

**Minutes**  
**South Mississippi Regional Board**  
**Special Meeting**  
**August 9, 2023**

The South Mississippi Regional Board had a special meeting at 2 p.m. on Wednesday August 9, 2023 in the auditorium at the Columbia Marion County Public Library. Present were Mrs. Libby Aaron, Chair, Mrs. Joan Bass, Ms. Carol Durham, Mrs. Sharon Dungan, Mrs. Patricia Norris, Carey Varnado, Board Attorney, Ms. Ryda Worthy, Library Director, Mrs. Jackie Miller, Jeff Davis County Branch Supervisor and Mona Swayze to take minutes of the meeting. Members of the public and news outlets WDAM and the Columbian Progress were, also, in attendance.

Mrs. Aaron addressed the audience, then opened the meeting with prayer.

There will be no decision on the Heartstopper book series due to no reconsideration forms being turned in prior to today's meeting.

Mr. Varnado apologized to the Board and to the crowd for being late.

The agenda, herein attached, was discussed. The floor was open for community members to express their views.

Community members signed in at the beginning of the meeting and Mrs. Aaron called each person in order that they signed in. Some people did not want to speak. Others just echoed what had been said by the person before them. Some highlights of what were said are: "The material in question is inappropriate for children", "The material is inappropriate for young readers"; "Material for children should have no sexual content"; "If the bible says it is wrong, it is wrong".

Heather McMurry asked what constitutes young adult. According to the American Library Association a young adult is between the ages of 12 and 18; whereas, according to the National Institutes of Health a young adult is between the ages of 18 and 26. That is a vast difference. What does the library consider young adult? For SMRL purposes, a young adult is between the ages of 13-18. She suggests maybe implementing a sticker system for content to make it easier for families to choose books.

Two members of the Marion County Board of Supervisors were in attendance, Blue Green and Tony Morgan. Blue Green stated that he wants the books removed from the library, as did Tony Morgan.

Ann Williams stated that “the graphic novels in the teen area are very dark.” Dal Murray expressed concern about the books “they do not need to be out on shelves for children.” She, also, asked for another meeting for the public to give more input.

Michael Thornton expressed appreciation for the staff but he states “the books are inappropriate to have in the library.” Nan Stringer states “they don’t need to be out for children to access.” Rachel May states “the content should be appropriate in the young adult area, if it is used for programming.” Glenda Shivers brought up Mississippi Code 95-12-27 from 2012. This law could not be confirmed, only Mississippi Code 97-5-27 regarding disseminating sexual material to children. She discussed the fact that rainbows were used to decorate the teen area for summer reading. She says we should let children be children. Betty Kendrick wants the people who order books to be accountable for that.

The group, also, asked that announcements for Board meetings should be on the radio to reach more people.

Mrs. Dungan moved to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Aaron seconded. Meeting adjourned.

***Adopted by the SMRL Board of Trustees on September 22, 2023.***