

**Saline County Library
Board of Trustees
Agenda**

Date: 7/6/23 | Time: 3:30 p.m.

1800 Smithers, Benton, AR

1. Call to Order
2. Announcements/Public Comment - Speakers must complete the Request to Speak Before the Board form and have it turned in to the Library Director or any Board Member by noon of the day of the board meeting.
3. Discussion Items
 - a. None
4. Unfinished Business
 - a. Recommendations for Board Member to Fill Out Term Ending June 2027
5. New Business
 - a. None

Adjourn

Next regular board meeting July 17, 2023

Questions for Potential Board Members

Name: Bob Vidt

Contact Information: 

Are you a registered voter in Saline County? (This is a legal requirement.) Yes

What do you know about being a public library trustee?

Responsible for making/revising library policies; be well versed in all financial responsibilities of the library including formulating/approving the budget; be a positive representation in the community; responsible for hiring/removing and providing direction to the library director.

How often do you use the Saline County Library?

I have just updated my library card after several years of inactivity. My family is a more frequent user than I have been. That has changed since I have updated my card.

What special skills do you have that might benefit the board or library?

I have served on multiple church boards. I have a passion to add perspective to the Trustee Board and to be more representative of our community.

Would you be willing to ask others for a donation for the library or to participate in library fundraisers?

Yes

Is there something you would like to see changed about the Saline County Library? Please explain.

A balanced Board and improved community representation.

What constitutes an “excellent public library” in your mind?

1. Institute policies that safeguard our children
2. Accountability to the residents of Saline County
3. Fiscally responsible
4. Community driven leadership
5. Earn the trust of the community

Questions for Potential Board Members

Name: Eric Wiebelhaus-Brahm

Contact Information: [REDACTED]

Are you a registered voter in Saline County? (This is a legal requirement.)

Yes

What do you know about being a public library trustee?

I have reviewed the bylaws. Being a public library trustee requires attending meetings every other month for a five year term. More generally, this role requires a commitment to public service and to the First Amendment to the US Constitution.

How often do you use the Saline County Library?

Including the library's digital content, I use the Saline County Library almost every day.

What special skills do you have that might benefit the board or library?

I am a [REDACTED]. I work with data on a daily basis; information is central to my work. My research specialty is on human rights and how societies deal with histories of violence and repression. All academic research involves synthesizing and identifying gaps in a body of research and presenting it in fresh ways that captures attention, ideally among academic, activist, and policy audiences. It also requires exceptional analytical and problem-solving skills to identify compelling research questions and devising plans to answer them.

Would you be willing to ask others for a donation for the library or to participate in library fundraisers?

Yes, increasingly at [REDACTED] I engage with alumni and community stakeholders, which involves forging internship relationships and growing scholarship endowments.

Is there something you would like to see changed about the Saline County Library? Please explain.

I am very happy with the library. Perhaps it needs to do more to show its value and the importance of access to diverse voices to the broader community beyond the active partisans on censorship issues.

What other community services/ organizations are you currently involved in?

At [REDACTED] I coordinate training programs for our Safe Zone Committee, which seeks to create a welcoming environment for LGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff. I also serve on my college's DEI committee. In addition, I work with activists who are seeking to prompt an official reckoning with histories of racial violence in Arkansas and Maryland. From 2015-2020, I served on the board of the Arkansas Coalition for Peace and Justice. I give talks to Rotary, Arkansas WAND, etc on public affairs.

What constitutes an "excellent public library" in your mind?

At its heart, I think an "excellent public library" is central to community. Libraries provide information/materials that meet the diverse needs and reflect the diversity of the community. Excellent public libraries are about more than accessing information, however. They help community members find the resources they need and, through public programming, aid us in community building by developing new friendships/partnerships.

Questions for Potential Board Members

Name: Jenelle Stephens _____

Contact Information: _____

Are you a registered voter in Saline County? (This is a legal requirement.)

Yes and I have worked at the Early Vote Center in downtown Benton for several years.

What do you know about being a public library trustee?

