

Adopted July 17, 1986  
Amended July 20, 1989  
Amended October 19, 1989  
Amended July 15, 1999  
Amended April 19, 2001

## **CONSTITUTION FOR THE ATHENS REGIONAL LIBRARY SYSTEM**

### **ARTICLE I - Name and Location.**

This organization shall be known as the Athens Regional Library System. Headquarters shall be located in the Athens-Clarke County unit at 2025 Baxter Street, Athens, Georgia 30606.

### **ARTICLE II - Purpose.**

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

The Athens Regional Library System shall offer a full program of library service to all citizens of the participating counties to meet their informational, educational, lifelong learning opportunities, and recreational needs. The attainment of this purpose will be fulfilled by: 1) acquiring library materials and electronic resources through gifts and purchase; 2) circulating materials to the public through the libraries and by other appropriate means of library extension; 3) developing the quality of existing libraries, branch libraries, deposits, bookmobile services, technological access, and reference collections and services; 4) establishing, as appropriately needed, additional branch libraries, deposits, bookmobile services, technological access, and reference collections and services.

### **ARTICLE III - Constituency.**

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 Athens 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 the service in said county or municipality and by the provisions of Title 20, Chapter 5, Article 2 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated.

Counties comprising the Regional Library System at the inception of this constitution are Athens-Clarke, Franklin, Madison, Oconee, and Oglethorpe, with existing libraries in the communities of Athens, Winterville, Lavonia, Royston, Danielsville, Watkinsville, Bogart, and Lexington. Membership in the Athens Regional Library System provides the citizens of Athens-Clarke, Franklin, Madison, Oconee and Oglethorpe Counties with reciprocal borrowing privileges in all libraries in the system.

## **ARTICLE IV - Legal Authority.**

The legal authority for public libraries and boards of trustees is described in Title 20, Chapter 5, Article 2 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, amended March 26, 1984.

## **ARTICLE V - Governing Body.**

**Section 1.** Board of Trustees. The governing body of the Athens Regional Library System shall be the Regional Board of Trustees. It shall be composed of members serving on county boards as specified in state law and in Article I of the Bylaws of the Athens Regional Library System. 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 and in Article I.

**Section 2.** Vacancies may be filled as specified in Article I of the Bylaws. If a vacancy occurs prior to the expiration of a trustee's term, the new appointee shall complete the unexpired term.

**Section 3.** In the event a member of the Regional Board ceases, for any reason, to be a member of his local library board, then 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 4.** Officers. There shall be a Chairman, a Vice Chairman, a Treasurer and a Secretary. The first three shall be elected by the Board; the Secretary shall be the Regional System Director or the Director's designee.

**Section 5.** Executive Committee. The Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees shall be composed of the elected officers of the Board and one at large representative. The Executive Committee shall govern in the name of the Board of Trustees between meetings of the Board and shall report to the full Board any action taken.

**Section 6.** Standing Committees. Standing and ad hoc committees shall be appointed by the Chairman as needed.

**Section 7.** Board members shall receive no compensation but 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. Membership dues or fees for individual membership of board members in state, regional and national library associations may be paid from operating funds.

**Section 8.** Additional representatives may be added from any library system which may affiliate with the Athens Regional Library System in the future.

## **ARTICLE VI - Interlibrary Cooperation.**

The Athens Regional Library System may enter into cooperative endeavors with other library systems, either by sharing of personnel, materials, and/or services; by confederation or by merger as seen fit by the governing bodies of both library systems, provided that the resulting cooperative endeavor is conducive to mutual growth and development of library system and not in violation of any state or federal laws, regulations, or other agreements, contracts or Library Board policies.

## **ARTICLE VII - Contracts.**

The Athens Regional Library System is authorized 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 Title 20, Chapter 5, Article 2 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. The Athens Regional Library System Board of Trustees authorizes the Chairman or Regional Director to apply for grants and to sign contracts and grant agreements. Any actions taken will be reported to the full Board.

