

Kent County Public Library Board of Trustees

Minutes of the March 25, 2024 Meeting

Present: John Murphy, Vice President; Erin Counihan, Secretary; Rachel Durso, Trustee; Alex Baker, Trustee; Arnessa Dowell, Executive Director; Olivia Coleman, Executive Secretary; Chris Walmsley, Director of Office Administration; Natalie Hagan, Director of Technical Services; Lucien Battcock, Information Services Clerk.

Mr. Murphy called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

Ms. Counihan moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. Ms. Baker seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Mr. Murphy reviewed the agenda. Ms. Baker noted that she wanted to add a topic about moving the April meeting, but after some discussion the group remembered the meeting had already been moved to April 30.

Public Comment

The trustees opened for public comment, and there was none.

Officer's Reports

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Sine was not present, but Ms. Coleman read out an email sent to her covering what Ms. Sine would have discussed. It was reported that the current bank balances were as follows: People's Bank \$218,991.52, PNC Checking \$125,648.94, and PNC Savings \$32,242.60. The balance in PNC Checking included a \$19,000 check from the Foundation for the Kent County Public Library for the book drops which means the trustees don't have to front the money and wait to get reimbursed for the project.

Secretary's Report

Ms. Counihan had nothing to report.

Foundation Representative

Mr. Murphy had nothing to report besides the aforementioned check.

Friends Representative

Ms. Durso reported that the Friends were increasing their donation to the library on July 1, 2024 by \$5,000 to a new total of \$20,000. The Friends are also working on a membership drive, and spent most of their meeting preparing the envelopes for the drive.

Committee Reports

Rock Hall Facility Update

Ms. Dowell reported that based on the Maryland State Library Agency project, the library would need to receive \$2 million from the county or have \$2 million in the bank to begin the project to create a new Rock Hall library. Thus, this avenue needs to be discussed with the full board, as it may have to be reconsidered. The reason the amount is so high is because of the current 50% match. If the legislators were pushed to lower the match next year, this avenue could continue to be explored. The committee working on the project will be meeting in Rock Hall on April 8, 2024, and they will also be joined by the grant writer. Mr. Murphy asked if there has been discussion with the County Commissioners. Mr. Dowell explained that at first this was a project of the Town of Rock Hall, then it became a library initiative which involved the Commissioners, but it is now budget season and interactions with the Commissioners must focus on the upcoming fiscal year 2025 budget.

New Director Search Committee

Ms. Counihan and Ms. Durso explained that the committee was comprised of the two of them, Mr. Silcox, and three staff members. The staff members are Director of Technical Services Natalie Hagan, Director of Public Services Annie Woodall, and Director of Office Administration Chris Walmsley. The Committee is asking for money to advertise for the position. They currently had \$450 which covers posting on two sites for one month. They would like to post to another website and have enough to cover two months' postings for all sites, especially since there are currently other attractive offers for similar positions available. The first two sites they would like to post on are the Maryland Library Association website and the American Library Association website. The third website that was so far not covered was Linked-In, which has a self-set budget so it is not known exactly how much additional money is needed to cover it, as they way that your job is advertised likely changes based on how much you pay. This all in mind, the Committee requested a total of \$1700 to cover two months of job postings, including the \$450 they already had. Ms. Dowell suggested not posting to MLA as they library already has email connections with other Maryland libraries, so the ask was lowered from \$1250 to \$1000. Ms. Counihan moved to approve this, Ms. Durso seconded the motion, and it

was approved unanimously. The advertisements are already prepared and will be published by the Committee members on staff, as they have access to the library credit cards to pay for the postings. Applications from these postings will be sent to a new hiring email address that all Committee members will have access to.

New Board Member Committee:

This committee was previously comprised of Ms. McKee and Ms. Sine, and last year was made up of Ms. Sine, Mr. Murphy, and Ms. Baker, so a new committee needs to be formed. Ms. Baker noted that there may be some potential applicants in the pool of people who were considered at the end of last year. The trustees decided to reach out to these people and let them know that there was a new opening for the Board, but the position will still need to be advertised. The present trustees noted that Ms. Sine was previously the chair of the committee, and Mr. Murphy said he would be happy to continue serving on the committee, but it was decided that one more member needs to be selected from the trustees not present at the meeting.