I worked at the Arkansas State Library for 38 years and the CALS Public Library for 5 years and attended and sometimes participated in several board meetings.

How often do you use the Saline County Library?

Occasionally check out books and attend civic organizational meetings in meeting room. I grew up in Desha County where my father was a lawyer and County Judge. He was an avid reader, amateur historian, a strong supporter of libraries in Arkansas and built branch libraries in Desha County. He was on the Arkansas State Library Commission and Arkansas History Commission boards and the Civil War Centennial Commission. My two sisters, twin brother and I earned our MLS degrees from LSU. My focus (and family's) has always been on non-fiction (biography, history (especially Arkansas and the South), social sciences, education, geography, paleoanthropology, etc. I've been fortunate to be able to order new non-fiction books for my home library. I do check the SCL website almost on a daily basis for new non-fiction titles but still prefer to have my own copy. As president of the Benton Literary Guild, I have selected, purchased and donated new books to the library on an annual basis.

What special skills do you have that might benefit the board or library?

Only a personal experience working in libraries for 43 years. I was the first branch library at CALS (John Gould Fletcher library). Then I became the Deputy Director of Information Resources (technical services) and Coordinator of Collection Services at the State Library. I selected and acquired resources for the State Library collection including reference books, periodicals, DVDs, and gradually more and more online reference databases. Through grants, I also coordinated workshops offered free to public librarians and staff on such topics as literacy council programs and preservation of library resources.

Would you be willing to ask others for a donation for the library or to participate in library fundraisers?

Yes

Is there something you would like to see changed about the Saline County Library? Please explain.

Maybe add more basic computer workshops for Senior Citizens? But I think the SCL has done an admirable job in all the services and resources being offered to the different demographic groups in the county. When I was a public librarian, I learned quickly that library users have a wide set of needs for recreational, educational, informational resources as well as different programs: everything from the full range of fiction, non-fiction, periodicals, reference books, to cookbooks, music, DVDs, and now of course more and more websites, online reference sources, and ebooks. Not to mention children's story times, teen activities, computer access and assistance, workshops, etc. It's an enormous responsibility for the library director in directing staff and operations to meet these public needs considering budget limitations.

~~What other community services/ organizations are you currently involved in?~~

Benton Literary Guild, P.E.O. Arkansas Chapter DM, various activities and committees at First United Methodist Church, past president of the Arkansas Library Association


What constitutes an "excellent public library" in your mind?

To be "excellent", a library must attempt to provide the very best of the following: librarians, historical information, current information, tools to analyze information, books, programs, technology, and equal accessibility for the community. A true community center which brings together all types of people.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sonelle Stephens". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Questions for Potential Board Members

Name: Kathy Boone

Contact Information: 

Are you a registered voter in Saline County? (This is a legal requirement.)

Yes

What do you know about being a public library trustee?

that duties would be similar to other "board"
type positions - educating self on issues,
discussion and assisting with the overall direction of
the library

How often do you use the Saline County Library?

Limited -

What special skills do you have that might benefit the board or library?

Retired - free time is not exactly a skill - but
I have it.

Budgets

Would you be willing to ask others for a donation for the library or to participate in library fundraisers?

Yes

Is there something you would like to see changed about the Saline County Library? Please explain.

Better Advertising of services - and
completing things already in progress

What other community services/ organizations are you currently involved in?

Central Arkansas Master Naturalist
Arkansas Wild Spaces - habitat advisor

What constitutes an "excellent public library" in your mind?

One that promotes an exchange of
ideas civilly

June 22, 2023

RECEIVED
JUN 23 2023
BY: 

Dear Judge Brumley,

I have enclosed my application for Saline County Library Board. Your consideration in this matter would be greatly appreciated.

Respectfully,

Lydia Cheatham

Lydia Cheatham

Questions for Potential Board Members

Name: Lydia Cheatham

Contact Information 

Are you a registered voter in Saline County? (This is a legal requirement.)

Yes

What do you know about being a public library trustee?

The trustee sets policies, mission statement, financial decisions in regards to the library.