## **ARTICLE VIII - Amendments.**

This Constitution may be amended or rescinded at any meeting of the Board by two-thirds vote of the members present, provided that thirty days notice of the proposed action has been submitted in writing to each Board member and providing a quorum is present. All amendments to the Constitution will be filed with the Division of Public Library Services of the Board of Regents, University System of Georgia, immediately upon adoption.

Adopted July 17, 1986  
Amended July 20, 1989  
Amended October 19, 1989  
Amended July 15, 1999  
Amended April 19, 2001  
Amended April 17, 2003

## **BYLAWS OF THE ATHENS REGIONAL LIBRARY SYSTEM**

### **ARTICLE I. Board of Trustees.**

The Board of Trustees shall consist of sixteen (16) members: four (4) members from Clarke County and three (3) from each of the other affiliated counties. These representatives shall be chosen by their respective county Library Boards of Trustees from among their memberships. Terms shall be for two years each, beginning with the January meeting with terms staggered. Representatives may be re-elected as long as they remain members of their local library Boards. The local board may fill regional board vacancies as the need arises.

The Quorum shall be a majority of members in office. The majority of votes shall prevail.

Members of the Board shall be covered by a blanket honesty Bond which also covers those members of the staff who handle money.

Appropriate insurance will be carried to protect the library, officers and members of the Board.

### **ARTICLE II. Officers of the Board.**

Officers of the Board shall be Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary. The Chairman, Vice Chairman and Treasurer shall be elected by the Board at the January meeting and shall serve for two years. The Secretary shall be the Regional Library System Director or the Director's designee. These officers shall perform the duties traditionally prescribed by parliamentary authority and *Roberts Rules of Order*.

Any and all elected officers may succeed themselves so long as they are members of their respective Boards.

All federal, state and local funds used for the operation and improvement of the services and facilities of the regional library system shall be received by the Treasurer and shall be used in accordance with the budget approved by the Board.

### **ARTICLE III. Duties of the Board.**

The Regional Board of Trustees is the legal governing body of the Athens Regional Library System. The Board of Trustees shall have the following powers and duties:

### **Legal**

1. Makes and enters into contracts and agreements deemed necessary; contract must meet the state criteria.
2. Title for library property is vested in the county or municipality, whichever made the major contribution toward construction costs; or the library board of trustees; property other than the land and building is owned by the system board of trustees.
3. To employ an attorney, as needed, representing a legal firm whom shall attend those meetings of the Board of Trustees at which legal counsel is requested.

### **Governance and Policy Making**

1. To employ the Regional System Director who meets state certification requirements. Authority for the technical administration and supervision of the libraries in the system shall be vested in the Regional Library System Director.
2. Adopts bylaws for board procedures; attends and participates in regular meetings; reviews reports, solicits information; obtains feedback from the community; personally uses the library.
3. Determines written policies to govern operation, use, and overall program of library services acting on the advice and guidance of the Regional System Director.
4. Officially approves and adopts library policies; assists in the interpretation of those policies to the public and staff acting on the advice and guidance of the Regional System Director.
5. To hear appeals of challenged materials from local library boards as part of the Collection Development Policy. Decision of the Athens Regional Library System Board of Trustees shall be considered final.

### **Planning and Evaluation**

1. Sets goals, adopts both short-and long-range plans for library growth.
2. Sets priorities and decides on the course of action to implement the plans.

### **Personnel**

1. Develops personnel policies and a personnel manual.
2. Encourages and authorizes in-service training for professional development of staff members; encourages and authorizes participation in opportunities for continuing education for library staff and trustees; encourages advancement of staff.
3. Provides hearings for individual staff members or groups of staff members as provided in the Personnel Handbook as part of the grievance procedure.

### **Financial**

1. Adopts budgets prepared on a timely basis by the Regional System Director, and with the Director, assumes responsibility for the presentation of the library system's fiscal needs to the supporting agencies.
2. Reviews expenditures in accordance with the budget, amending if needed.
3. Occupies the role of a fiduciary with regard to the citizens and taxpayers of the geographical area served by the Athens Regional Library System.

