

CONSTITUTION of the Piedmont Regional Library & Library Board of Trustees

Revised and approved by the Piedmont Regional Library Board of Trustees, October 2022

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of the library system shall be the Piedmont Regional Library (PRL).

ARTICLE II. HEADQUARTERS

The headquarters for the Piedmont Regional Library shall be located in Jefferson, Georgia.

ARTICLE III. PURPOSE

The mission of the Piedmont Regional Library is to empower people, raise aspirations, and build quality of life. Supporting activities include to acquire and purchase library materials; to circulate materials to the public through the headquarters library or by other appropriate means of library outreach; to develop existing libraries, book deposits, and outreach services as appropriate to the needs of the communities served; to provide current and reliable information 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. CONSTITUENCY

PRL shall serve all citizens of Banks, Barrow, and Jackson counties through the headquarters library, affiliated libraries, and outreach services. PRL provides the citizens of Banks, Barrow, and Jackson with reciprocal borrowing privileges in all libraries in the system.

Existing libraries are located in the communities of Winder, Commerce, Jefferson, Nicholson, Maysville, Homer, Auburn, Braselton, Talmo and Statham. Book deposits are located in Bethlehem, Carl and Arcade.

Any county adjoining a county that is a member of PRL may become a part of PRL by contract agreement with the Piedmont Regional Library Board of Trustees, and by paying the local cost of providing service in said county according to the minimum requirement to qualify for state aid, and by the provisions of Title 20, Chapter 5, Article 2 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. Within the system, libraries that are primarily funded by municipalities are able to participate in the system through representation on that county's library board as stated in that county library board's Constitution and Bylaws.

ARTICLE V. 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, Current Through the 2020 Regular Session of the General Assembly.

ARTICLE VI. GOVERNING BODY

Section 1. The governing body of PRL shall consist of a board of trustees composed of trustees serving on member county library boards who are appointed to the PRL Board of Trustees by each county library board. Banks County Library Board of Trustees appoints three members, Barrow County Library Board of Trustees appoints four members, and Jackson County Board of Library Trustees appoints four members.

Section 2. The term of office shall be three years, with starting and ending dates corresponding to the state fiscal year.

Section 3. 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 terms of any bequest or gift.

Section 4. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as appointments are made. If a vacancy occurs prior to the expiration of a trustee's term, the new appointee shall complete the unexpired term.

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 the county library board of any county which may affiliate with the Piedmont Regional Library in the future.

ARTICLE VII. OFFICERS

Section 1. The officers of the Board of Trustees shall be a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and a Secretary elected from those serving on the Board. These officers shall perform the duties prescribed by the bylaws and by the parliamentary authority adopted by the Board.

Section 2. The officers shall be elected at the July meeting to serve for one term or until their successors are elected, and their term of office shall begin at the close of the meeting at which they are elected. Officers are elected for a three-year term consistent with their board term, or until their successors are elected.

Section 3. The Director and any members of the staff authorized to handle library funds shall be bonded for an amount commensurate with the amount of funds handled, determined by the Board and entered in the minutes, and a copy of the bond filed with the Georgia Public Library Service.

Section 4. All federal, state, and local funds used for the operation and improvement of the services and facilities of PRL shall be used in accordance with the budget approved by the Board, and the intent of the appropriation and its attendant laws and regulations.

ARTICLE VIII. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

An Executive Committee, composed of the officers of the Board, shall be entrusted to govern in the name of the Board of Trustees between meetings of the board.

ARTICLE IX. INTERLIBRARY COOPERATION

The Piedmont Regional Library 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 the library systems, providing that the resulting cooperative endeavor is conducive to mutual growth and development of the library system.

ARTICLE X. CONTRACTS

The Piedmont Regional Library 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.

ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION

This 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 one week prior to the meeting, and provided that a quorum is present. All amendments to the Constitution will be filed with the Georgia Public Library Service immediately upon adoption.

BYLAWS of the Piedmont Regional Library & Board of Trustees

Revised and approved by the Piedmont Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 2021

ARTICLE I. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARD MEMBERS

The Piedmont Regional Library Board of Trustees is the legal governing body of the Piedmont Regional Library (PRL). It shall be the duty and responsibility of members of the PRL Board of Trustees to do the following:

- a. To employ a director for PRL who meets state certification requirements and such other employees as necessary upon the recommendation of the PRL Director. Authority for the technical administration and supervision of the libraries in the system shall be vested in the PRL Director. The PRL Board of Trustees delegates to the Banks County Library Board of Trustees and the municipalities in Jackson County the activity of employing library staff.
- b. To approve budgets prepared by the PRL Director and, together with the local county library boards of trustees, assume responsibility for the presentation of the library system's fiscal needs to the supporting agencies.
- c. To attend board meetings.
- d. To establish library policies.
- e. To present financial and progress reports to governing officials and to the public.
- f. To notify the PRL Director in advance of all meetings of the PRL Board of Trustees or committees.

ARTICLE II. DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

Section 1. The Chairperson shall preside at all regular or called board meetings. He or she shall appoint all committees and shall be an ex-officio member of all committees, and perform such other duties as generally pertain to the office.

Section 2. The Vice-Chairperson shall preside and perform the duties of the Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson. All other duties of the Vice-Chairperson shall be assigned by the Chairperson.

Section 3. The Secretary shall keep a record of attendance at Regional Library board meetings, record the official action of the Board, and have the custody of its official books, which shall be housed in the Regional Library Headquarters. The Secretary shall send copies of the minutes of all meetings to the Director of the Piedmont Regional Library. He or she shall report changes of board membership to the Director.

