

NORTH SHELBY LIBRARY DISTRICT, A PUBLIC CORPORATION  
June 6, 2024 Minutes

STATE OF ALABAMA  
COUNTY OF SHELBY

The Board of Trustees of the North Shelby Library District, a public corporation, at the library June 6, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. Having confirmed that notice for the meeting was posted in advance at North Shelby Library 5521 Cahaba Valley Rd., Birmingham, AL and that a quorum of three Trustees was present, the meeting was called to order by Morgan Barnes.

PRESENT  
Morgan Barnes  
Ann Price  
Beth Ronilo  
Tim Ryan

Kate Etheredge, Director of Library Services and Tina Bailey, Business Manager

Guests: see attached

BUSINESS CONDUCTED

MOTION: Beth Ronilo - Accept agenda

SECOND: Tim Ryan

VOTE ON MOTION: Unanimous

MOTION: Ann Price - Approve minutes

SECOND: Tim Ryan

VOTE ON MOTION: Unanimous

MOTION: Beth Ronilo - approve contract for fire equipment inspection with Summitt

SECOND: Tim Ryan

VOTE ON MOTION: unanimous

Next Meeting: August 12, 2024 at 4:00 PM

NORTH SHELBY LIBRARY DISTRICT, A PUBLIC CORPORATION  
June 6, 2024 MINUTES

READ AND APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Morgan Barnes

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ann Price

\_\_\_\_\_  
Beth Ronilo

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tim Ryan

unsigned  
as this board was  
replaced on 7/11/2024  
before their regularly  
scheduled meeting.

GUESTS ATTENDING

Name

Name

Anne Ferguson Jansell	Terry Coggins
Courtney Ealy	Amy Hardy
Jane Cooper	Elizabeth Anderson
Marsha Sturdevant	Betty Ann O'Neal
Michael Morrissey	Kassandra Stevens
Cindy Warriner	Susan Garris
Linda Barnard	Paul GARRIS
Meredith Ryan	ROBERT LAMB
Donna Noland	Vanessa Warner
Cowley Short	nicki sidwell
Colly Edwards	Allan O'Neil
Julie Henderson	Pamela Ochsenh. rt
Jean Brucher	John Coggins
Sarah Lumpkin	James Lent
LAURACEE BARUES	Pam Cooper
Robbie Breeding	Cheryl Landreth
Mark Bristol	Williestha Morris
CE Holt	
Kristy HEARN	
Robert	

NS Director

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**From:** Kay Kelley [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 31, 2024 9:24 AM  
**To:** Morgan Barnes; Tim Ryan; Ann/Jay; BILLY RONILO; NS Director;  
nsbusinessmanager  
**Subject:** Place 3

Please accept this email as notice of my resignation as Trustee Place 3, North Shelby Library District, a Public Corporation, effective 12:01 a.m. June 1, 2024. My signature has been on every check issued by the organization since @2008 and this needs to be immediately changed.

Kay Kelley

received  
6/6/24

Good afternoon.

My name is Marsha Sturdevant, I'm a retired pediatrician, and I've lived in the NSL district since 1991. My children all attended Oak Mountain Schools and used the library as an extender library for their school libraries. When they were little, my husband and I took them to the children's programs at the small NSL on Meadowlark Lane. In essence, my children, who are now adults in their 30s, grew up with the North Shelby Library. Representative Arnold Mooney is my state house rep. Senator Jabo Waggoner is my state senator.

I want to thank the current board members for their service. You all have served the library and its families well. I'm disappointed that I will not have the opportunity to vote for library board members in the Fall.

And now, I have questions about the process moving forward for clarification.

1. Which legislative districts' representatives will be choosing the 5 NSL board members?
2. Which of those legislative districts have constituents who live outside the NSL district?
3. When did the legislative delegation begin the process of deciding to change the way NSL district board members were chosen?
4. How did the delegation come to the conclusion that this was the best way forward?
5. What alternative strategies for oversight were considered during this process?
6. When will the 501c3 status of the NSL district officially be dissolved?
7. How will landowner and business owner assessments change when the 501c3 status ends?

