

Kent County Library Board of Trustees

Minutes of the November 29, 2021 Meeting

Present: Elisabeth Tully, President; Valerie Overton, Vice President; Jay Silcox, Treasurer; Erin Counihan, Trustee; Judi O'Brien, Trustee; Arnessa Dowell, Executive Director; Chris Walmsley, Staff Member

The meeting was called to order at 4:35 pm.

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed. Mr. Silcox moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Ms. Counihan seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report & Finance Committee

Mr. Silcox reviewed the November 17 meeting of the Finance Committee with the trustees.

Mr. Silcox informed the trustees that a \$25,000 donation had been received for facility improvements to the new Rock Hall facility. Ms. Dowell provided more information related to the contribution and intended use of the funding.

Mr. Silcox reviewed a request from the town of Millington related to opening a library branch within the town. Ms. Dowell reviewed the history of the request and possible service alternatives. Ms. Dowell noted that the library had committed to including Millington in the summer reading program planning.

Mr. Silcox noting that the finance committee had discussed salary projections, which included bonuses for staff and salary increases for some employees.

Mr. Silcox reviewed the bank balances, noting that the PNC Checking account had \$188,462.48, the PNC Savings account had \$31,235.30, and the Peoples Bank Savings had \$218,648.20.

Trustee Announcement

Ms. Tully informed the trustees that Dr. Austen and Ms. Jones had resigned from the library board due to other obligations. Ms. Tully noted that their resignations would be effective December 31, 2021. Ms. Tully reminded the trustees how this would impact recommendations for trustees.

Director's Report

Ms. Dowell reviewed upcoming branch transitions, noting that the new Rock Hall facility would be opening on December 1, 2021, and that the new North County location was expected to be in

early January. Ms. Dowell reviewed the hours the branches would be open, and reviewed a request for increased hours in Rock Hall and how this could be accommodated.

Ms. Dowell reviewed changes to the governance of the Eastern Shore Regional Library, noting that the board for the organization would be expanded to include two representatives for each system. Ms. Dowell informed the trustees that Ms. Counihan had agreed to be the representative to the Eastern Shore Regional Library for the trustees.

Ms. Dowell reviewed upcoming library programs, noting the gingerbread program, trains, and a holiday party for all ages. Ms. Dowell noted that there would be a two-week break during the holidays, with regular programming resuming in January.

Ms. Dowell informed the trustees that the State of Maryland was distributing COVID test kits to all counties in Maryland, and that some counties were working with the library systems to distribute them.

Ms. Dowell noted that she had nominated Ms. Wanda Sheriff for Library Volunteer of the Year for all her work related to book sales and the Friends of the Library.

Pay Increases

Ms. Dowell informed the trustees that there was currently a projected excess of \$38,000 in salaries for Fiscal Year 2022. Ms. Dowell presented potential changes, which included increasing all full-time staff to a minimum of \$15.00/hour and all part time staff to \$13.50/hour. Ms. Tully questioned the reason for the difference between full and part time staff. Ms. Dowell noted that she was working towards forming a pay scale, and that needed a notable difference between part and full time individuals. Ms. Dowell reviewed some possibilities for the salary scale, and noted that she was working to keep it within the current budget for salaries.

The trustees discussed salary scales and studies, and how this could be tailored to the particular organization. Ms. Dowell noted that there was currently a state-wide salary study being conducted for library staff, and that in some regards the library was not competitive with neighboring counties.

The trustees reviewed the increases and projected changes, along with the impacts on the future budgeting process.

Mr. Silcox moved to approve the pay increases for part and full time staff as presented. Ms. Overton seconded the motion. Ms. Tully asked if there was further discussion of the motion. Ms. Overton noted that the trustees had given bonuses in the past due to extenuating circumstances, and did not want bonuses to become an expectation. Ms. Tully reviewed the motion, and called for a vote. The motion was approved unanimously.

Trustee Recruitment

Ms. Tully informed the trustees that herself and Ms. Overton had picked up the trustee recruitment process after the trustee resignations. Ms. Tully noted that five interviews had been conducted for the three terms available.

Ms. Tully reviewed the candidates, recommending Ms. Peggy McKee for a five-year term, Ms. Amy Sine for a three-year term, and Dr. John Murphy for a one-year term.

Ms. O'Brien moved to accept the recommendations of the committee as presented. Mr. Silcox seconded the motion. Ms. Tully called for discussion. Ms. Overton asked if there was a citizen representative recommendation. Ms. Tully reviewed the previous process, noting that it typically came after official notice of trustee appointments. The trustees discussed engagement in the board from members with full time jobs and other responsibilities, and accommodating them within the meeting schedule. Ms. Tully called for a vote after discussion concluded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Lost and Found Items Policy

Ms. Dowell presented a lost and found policy to the trustees. Ms. Dowell noted that the old policy was unclear as to how long items would be held and what items would be kept. Ms. Overton moved to approve the policy as written. Ms. Tully seconded the motion. Ms. Tully called for discussion. Mr. Silcox questioned what happened to items after the time expired. Ms. Dowell responded that it depended on the item type and that procedures had been developed to govern how these would be handled. Ms. Tully called for a vote after the motion was discussed. The motion was approved unanimously.

Strategic Planning Committee

Ms. O'Brien reviewed the documents included in the packet, and recommended that the staff and director take the lead in the development of the plan. Ms. O'Brien noted that she would like to see a 10 year plan, which would be divided into two five-year terms, allowing for milestones and goals, and a review towards the end of the first half to inform the next five years. The trustees discussed the planning process, trustee involvement in the process, and how to be collaborative partners throughout the process.

Funding Partner Reports

Friends of the Kent County Public Library

Ms. O'Brien reviewed a previous meeting of the Friends of the Library, noting that they had reviewed their funding, and what contributions had been made within the current year, along with the results of the previous book sale.

Foundation for the Kent County Public Library

Ms. Dowell informed the trustees that the Foundation was being utilized as a passthrough for a significant donor contribution for facility improvements to the Rock Hall location.

Staff Guidelines Revisions

Ms. Tully noted that not all the sections had been reviewed and revised by trustees, but that she was hopeful that the final document would be ready for the January meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Meeting Schedule

Ms. Tully noted that there was not currently a meeting scheduled for December, and traditionally there had not been a December meeting. The trustees discussed the necessity of a meeting in December, concluding that at present there was no need for a meeting, but that Ms. Tully and Ms. Dowell would continue to meet and communicate with the trustees.

Ms. Tully thanked all the trustees for their continued service, noting that it had been an interesting and varied year, and that she was very confident in a strong Board of Trustees going forward.

Ms. Overton thanked Ms. Tully for her leadership over the past two years.

No further business was brought before the trustees.

Ms. Tully moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Silcox seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:57 pm.