#### **ARTICLE IV. Duties of the Officers.**

- A. The Chairman shall preside at all regular meetings, authorize calls for special meetings and preside over them, appoint all committees, and perform those other duties generally considered the responsibility of the Chairman.
- B. The Vice Chairman shall act in the absence of the Chairman in any and all capacities of the Chair.
- C. The Secretary shall notify members at least two weeks in advance of meetings and shall keep a true and accurate account of the proceedings of all meetings and keep attendance records. All official documents shall be on file in the Headquarters at all times. The Secretary shall notify participating agencies when routine terms of members are to expire, and shall also notify these agencies as soon as possible in cases of emergency vacancies.
- D. The Treasurer shall advise the Regional Library System Director in maintaining accurate records of all financial matters and official reports. The Treasurer shall sign checks and official reports and shall be authorized to designate appropriate staff members to receive and deposit monies to the library accounts. He shall pay all bills which have been approved by the Regional System Director, who shall make all purchases. An account of all receipts and expenditures must be kept and a report made at each quarterly board meeting. 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 records shall be kept at the library at all times.

#### **ARTICLE V. Committees.**

- A. The Executive Committee shall govern in the name of the Board of Trustees between meetings of the Board and shall report any action taken to the Board for approval or amendment at the next regular meeting. This committee develops standards for evaluating the library director's performance; and annually reviews the director's performance.
- B. The Personnel Committee shall recommend legal, current personnel policies; support the Director in establishing a system of procedural controls to assure a responsible administration of personnel policies. It shall be available to hear grievances which arise from the grievance procedure.
- C. Finance and Budget Committee shall recommend and monitor financial, budgetary and administrative policies to assure that the library is adequately funded to meet short and long term needs, has policies and systems of procedural control to assure conservation of public funds and wise management of assets and is operated in a financial sound, balanced manner consistent with the best interest of the Athens Regional Library System.

D. Ad hoc Committees such as a committee to review challenged materials and a long range planning committee shall be appointed from time to time as needed.

## **ARTICLE VI. Order of Business**

1. Recognitions and Resolutions
2. Call to order.
3. Approval of minutes
4. Public Comment (3 minute individual limit)
5. Adopt Agenda
6. Financial Report
7. Regional Reports
8. Director's Report
9. Old Business
10. New Business
11. Other Business
12. Adjournment

## **ARTICLE VII. Meetings.**

A. The regular quarterly meetings of the Board shall be scheduled on the third Thursday at 3:30 p.m. in the Athens-Clarke County Library, or such place as delegated in January, April, July and October.

B. Special meetings may be called with at least 3 days notice by the Chairman or upon written request of five members for such business as is described in the written call for the meeting and for no other business.

C. All meetings shall be open to other members of local Boards and to the general public and media, in accordance with the Official Code of Georgia Annotated 50-14-1 et seq.

D. Order of Business of all meetings shall follow *Roberts Rules of Order*.

## **ARTICLE VIII. Regional System Director.**

The Board of Trustees shall appoint, and employ a Regional Library System Director who shall have the sole charge of administration of the library under the direction and review of the Board.

### **Legal**

1. Holds at least a Grade 5(b) Librarian's Professional Graduate Certificate as defined

by the State Board of the Certification of Librarians.

2. Notifies the Division of Public Library Services of the Board of Regents, University System of Georgia, and the board of trustees of any failure to comply with policies of the Board, criteria for state aid, or state, federal and local regulations and laws.

3. Attends all meetings called by the Division of Public Library Services of the Board of Regents, University System of Georgia, or sends a substitute authorized by the Public Library Services Director.

Prepares needed library reports for the local government, the system, and Public Library Services; provides copies to the board and community.

