARTICLE. VIII - AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Board of Trustees by a two thirds vote of the members present, provided announcement of the proposed change is made in writing at least one week prior to the meeting, and provided that a quorum is present. All amendments to these Bylaws shall be filed with the Office of Public Library Services, a unit of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, immediately upon adoption.