We all know that accountability is very important. As this process continues, I will do my very best to hold both the legislative delegation responsible for NSL board appointments and the new NSL board members accountable.

Thank you.

Marsha Sturdevant MD



June 6, 2024

North Shelby Library Board of Trustees  
5521 Cahaba Valley Road  
Birmingham, AL 35242

Board members:

I recently rewatched one of my favorite childhood shows, "A Different World." I dreamed about going to Hillman. But they already had a Whitley. They didn't need me.

One episode saw an art show be shut down because one painting offended one man's religious sensitivities. The lesson learned was "when the artist is silenced, the community suffers." That aired in 1992. Why are we still fighting this battle today? Thirty-two years before that episode, people began banning one of the most beautiful books ever written, and one I take great pride in as an Alabama lawyer raised by a small town lawyer – To Kill a Mockingbird. I hope they are embarrassed now.

I want to ask when it will be enough, but I think I know the answer. Either when all dissent is crushed, or when it finally affects the ban supporters personally. Be careful who you hate. It very well could be someone you love.

I think if Whitley were real, she would be proud of me today. I wore this in honor of her and the lesson she learned. I'm wearing, head to toe, a queer designer. But we aren't seeing any more of his personal art. He committed suicide. I wonder why.

Thank you,

  
Courtney Hutchinson Ealy

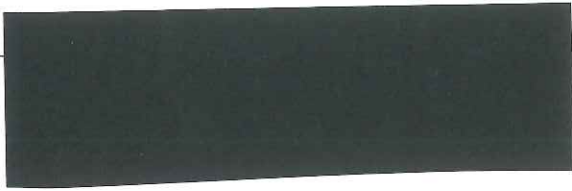
PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

RECEIVED  
6/6/24

NAME Linda Bernard

DISTRICT RESIDENT ? Yes

Address:



35242

Please send me a personal response. Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach Shelby Co Reported article  
on HB 89 Thankyou.



# Opinion: Reading between the lines of House Bill 89

Published 9:26 am Thursday, June 6, 2024

By **Donald Mottern** (<https://www.shelbycountyreporter.com/author/donaldmottern/>)



Republican state leaders have chosen to dismantle this elected system in favor of their own political appointments. House Bill 89 gives lawmakers that power and comes with no input from the local community. (File)

In a world of over-politicization and commodification, the notion of a public library governed and operated as a public good by those elected from its community might seem like it is out of the ordinary. That's because it was.

The North Shelby Public Library once stood as a proud and unique entity in Alabama—the only library not formed or maintained under any city council or county commission. Instead, the library had existed and operated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit funded primarily by its district's residents in a design that was voted on and approved in 1988.

This model, established through legislative action and community support, reflected the values and aspirations of the local population and those who cared enough about their local library to dedicate their time and energy to its success.

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While the North Shelby Public Library is admittedly unusual when compared to other libraries, what is not unusual is the belief that a community should have the right to decide how their own institutions and public goods ought to be organized and made available.

Unfortunately, Republican state leaders have instead chosen to dismantle this elected system in favor of their own political appointments. House Bill 89 gives lawmakers that power and comes with no input from the local community. These lawmakers cite two primary reasons for inserting themselves into this issue. One, North Shelby Library members have always ran unopposed, therefore a balloted election has never occurred. Two, by appointing board members, the government feels it can ostensibly ensure the diversification and fair representation of the library board.

While it is an unfortunate fact that there appears to have never been a balloted election for any of the five seats on the library board, it has been that way through no verifiable fault or action of the board itself.

As it turns out, the managing of a public library, with no expectation of pay, is not a position many are willing to sign up for. For decades those who have cared enough have had a vacant place waiting for them, sparing the necessity for elections.

Republican leaders, such as Rep. Susan DuBose, claim that the board has not taken the steps to adequately advertise how individuals can run for the position.

However, if that was indeed the problem, why wasn't the solution to find ways to promote public information and awareness instead of stripping the decision away from the people of the district wholesale?

Would it really have been so hard to find someone with alternate viewpoints and proposed solutions to run for the library board? Would it truly have been so wrong to let Alabamians make their own decisions on a local matter? If those people in fact exist, as its been claimed, why weren't they encouraged to run for office?