Section 4. An account of all receipts and expenditures must be kept and a report made at each quarterly 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 copies of all financial reports shall be kept in the PRL headquarters at all times.

ARTICLE III. DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR

Section 1. The Director of PRL 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.

Section 3. The duties and responsibilities of the Director are the following:

- a. To employ or terminate staff members, as necessary, in compliance with application laws and the availability of funds.
- b. To attend all meetings called by the Georgia Public Library Service or send a substitute.
- c. To prepare any local, state, or federal annual budgets.
- d. To notify the PRL Board and the Georgia Public Library Service of any failure to comply with policies of the Board, criteria for state aid, state and federal rules and regulations, and all applicable local, state or federal laws.
- e. To administer the total library program, including all affiliated libraries, in accordance with policies adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Piedmont Regional Library.
- f. To attend all meetings of the PRL Board and of the affiliated libraries in the region, or to designate a substitute.

ARTICLE IV. MEETINGS

Section 1. There shall not be fewer than four meetings of the Regional Library Board during each twelve-month period. These meetings shall be held quarterly in January, April, July and October at rotating locations and times throughout the Region as designated by the Board Chair, with approval from the Regional Board. Five (5) members present shall constitute a quorum.

Section 2. The Executive Committee shall meet as called by the Chairperson to deal with specific needs. Three members present shall constitute a quorum.

Section 3. Special meetings of the full board may be called by the Chairperson or upon the written request of three Board 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 of the Regional Library system shall notify each member of the date, time, and place of the Regional Board meeting.

Section 5. All meetings must be open to the public and the news media. The Regional Board may, however, enter into a closed (executive) session for the discussion of proposed or pending litigation, deliberation on acquisition or sale of real property, or hearings or discussions on the appointment, discipline or dismissal of an individual employee, without restricting the employee's right to a public hearing if requested. If the Board enters into a closed session, no formal action will be taken. All decisions must be formally moved and adopted in an open Board meeting to be legally binding.

Section 6. The latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order (Revised), when not in conflict with this Constitution and Bylaws, shall govern the proceedings of the Board of Trustees of the Piedmont Regional Library.

Section 7. Each member of the Regional Board shall have one vote. The Chairperson shall not vote except in the case of a tie vote, at which time the Chairperson shall vote to break the tie.

Section 8. No official business may be conducted without a quorum. Except as stated elsewhere in these documents, a simple majority affirmative vote of the quorum shall be necessary to approve any action before the Board.

Section 9. The order of business for meetings shall be the following:

- Call to Order
- Approval of minutes of previous meeting
- Financial report
- Regional Director's report
- Unfinished business
- New Business
- Adjournment

Section 10: Board meetings are held to conduct the affairs and business of the Library. Board meetings are not meetings of the public, but are open to the public as required by law. The Board may restrict, in accordance with law, public participation in meetings to any extent necessary to allow it to carry on its business. The following process will be followed in an effort to ensure that public participation in Board meetings is orderly and meaningful, both for the public and the Board:

1. To be eligible, individuals wishing to speak must complete, sign and submit a [Request to Comment](#) form no later than 5 pm on the weekday prior to the day of the regularly scheduled meeting. The form must be completely filled out. Speakers will be heard in the order of the form completion and submission.
2. Any person concerned with an administrative question shall exhaust all administrative channels before presenting same to the Board.
3. Any individual desiring to speak should give his/her name, address and the name of the group, if any, that he/she is representing. The individual should speak to the Board, not the audience.
4. Each speaker shall not exceed three minutes.
5. If one spokesperson has presented a matter, it is not necessary to repeat the same ideas. Others speaking on the same subject shall usually be limited to one minute each.
6. Questions, suggestions, proposals or criticisms which have been presented verbally should also be submitted, when practical, in writing and should be signed by the individual, the spokesperson or the group appearing before the Board.
7. Persons appearing before the Board are reminded, as a point of information, that members of the Board are without authority to act independently as individuals on official matters.
8. Any personal complaint(s) against library personnel must be in writing and will be received in executive session only.

9. The Board will not allow abusive language, threats, comments, jeers, applause or shouts from the floor. Disruptive persons will be asked to leave the meeting room.
10. The Board vests in its chairperson or presiding officer authority to terminate the remarks of any individual when he/she does not adhere to the rules established.

ARTICLE V. 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 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 VI. PENALTIES

Employees or agents of the Piedmont Regional Library may cause the arrest, fine, and imprisonment of persons who borrow, and fail to return, books and other property owned by the Piedmont Regional Library; 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 VII. DISSOLUTION OF OR WITHDRAWAL FROM THE REGIONAL LIBRARY

Section 1. The Piedmont Regional Library 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. Notice of withdrawal must be sent to the Chairperson 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 Georgia Public Library Service must be notified of the receipt of this letter of intent within five working days.

Section 3. The Piedmont Regional Library 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 in the most recent system participating agreement; 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 Chairperson of the County Board of Trustees, all funding agencies party to the participating agreement, the Director of the Piedmont Regional Library, and the Georgia Public Library Service.

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 Piedmont Regional Library Board, there is no obligation on the part of the Piedmont Regional Library 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 VIII. AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Piedmont Regional Library Board provided a quorum is present, provided all Board members have been notified in writing one week preceding the meeting, and provided the vote is unanimously in favor of the amendment. All amendments to these Bylaws shall be filed with the Georgia Public Library Service.

Constitution and Bylaws of the Piedmont Regional Library

Originally adopted August 29, 1974

Revised and approved January 2021

Public Comment process added October 2022