How often do you use the Saline County Library?

Twice a month or more. Audiobooks often, too.

What special skills do you have that might benefit the board or library?

Caldwell Elementary Library - volunteered 15 years

Set up church library.

Worked at Benton branch for 14 months as shelver.

Would you be willing to ask others for a donation for the library or to participate in library fundraisers?

Definitely.

Is there something you would like to see changed about the Saline County Library? Please explain.

Intergenerational programs, as in senior citizens mentoring young adults.

What other community services/ organizations are you currently involved in?

None at this time.

What constitutes an "excellent public library" in your mind?

The Benton branch qualifies as an "excellent public library."

Please see the included, expanded application answers.

Thank you.

Lydia Cheatham

I have been a resident and registered voter of Saline County for 37 years. I am applying for the Saline County Library Board.

I understand that a trustee would be responsible for library mission statement, policy, deciding on the director, as well as other financial concerns, and keeping the library a vital part of the community. I am willing to learn all the responsibilities expected of being a trustee.

Prior to lockdown, I regularly used the library for research and materials, but discovered audiobooks and e-books during the pandemic. The Benton location has been my branch of choice, but have frequented the Bryant location as well.

The library of a town has always been something to explore since I was a child, from the school libraries to public ones. Caldwell Elementary Library of Benton was where I spent fifteen years working with the librarian, Dot Jones. She taught me cataloging, shelving, and displays. I also substituted for her when necessary. I helped to start a church library in Salem by gathering donated books, cataloging books, purchasing book cases, and worked to get it running. In 2021, I joined the Friends of the Library at the Saline County Library in Benton. This volunteer position allowed me to be a part of fundraisers, devote time and attention to the Book Sale Room, and make connections with other Saline County patrons. I am not currently involved with any other community organization.

In February 2022, I was hired as a book shelper for the Benton location until June 2023. I have learned more about inner workings, behind the scenes, and what it takes to make a library run smoothly for the community. This includes programs such as Author Meet & Greets, book clubs, writer groups, community outreach, and more. I have also learned about book repair, purchasing, providing requested materials, book suggestions, and newer cataloging systems, as well as new materials offered besides books. I know I would excel as a Library Board trustee because I have the perspectives from multiple views, as a mother, as a volunteer, as a former employee, and as a Saline County resident and library patron.

I would be willing to help seek donations for the library and participate in library fundraisers. I have helped organize and run multiple events such as church bazaars, workshops, and summer camps. If there needed to be any changes, I would like to see more adult programs that would get them involved in community activities, such as letters to military or first responders, mentoring young adults that might need help with guidance, or language and literacy programs to help those in need.

An ideal public library would reflect what I see at Saline County Library. They have programs for all ages year round, a computer lab for adults and children, a makerspace where everyone can explore the world of crafting and art with new techniques and technology, historical records of Saline County and more.

My commitment to the people of Saline County would benefit the Saline County Library Board. As a trustee, I would put in the work, the dedication, and the time to make the Library even better for future generations.

Questions for Potential Board Members

Name: Marcia Lanier

Contact Information: 

Are you a registered voter in Saline County? (This is a legal requirement.)

yes

What do you know about being a public library trustee?

I worked as a library media specialist at Bryant High School for 18 years. I have experience in writing policy and mission statements, managing a library, and helping and → *

How often do you use the Saline County Library?

I frequently check out ebooks or audiobooks. I retired last May, so the 18 years I worked as a high school librarian, I read a large amount of YA literature → **

What special skills do you have that might benefit the board or library?

I strongly support the library. I support the Freedom to Read. I spoke at the Quorum Court meeting in April against the referendum. Over the 42 years I taught → ***

Would you be willing to ask others for a donation for the library or to participate in library fundraisers?

I am willing to participate in library fundraisers. I know you need help in the bookstore and will commit to helping with that job.

Is there something you would like to see changed about the Saline County Library? Please explain.