The claim that appointed boards would bring more competition and change is a glaring hypocrisy coming from many Republican legislators who themselves have run unopposed in their own general elections.

If competition and change are truly desired, then it should start at the local level and be guided by the local voice.

Moreover, claims of board members overstaying their welcome truly lose credibility when the delegation has no intention on establishing term limits for their new appointed board.

Let us not even mention that one of the key decision-makers in this replacement, Senator J. T. "JABO" Waggoner, has held state offices since the Presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson.

Furthermore, the proponents of HB89 honestly expect those affected to believe that nothing says "better representation" like letting a handful of elected officials in Montgomery lock you out of the room while they play puppet master with your local library.

While our state representatives and senators preach of their desire to allow for new viewpoints and diversity in one hand, they make no mention of the fact that this diversity is expected to distill out of an incredibly diverse group of five white conservative Republicans who will handle the appointments.

Proponents of HB89 expecting us to buy their line about providing improved representation while stripping voting rights in the same breath is like a used car salesman desperately attempting to avert your eyes away from the rusted-out floorboards and leaking oil pan just long enough for the ink to dry.

If dissenting voices in the community do in fact exist, they should be encouraged to engage in the democratic process.

Those same individuals should now be angered by the fact that they have been cheated of the opportunity to run for the office in favor of state leaders resorting to hand picking appointees themselves.

The Alabama Library Association isn't in favor of this move either. They have rightfully and repeatedly voiced concerns about politicians meddling in local affairs and turning libraries into political battlegrounds.

Libraries have always been—and should always remain—bastions of knowledge and community. They should in any way possible remain free from the taint of partisan influence.

By allowing politicians to strip away an elected board and handpick their replacements, we risk turning these vital institutions into mere extensions of political agendas.

This decision is a direct affront to the autonomy and self-determination of the very residents those politicians are meant to represent. Already, staff of the North Shelby Library have found themselves with no route forward but to resign in protest of the changes being forced upon them.

With a local board of caring volunteers being chucked to the wayside and dedicated staff and librarians jumping ship, the North Shelby Library—and others like it—is sinking into a swamp of politics, coating every bookshelf and index card in political muck we will never be able to rinse off.

It is my personal belief that these lawmakers are targeting the North Shelby Library's ability to stand independently from the whims of elected officials in order to wage a culture war.

Even the overall genuineness of the claims behind HB89 immediately fall under fire, considering that DuBose, a major proponent of House Bill 89, spent the previous months lambasting the sitting board for their refusal to overrule a librarian's refusal to remove an LGBTQ display inside the library.

As libraries across this state and around the country are becoming the new battleground in a war fighting non-existent problems, I find the notion that this was not the true reason behind HB-89 insulting.

I cannot be the only one here that routinely notices that the party that still espouses a desire for small government and decries governmental overreach into local politics so routinely seeks to strip rights away from local bodies and intrude into the personal rights and lives of their constituents.

HB89's stripping away of 50,000 people's right to vote on yet another topic that directly affects them is not unique. More than anything HB89 has done nothing but further reveal the rampant, ironic and hysterical hypocrisy that is beyond evident in this state and the Republican Party that dominates it.

What I can assure you is the fact that local problems are, and have always been, better solved at the local level. Local issues demand local solutions, not top-down mandates from state legislators. Passing the buck up the ladder, or in this case allowing those up the ladder to rip the rungs away from you, is decidedly not the answer.

I'm reminded of a few words once said by Republican President Ronald Reagan that perfectly encapsulate my feelings on this entire debate.

"The most terrifying words in the English language are: I'm from the government and I'm here to help."

I can't help but imagine that President Reagan, who was in office when North Shelby organized its library, is now rolling over in his grave with such a heightened velocity that the United States Department of Energy is currently seeking ways to harness it.

I've said this here before, but I'll say it again for posterity, Democracy isn't a spectator sport—it's a participatory one. Just be sure to play before the professional athletes lock you out of the locker room.

Donald Mottern is a staff writer for the Shelby County Reporter. He can be reached at 669-3131 ext. 523 or by email at [donald.mottern@shelbycountyreporter.com](mailto:donald.mottern@shelbycountyreporter.com)