

Kent County Library Board of Trustees

Minutes of the May 30, 2023 Meeting

Present: Jay Silcox, President; Judi O'Brien, Vice President; Amy Sine, Treasurer; Erin Counihan, Secretary; Alex Baker, Trustee; Peggy Mckee, Trustee; John Murphy, Trustee; Annie Woodall, Staff Member; Chris Walmsley, Executive Secretary

Mr. Silcox called the meeting to order at 4:32 pm.

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

Mr. Silcox reviewed the agenda for the meeting. No changes were made.

Trustees Education

Ms. Woodall circulated a handout to the trustees reviewing the sessions and attendance to the MLA/DLA Annual Conference 2023 by the staff of the library. Ms. Woodall reminded the trustees that the library had been closed on May 11, enabling all of the library staff to attend the conference. Ms. Woodall noted that staff were able to identify ways that the concepts presented could be incorporated into existing practices. Ms. Woodall continued that several staff had attended sessions focused on EDI and how it could be incorporated into the library, and providing services to underserved groups such as emerging adults.

Mr. Silcox questioned if the concepts and ideas from the conference had been discussed by staff yet. Ms. Woodall said that it had not been discussed yet, but that ideally takeaways would be incorporated into the goals for the next fiscal year.

Mr. Murphy questioned if this should be done in the future. Ms. Woodall noted that the MLA/DLA Annual Conference was special due to its proximity to most staff, and typically covered a variety of subjects giving most staff something to engage with. Ms. Woodall continued that most staff were attending a conference for the first time, and that gave some excitement around attendance.

Ms. Mckee asked if there were new ideas which had come from the Challenging Patron Situations workshop. Ms. Woodall reiterated that the sessions had not been discussed yet, but that she believed there were some important takeaways.

Ms. Sine noted that the handout stated that low morale was prevalent in a lot of libraries, but based on systemic factors, and asked if any of these factors were present at the library. Ms. Woodall noted that this was a session she had attended, so was able to provide more insight into this topic, and said that some of the factors were present at the library. Ms. Woodall

reviewed some of the qualifications of the presenter, and said that some of the struggles were related to the culture of an organization such as how it responded to challenges, and what had been implemented to address fears of being at work. Ms. Woodall also noted that low morale was not coming from individuals, and could not be recovered from by individuals, but was based on situation and how the administration and culture responded to the concerns of staff, and that taking proactive steps could help raise morale. Mr. Murphy asked if there was discussion of what could be done by trustees or administration to help alleviate systemic factors? Ms. Woodall said that the presenter discussed the importance of communication and conflict resolution, and to make sure that information was flowing freely and accurately.

Public Comment

No members of the public were present.

Officer Reports

Treasurer

Ms. Sine informed the trustees that unofficial notice of the funding allocation for the next fiscal year had been received from the county commissioners, and that she had met with Ms. Dowell related to the impacts on the budget, which would be presented by Mr. Walmsley later in the meeting.

Ms. Sine reviewed the bank account balances, noting that there was approximately \$218,000 in the Peoples Bank savings account, \$31,000 in the PNC Bank money market account, and \$91,000 in the PNC Bank checking account.

Secretary

Ms. Counihan informed the trustees that since Mr. Walmsley would be transitioning out of the role of Executive Secretary, she would meet with Mr. Walmsley related to the transfer of information and preservation of institutional knowledge.

The trustees discussed the Executive Secretary role transition.

Committee Reports

Foundation for the Kent County Public Library

Mr. Murphy reported that the Foundation had met at the end of April with Ms. Donoso and Mr. Walmsley present. Ms. Donoso had presented to the board of the Foundation related to the website renovation and progress on the project. Mr. Murphy noted that the Foundation had expressed interest in seeing the website as soon as possible.

Rock Hall Facility

Ms. Mckee reported that she and the town manager of Rock Hall had an informal meeting at which potential grants were identified and discussed, and had been sent to Ms. Dowell. Ms. Mckee noted that Ms. Dowell was unable to complete the capital funding grant application for the state of Maryland prior to the deadline. Ms. Mckee informed the trustees that while the town was working with a consultant related to grant writing, the library would need to prepare materials for grants related to the library.