I have been greatly pleased with Patty Hector's leadership. Her last newsletter was exceptionally well written. I was impressed with all librarians who spoke at the Quorum Court meeting in April. They were calm, inviting → ****

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* supporting students and teachers. I also recognize that the library is needing trustees who are willing to stand up against censorship and bullying.

** from the high school library. I also worked with several YA Librarians from the Bryant branch as they supported the Hornet Readers book club, which I formed 18 years ago.

*** English and library skills, I taught quality literature that the district has now banned from being taught in the classroom curriculum. I understand the value and importance of the banned books.

**** and clear. Over recent months, a social change has been pervading our lives. The library must continue to provide literature and activities for its diverse population by increasing the pressure against these groups trying to limit the library, or worse, defund the library.

What other community services/ organizations are you currently involved in?

Over the years, I have been involved in church: being active in my disciple group, working at the church bookstore/ resource center, visiting people in need, and helping * ↓

What constitutes an "excellent public library" in your mind?

An excellent public library provides a safe environment for people of all ages, races, and genders with a variety of materials, both informative and entertaining. An example is Saline County Library System.

* at the Rowland Food Pantry. I also volunteered for several years feeding children at the Alexander Community Center.

Questions for Potential Board Members

Name: __Robin Campbell_____

Contact Information: [REDACTED]

Are you a registered voter in Saline County? (This is a legal requirement.)

Yes

What do you know about being a public library trustee?

I believe a trustee is a volunteer advocate for the powerful role the library plays in our community. They help by shaping the library's mission, developing written policies, hiring and evaluating the director, setting goals for long-range planning, and maintaining relationships with County Government.

How often do you use the Saline County Library?

I definitely plan to use the library more with the new location in East End. As it is, I have visited both branches, browsed the collections, saved money by borrowing video/board games, used a computer when in Benton, and utilized the pickup and return at Ace Hardware in East End. I'd love to use the Makerspaces, but I haven't worked out a time to do that on Saturdays. I'm really looking forward to having access to new crafting books and maker programming closer to home.

What special skills do you have that might benefit the board or library?

I'm responsible and interested in working with others to help library staff members serve the people of Saline County, which is why I joined the Saline County Library Alliance. I try focusing on others' intentions and understanding their viewpoints and goals. I value the library's mission, the services they provide, and being a good steward of library and community funds.

Would you be willing to ask others for a donation for the library or to participate in library fundraisers?

Yes

Is there something you would like to see changed about the Saline County Library? Please explain.

I would like to see the Saline County Library continue growing and improving. It's a great system with a bright future! Benton and Bryant are lucky – and expanding from the Mobile Library/remote services into East End is wonderful for us here in this community too. This is a big county. Are there areas that historically haven't been served?

What other community services/ organizations are you currently involved in?

Saline County Library Alliance

What constitutes an “excellent public library” in your mind?

An “excellent public library” is exciting! It offers a lot – including items people of all ages are interested in using and borrowing. It promotes life-long learning and hosts programs for all stages of life. It also provides services the community needs, early literacy initiatives, and innovative support, especially for underserved community members.

Questions for Potential Board Members

Name: Sam Gibson

Contact Information: [REDACTED]

Are you a registered voter in Saline County? (This is a legal requirement.)

Yes, registered address is our home [REDACTED]

What do you know about being a public library trustee?

As an attorney, I am familiar with the operation of boards of non-profit and local government organizations. I have not previously served on a public library board.

How often do you use the Saline County Library?

My most recent use of a public library has been spending time with my youngest grandchild selecting books and videos for him at a couple of the Little Rock Public Library branches.

What special skills do you have that might benefit the board or library?

I have practiced law in Benton since 1972, and held elected public office (Municipal Judge and Benton City Attorney) for over twenty years. I retired from the US Army Reserve as a Brigadier General, having held three command positions over the last twelve years of that service and with deployments to Kuwait / Iraq for the First Gulf War (1991) and Bosnia for Operation Joint Guard (1997-98). I have served on a number of boards of local organizations over the years.

Would you be willing to ask others for a donation for the library or to participate in library fundraisers?

Yes

Is there something you would like to see changed about the Saline County Library? Please explain.

