

Good evening, Members of the Board of Supervisors. My name is Lewis Edward Moten III, a resident of the North River District and the Trustee at Large for Samuels Public Library. I am here tonight as a private citizen to raise concerns about the proposed creation of a separate Warren County Library Board and its potential impact on the Library.

Since 2023, the Library has faced significant challenges, but thanks to the support of our community and donors across the country, it has thrived and was recently recognized as VLA's Library of the Year. This honor reflects the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and the community. The President of the Board and FOSL also received awards.

The 2023 Report, presented two months later, distorts facts, omits key perspectives, and presents a biased narrative that has harmed the Library's reputation and shaken public trust. The suggestion that creating a new library board is "standard practice" is misleading. I have found no examples of nonprofit libraries where the primary funding source also establishes its own governing library board, and the report and its addendum do not provide any.

The issue of governance was already addressed through the MOA last year. There is no need to rush to form a new board. The MOA offers a clear path for public-private partnerships. If there are concerns, I urge you to work with the Library to resolve them without disrupting the current structure.

I was encouraged by the attendance of three supervisors at the Library's second Q&A session this past weekend. This shows there's an opportunity for collaboration, and I believe we can work together to find a solution that benefits everyone while preserving the Library's independence.

On a personal note, I want to share something that's close to my heart. I've faced significant challenges in my life, including learning disabilities, which made my early years difficult. I am the oldest of four siblings, and when I reconnected with my sister years ago, she introduced me to her son by saying, "This is my brother Lewie. He was the dumb one growing up." It wasn't meant to hurt; it was her way of teaching her son about resilience and that success is possible despite struggles. That moment stuck with me—it reminded me that, with perseverance and support, we can overcome obstacles and achieve more than we might believe.

I've submitted several documents, including my letter to the Royal Examiner and two detailed reports raising concerns about the 2023 report. The folders I've chosen for this submission are intentionally colorful to symbolize my support for inclusivity, especially as the Library has faced challenges related to diversity and community concerns.

I respectfully ask that you take the necessary time to carefully review the facts and work with the Library to find a solution that allows us to continue serving the community in the best way possible. Let's ensure we make a decision that supports the Library's future as an independent, thriving resource for all.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

MOA - Memorandum of Agreement

The Library - Samuels Public Library

Supervisors - Warren County Board of Supervisors

BOS - Warren County Board of Supervisors

2023 Report - November 19, 2024: Warren County 2023 Library Debrief and Research Report

The Report - See 2023 Report

WCLB - Warren County Library Board

VLA - Virginia Library Association

FOSL - Friends of Samuels Library