The trustees discussed the proposed building, the potential needs of the space, and routes to securing funding necessary for the space.

Mr. Murphy asked what the process was to secure a memorandum of understanding from the town. Mr. Silcox commented that the town may have a draft that they have used previously. Mr. Murphy reiterated the importance of having a document outlining the responsibilities and obligations of both the town and the library.

Ms. Counihan asked what the next steps were related to the space discussed. Mr. Silcox identified that funding was the biggest priority. Mr. Murphy identified the grants and the memorandum were needed to move forward. Ms. Mckee said that she would pursue quotes.

Friends of the Kent County Public Library

Ms. O'Brien reported that there was an excellent turn out to the book sale.

Ms. O'Brien noted that she would inform the celebration committee once a point person from the Friends was identified.

Librarian's Report

Mr. Walmsley reviewed changes to the proposed Fiscal Year 2024 budget. Mr. Walmsley noted that the proposed county funding of \$756,152 was significantly lower than the requested funding. Mr. Walmsley continued that the fund balance use had been increased to \$100,000, which was supported by the current projection for the end of Fiscal Year 2023. Mr. Walmsley reported that the advertising, telephone/internet, supplies, copiers, capital expenditures, and salaries lines had been reduced to make up for the remaining shortfall in revenues. Mr. Walmsley noted that the reduction in salaries had been achieved by eliminating a new, unfilled position in the next fiscal year, and that current employees would not be impacted.

Mr. Silcox asked if a vote was needed. Mr. Walmsley said that a vote would be needed to approve the budget, but that since the notice was not official, there may be changes until the

budget is adopted by the commissioners. Mr. Silcox indicated that a vote would occur at the next meeting.

Ms. Woodall reviewed the ban/trespass form and the rules of conduct, which had been revised to use suspension for temporary measures, and ban for more permanent measures. Ms. Woodall continued that some language had been clarified to specify that some documents were internal.

Ms. Sine questioned if the process was correct within the documents related to when incident reports were completed. Ms. Woodall reviewed the process with the trustees, clarifying the order of events.

Ms. Baker asked how a patron would be notified that behavior may result in a trespass notice? Ms. Woodall noted that it would happen at the time of the incident, or when the patron returned to the library. Ms. Woodall continued that the library did not always have contact information for individuals, but that in conversations with the Chestertown Police Department, they had indicated that they could help with identifying individuals.

Ms. Mckee questioned what would happen if someone refused to sign the trespass notice. Ms. Woodall indicated that the police may be contacted, and that parental involvement had been discussed in the case of minors.

Ms. Baker asked how communication was shared across the team if a patron was suspended. Ms. Woodall noted that it had been a long time since someone had been banned, but that incident reports were shared by the senior team, and that most often repeat offenders were known by staff. Ms. Baker noted that this was an opportunity for transparency and to create a feeling of safety and security.

Ms. Coughlin moved to approve the revised Rules of Conduct Policy. Ms. Mckee seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Old Business

Subpoena Language

Mr. Walmsley reviewed the updates to the language, noting that the County Attorney had reviewed the addendum and recommended that a line be added related to referral to legal counsel if documents are requested.

Ms. Sine moved to approve the subpoena language addendum as revised. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

New Business

Staff Handbook Addendum

Ms. O'Brien noted that there were three addendums to the staff handbook included in the packet; one of which was to update the handbook to apply to exempt employees, the second was to inform employees about the whistleblower policy, and the third was to inform employees that a background check would be conducted.

Mr. Silcox noted that the staff handbook addendum was a much more streamlined option for exempt employee language.

The trustees discussed when prospective employees should be made aware of the background check.

Mr. Silcox asked if the executive director was the only exempt position at present. Ms. O'Brien confirmed that the executive director was currently the only exempt position, but that there may be others in the future. The trustees discussed an employment contract compared to the handbook, and which would take precedence.

