

Kent County Library Board of Trustees

Minutes of the February 27, 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; Arnessa Dowell, Executive Director; Annie Woodall, Staff Member; Chris Walmsley, Executive Secretary; two members of the public

Mr. Silcox called the meeting to order at 4:37 pm.

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed. Ms. Mckee moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion. Mr. Silcox called for discussion. Ms. O'Brien questioned if Mr. Walmsley should be noted as the Executive Secretary in the minutes, which was agreed by the trustees. Mr. Silcox called for a vote on the revised minutes, which was approved unanimously.

Ms. Dowell reviewed the agenda of the meeting. Ms. Dowell added the telework policy review under Old Business. No additional items were added.

Public Comment

Mr. Silcox called for public comment.

Ms. Alice Ritchie introduced herself to the Board of Trustees and stated that she was present to observe.

Trustee Education

Ms. Dowell presented to the trustees related to the duties of the director and the trustees.

Mr. Silcox presented to the trustees related to the Open Meetings Act and how trustees could ensure compliance with the act. Following the presentation, Mr. Murphy asked if the open meetings act applied to committee meetings as well. Mr. Silcox responded that as long as there was not a quorum of trustees on the committee, then they were not subject to the open meetings act, with the exception of the finance committee, which were open to the public.

Officer Reports

Ms. Sine reported that the finance committee had met, and that some of the items discussed would be presented later in the meeting, and that efforts to transfer responsibilities to the treasurer were ongoing.

Secretary

Ms. Counihan reported that she and Ms. Dowell had drafted a letter to Chief Dixon of the Chestertown Police Department related to creating a liaison between the library and the police to open communication and share resources. Ms. Counihan noted that the letter would be sent after approval by the President.

Librarian's Report

Ms. Dowell reviewed a draft of the Fiscal Year 2024 budget submission and noted several considerations for the budget for the next fiscal year. Mr. Murphy asked how the commissioners would view the increase, either comparing it to the requested amount for the previous year or the amount awarded. Ms. Dowell was unsure how the commissioners would view it, but noted that both amounts were included in the budget considerations.

Mr. Silcox asked if the budget request was supported by the finance committee. Ms. Sine noted that the finance committee had reviewed the proposed budget, and determined that the changes were supported by library operations.

Mr. Silcox asked what the approach would be if the library were flat funded for the upcoming year. Ms. Dowell noted that some expenses would need to be cut such as materials and fixed assets. Mr. Silcox questioned if the tech director position would be put on hold. Ms. Dowell noted that she was working on a structural reorganization, and that the position of Tech Director may be filled with an internal candidate prior to the start of the next fiscal year. The trustees discussed the salary budget line.

Ms. Sine moved to approve the budget request for Fiscal Year 2024 as drafted. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Ms. Sine requested that Ms. Dowell notify her of when the budget presentation would be. Ms. Dowell indicated that it would likely be in April.

Grant Updates

Ms. Dowell reported that she had received permission to pursue the Historical Society Grant and she was working with the county to figure out a model for funding.

Ms. Dowell noted that the Cubicalls would be arriving on March 7 at North County and Chestertown library locations.

Ms. Dowell informed the trustees that the library had applied for a grant from the PNC Foundation and through Dollar Tree to support the summer reading program.

Mr. Silcox provided an update on the Chestertown Library Inc., building, noting that there was no insulation or vapor barrier under the building, which had contributed to the spongy floor. He continued that some sections of the floor were not adequately supported, and that the beams supporting the floor would need to be reinforced.

Letters of Intent

Mr. Silcox asked Ms. Dowell to confirm that the letters of intent had been submitted and that none were outstanding. Ms. Dowell confirmed that they had been submitted with the Rock Hall location as the first priority and the meeting room as the second priority.

Legislative Updates

Ms. Dowell reviewed legislative updates , which included Imagination Library, ESRL Governance, library fines and fees, and collective bargaining for library employees. Ms. Dowell noted that she had spoke with Delegate Jacobs and had brought up the Rock Hall branch and Ms. Jeanne Geibel's retirement from the library.

Capital Projects

Ms. Dowell reviewed the capital projects priority list with the trustees, noting that updates had been made in blue to the document.

Mr. Silcox reported that he had met with the Public Works Director and Site Maintenance Chief related to the roof of the Chestertown location. Mr. Silcox noted that they had examined two areas of concern on the roof. Mr. Silcox noted that the gutters were recessed into the roof with the downspouts going through the building, which had led to concern about the volume of water and gutters and downspouts not being able to handle significant quantities. Mr. Silcox reported that the county had agreed to seal areas where water could affect the roof if the gutters were overfilled, install leaf guards, and investigate additional downspout options.

Old Business

Study Pod Policy

Ms. Woodall reviewed the policy as written, noting that it was a new policy to apply to the two Cubicall pods. Ms. Woodall noted that policies from other libraries related to study rooms had been reviewed as part of the creation of this policy, and feedback from the trustees had been incorporated into the policy. Mr. Silcox asked if a particular staff member would be responsible

for the pod reservation and use. Ms. Woodall said that all staff would be trained and able to handle the reservations. The trustees discussed minors and the scope of responsibility of the library.

Mr. Murphy moved to approve the Study Pod Policy as presented. Ms. Mckee seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Fines and Fees Policy

Ms. Woodall reviewed the policy as presented, noting that while it may look significantly different, the content of the policy was largely unchanged. Ms. Woodall informed the trustees that the policy had been renamed to the Material and Service Fee Policy as the organization no longer has fines. Ms. Woodall noted that information about specific fees and amounts was moved to the Fee Schedule.

Ms. Woodall reviewed the Fee Schedule with the trustees, noting that the document included language related to practices which were not reflected in the current policy, such as 10 free printed pages per day. The trustees discussed charges related to the meeting room.

Ms. Woodall noted one change, which was the removal of the fee for faxing service. Ms. Woodall clarified that this was done because the library was not charged for this service. Mr. Murphy asked if staff was involved in sending the fax, and Ms. Woodall said that staff would still need to facilitate the faxing process.

Ms. Mckee moved to approve the Material and Service Fee Policy, including the Fee Schedule, as presented. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Ms. Woodall concluded by stating that the Core Committee was working on two additional policies; the whistleblower and the reference policy, and that the committee would like the trustees to take the lead related to the whistleblower policy. Ms. Woodall noted that the committee would be able to support the trustees as necessary.

Telework Policy

Ms. O'Brien noted that at the previous meeting, there was some confusion over the intent of the Telework Policy. Ms. O'Brien presented a revised policy which had been redrafted to clarify the intent of the policy. The trustees agreed to review the policy between the current meeting and the next.

New Business

Ms. O'Brien asked Ms. Dowell if there was an update or timeline for the organizational restructuring. Ms. Dowell stated that the restructuring was being conducted in phases, and that she hoped to have the entire process concluded by the end of April.

Mr. Murphy asked if the organization was looking at a building in Rock Hall to evaluate purchasing. Ms. Dowell informed the trustees that she had toured a location, but that there was another potentially interested party, and the current occupant had first right of refusal. The trustees discussed options for funding a location, if the library was able to purchase and own property, and how this would impact responsibilities for the facility.

No further business was brought before the trustees.

Mr. Murphy moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. O'Brien seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:18 pm.