I have no agenda except to help the Saline County Library continue its excellent service. That said, if I should as a board member see any opportunity for improvement, I would certainly advocate for such change.

What other community services/ organizations are you currently involved in?

I am currently Chair of the Board of the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas and I am a member of the Board of Habitat for Humanity of Saline County.

What constitutes an "excellent public library" in your mind?

An excellent public library is a place where all members of the community are welcome and encouraged by highly qualified librarians to connect with information. It should house the physical and digital records of the community it serves and make those archives readily accessible to its patrons. It should be a source for free access to the widest possible variety of books for all patrons and should conduct programs that enhance public literacy for all ages and groups within the community. It should be a foundational institution of learning and enlightenment of its community and should always seek to improve its service to its patrons.

Questions for Potential Board Members

Name: Tamme Adams

Contact Information: [REDACTED]

Are you a registered voter in Saline County? (This is a legal requirement.)

Yes

What do you know about being a public library trustee?

I believe that trustees would have a passion
for public libraries, advocate for the library, provide
oversight for financial management

How often do you use the Saline County Library?

Several times throughout the year.

What special skills do you have that might benefit the board or library?

I have taught in Benton Public Schools for 37 years.

I understand the importance a well informed citizenry
and the need for free educational resources to make that possible.

Would you be willing to ask others for a donation for the library or to participate in library fundraisers?

Yes

Is there something you would like to see changed about the Saline County Library? Please explain.

Not at this time. The Saline Co. Library is an
excellent public library and provides important
resources to the public.

What other community services/ organizations are you currently involved in?

I volunteer at the Christian Care Clinic and serve on the
finance committee of my church - First United Methodist. I am
treasurer of the Democratic Party of Saline County and the
Democratic representative on the Saline County Election Commission.
What constitutes an "excellent public library" in your mind?

A diverse and comprehensive collection of books and other
reading materials, digital resources, a knowledgeable and
friendly staff, community educational programs, and a
comfortable, inviting facility.

I believe that a public library is a vital part of our community. It provides a place where people can learn, grow, and connect. A good library has a diverse collection of books and resources, a knowledgeable and friendly staff, and a comfortable, inviting facility. It also offers community educational programs and a place where people can meet and talk.

Several things that I think are important for a public library are:

I have thought a lot about the importance of a public library. It is a place where people can learn, grow, and connect. A good library has a diverse collection of books and resources, a knowledgeable and friendly staff, and a comfortable, inviting facility. It also offers community educational programs and a place where people can meet and talk.

I understand the importance of a public library. It is a place where people can learn, grow, and connect. A good library has a diverse collection of books and resources, a knowledgeable and friendly staff, and a comfortable, inviting facility. It also offers community educational programs and a place where people can meet and talk.

and the need for free educational resources for our community.

ok

Not at this time. The Saline County Public Library is a great resource for our community.

Excellent public library and provides important resources to the public.

resources to the public.

Questions for Potential Board Members

Name: ROBERT C. HILL

Contact Information 

Are you a registered voter in Saline County? (This is a legal requirement.)

YES

What do you know about being a public library trustee?

Trustees approve budgets, salaries, promotions, approve policies, but do not set policies or are involved in the day to day operations of the library.

How often do you use the Saline County Library?

Occasionally

What special skills do you have that might benefit the board or library?

I am retired, with 35 years experience in the private sector. I have a Ph.D. in Animal Nutrition, from my own business for two years after I retired.

Would you be willing to ask others for a donation for the library or to participate in library fundraisers?

Yes

Is there something you would like to see changed about the Saline County Library? Please explain.

I would like to see the animosity that is currently going on to stop. Civil discussion of ideas and opinions is a wonderful thing, the level of meanness that has happened recently is not.

What other community services/ organizations are you currently involved in?

None

What constitutes an "excellent public library" in your mind?

One that respects to all with books supporting viewpoints that address all people of Sartice Co. lots of activities allowing for interaction at the library. A variety of activities. The library should provide a place where people can come together to meet + talk.