### **Governance and Policy Making**

1. Administers the library program, including all affiliated libraries, within the framework of board plans, policies, and budget which shall be in accord with the Constitution and Laws of the State of Georgia and any rules and regulations promulgated by the State Department of Technical and Adult Education and include federal laws. These rules and regulations shall be subject to change by majority vote of the Board at any regular meeting.

2. Prepares regular written reports and submits other relevant documents; keeps trustees informed of progress and problems.

3. Attends all system and affiliate board and committee meetings or designates a substitute. When in attendance at these meetings, he/she shall have the right to speak upon matters under discussion by the Board or Committee, but shall not have the right to vote.

4. Recommends policies; administers policies and maintains the policy handbook; interprets policies to the staff and public.

### **Planning and Evaluation**

1. Participates in the community analysis process and in the continuing survey of library service.

2. Recommends plans for the library's growth and objectives to achieve goals.

3. Administers the library in terms of its plans as adopted by the board; suggests revisions as needed.

### **Personnel**

1. Employs and directs a competent staff according to board policy.

2. Suggests improvements needed in salary and working conditions; utilizes skills and initiative of staff members.

3. Maintains the personnel manual.

4. Suggests a basis for evaluation criteria; maintains records of all personnel.

5. Provides in-service training for professional development of staff; encourages participation in opportunities for continuing education for library staff; provides opportunities for staff to advance in their careers.

### **Financial**

1. Maintains complete and accurate records of finances, inventory, and annual reports, includes information with reports to the board.

2. Prepares local, state or federal budget based on present and anticipated needs, considering the board's plan for library growth.
3. Authorizes expenditures for the general operation of the Library within the approved budget. The Director shall not be authorized to transfer title or assets without the approval of the Board of Trustees.
4. Attends budget hearings of funding agencies to answer questions about library growth and administration and to supply facts and figures to defend budget requests.
5. Investigates methods of increasing the library's income through new sources and cooperation with other libraries or agencies; prepares reports for the board's review.
6. Responsible for the physical facilities and for the efficient operation of the library under the conditions set forth in the annual budget.

#### **ARTICLE IX. Library Staff.**

Staff members shall include assistants both professional and clerical as needed to provide an effective program of library service. These assistants shall be employed or dismissed by the Regional Library System Director with notification to the Board.

A personnel handbook outlining the governing policies, working conditions, and duties of the staff shall be kept up to date at all times.

#### **ARTICLE X. Reports.**

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

#### **ARTICLE XI. Attendance.**

**Section 1.** A Board member shall be removed for cause or for failure to attend three consecutive regularly scheduled meetings.

**Section 2.** A letter reporting the removal and specifying the cause shall be sent by the secretary to the affected Board member and to the local board responsible for his appointment. The local board shall be asked to appoint another representative to fill that member's unexpired term.

#### **ARTICLE XII. Penalties.**

Employees or agents of the Athens Regional Library System may cause the arrest, fine and imprisonment of persons who borrow, and fail to return, books and other property owned by the Athens Regional Library System; deface, damage, steal or otherwise improperly use and/or abuse library property; or commit other violations as described in

the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Title 20, Chapter 5, Article 2.

### **ARTICLE XIII. 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 local Board members vote to do so. Notice of withdrawal must be sent to the Chairman of the Regional Board of Trustees and the Regional Library System 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 Division of Public Library Services of the Board of Regents, University System of Georgia, must be notified of the receipt of this 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 annually agreed level of support to the regional system; or
- (b) Failure of the county to meet criteria which 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 Division of Public Library Services of the Board of Regents, University System of Georgia.

**Section 5.** In the event of the withdrawal of one county from a 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 System 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 the Maintenance and Operations budgets for the current year.

### **ARTICLE XIV. Amendments.**

These bylaws may be amended, extended or rescinded at any regular meeting of the Board of Trustees by a two-thirds vote of the members present, providing announcement

of the proposed change is made preceding the meeting and all members have been notified of the proposed change. All amendments to these bylaws shall be filed with the Division of Public Library Services of the Board of Regents, University System of Georgia, immediately upon adoption.