Ms. Woodall asked if the procedures for the whistleblower would be part of the policy or in the handbook. The trustees discussed how a whistleblower policy could be executed.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity Statement

Ms. Woodall reviewed the EDI statement with the trustees, noting that the statement built on the trustee statement against racism which had been approved earlier.

Ms. Sine asked if the staff who attended EDI sessions at the MLA/DLA conference had been able to incorporate their knowledge into the statement. Ms. Woodall noted that not all staff had reviewed the statement, but the majority of staff had the opportunity to provide feedback.

Mr. Silcox asked if there were questions or comments related to the statement. Ms. Baker asked if there had been interest in creating benchmarks for collection representation within the library. Ms. Woodall noted that there were some tools available to staff related to assessing diversity within the collection, and that the library's collections were generally more diverse than other libraries in the regional system. The trustees discussed creating goals related to EDI and the collection.

Ms. Mckee asked if the software or statement accounted for neurodiversity or physical disability. Ms. Woodall noted that the library was taking a broad approach to EDI. The trustees discussed the language in the statement, and how some if it may be more aspirational or ongoing instead of achievable.

Closed Session

Mr. Murphy moved to enter closed session. Ms. Mckee seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. The meeting entered closed session at 6:32 pm.

The meeting was reopened at 7:11 pm and unanimously adjourned.

**PRESIDING OFFICER'S WRITTEN STATEMENT FOR CLOSING A MEETING ("CLOSING STATEMENT")
UNDER THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT (General Provisions Article § 3-305)**

This form has two sides. *Complete items 1 – 4 before closing the meeting.*

1. Recorded vote to close the meeting: Date: _____; Time: _____; Location: _____;
Motion to close meeting made by: _____ Seconded by _____;
Members in favor: _____; Opposed: _____;
Abstaining: _____; Absent: _____.

2. Statutory authority to close session (check all provisions that apply).
This meeting will be closed under General Provisions Art. § 3-305(b) only:

(1)___ "To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals"; (2)___ "To protect the privacy or reputation of individuals concerning a matter not related to public business"; (3)___ "To consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto"; (4)___ "To consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State"; (5)___ "To consider the investment of public funds"; (6)___ "To consider the marketing of public securities"; (7)___ "To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice"; (8)___ "To consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation"; (9)___ "To conduct collective bargaining negotiations or consider matters that relate to the negotiations"; (10)___ "To discuss public security, if the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to the public or to public security, including: (i) the deployment of fire and police services and staff; and (ii) the development and implementation of emergency plans"; (11)___ "To prepare, administer, or grade a scholastic, licensing, or qualifying examination"; (12)___ "To conduct or discuss an investigative proceeding on actual or possible criminal conduct"; (13)___ "To comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter"; (14)___ "Before a contract is awarded or bids are opened, to discuss a matter directly related to a negotiating strategy or the contents of a bid or proposal, if public discussion or disclosure would adversely impact the ability of the public body to participate in the competitive bidding or proposal process." (15)___ "To discuss cybersecurity, if the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to: (i) security assessments or deployments relating to information resources technology; (ii) network security information . . . or (iii) deployments or implementation of security personnel, critical infrastructure, or security devices."

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3. For each provision checked above, disclosure of the topic to be discussed and the public body's reason for discussing that topic in closed session.

| Citation (insert # from above) | Topic | Reason for closed-session discussion of topic |
|--------------------------------|-------|---|
| §3-305(b) () | | |

4. This statement is made by _____, Presiding Officer.

WORKSHEET FOR OPTIONAL USE IN CLOSED SESSION: INFORMATION FOR SUMMARY TO BE DISCLOSED IN THE MINUTES OF THE NEXT OPEN MEETING. (See also template for summary.)

➤ For a meeting closed under the statutory authority cited above:

Time of closed session: _____
 Place: _____
 Purpose(s): _____
 Members who voted to meet in closed session: _____
 Persons attending closed session: _____
 Authority under § 3-305 for the closed session: _____
 Topics actually discussed: _____
 Actions taken: _____
 Each recorded vote: _____

➤ For a meeting recessed to perform an administrative function (§ 3-104): Time: _____

Place: _____
 Persons present: _____
 Subjects discussed: _____