Librarian's Report

Website Update

Ms. Hagan presented the updated website wireframe to the trustees. She explained that the staff chose a speech bubble design. They also asked the web designers to make buttons more noticeable and incorporate more of the green color in the new logo, which was added. She explained and displayed how menus would look and function in the site. From here on out, the web designers will be working on subpages in the website, creating menus and determining what will be in the dropdown menus. They will also be creating tablet and mobile layouts for the web page.

Blueprint for Maryland's Future Opportunity Discussion

Mr. Tom Porter began his presentation by introducing himself. He is the accountability and Blueprint coordinator for the Kent County Public School system. He went on to explain each of the five pillars of the Blueprint project, which are early childhood education, high quality and diverse teachers and leaders, college and career readiness, more resources to ensure all students succeed, and governance and accountability. He also explained actions needed to fulfill each of these objectives, such as expanding Pre-K to include 3 year olds for people of a certain wage level which additionally involves having 30% of seats in private Pre-K programs, or mentoring teachers to apply for National Board Certification. Mr. Murphy asked how the library can partner with the schools. Mr. Porter said there were monthly meetings that the library could participate in, and Mr. Murphy suggested partnering for the library's Summer Reading Program. Mr. Porter

said that idea would be best discussed with his work partner Gina Jachimowicz, who coordinates things like that. There was discussion about changing demographics in the school system. Mr. Porter said that declining enrollment was the primary demographic issue, which is majorly due to homeschooling. He also discussed the tour of information that the schools took regarding the Blueprint project in the previous year. After he finished his presentation, Mr. Porter left the meeting.

Book Drop Replacement Grant Update

Mr. Walmsley said that the library was gathering quotes for the project. Since the initial plan, some products have been discontinued while others are now more expensive. He also reported that the library received the documents needed for the project from the Foundation.

Maryland Heritage Grant Update

Ms. Dowell said there would be a site visit on April 9 at 1:30 PM with Mr. Silcox, Mr. Walmsley, and herself. The representatives from the granting organization would search the Hearse House and inform the library of what it needs to have. The library will then work with the architect for the project, which will also require the granter's approval. Ms. Dowell added that she spoke with Mr. Dan Mattson at Public Works and invited him to the site visit as well, as the county may be able to take care of some of the work needed on the building.

Operational Updates

Firstly Ms. Dowell gave an update on hiring. The library received four applications for the Youth Services Assistant position, none for the Teen Services Clerk position, and three for the Director of Branch Services position, though none of them seemed very viable. She reported that three six month trespass notices and one year long trespass notice had been sent out for an incident where a minor was tied up with tape. Ms. Dowell has spoken with the parents of two of the patrons under trespass, and one has asked for an appeal. The Sustainability Award for Staff Wellness has been due March 15, but this was pushed back to April 1, so Ms. Dowell will be submitting for it. She additionally noted that the Jerry Kline Community Impact Award would be due on June 16 for \$250,000 with no match, which Ms. Dowell advised to trustees to apply for.

Strategic Projects Update

Ms. Dowell provided an update on the current projects of the library. The Rock Hall library project has not yet come to full fruition. The roofing improvements were sent to the county to patch. The renovation on the Hearse House is being covered by the Heritage Grant. Portable study rooms have been installed. The renovation on the meeting room and the kitchen is still on

the to do list. The website is being worked on. Patio furniture should be considered as a Foundation initiative. The outreach vehicle is still on the to do list. The book drop replacement is being done. The rebranding and style guide is being done along with the website. Sound panels are being installed in Chestertown.

Sound Dampening Panels Update

Library staff selected the colors for the panels and the panel covers. The library is waiting on design samples.

Health Disparities Grant Update

Ms. Dowell reported that most of the money from this grant had been expended. There remained \$1500 for books, \$500 for the KCPL Cares - Safety giveaway, and \$1000 advertising money to be used for new staff t-shirts and sweatshirts. This will be due in June, and Ms. Dowell is working on this with Director of Public Services Annie Woodall.

Parks and Recreation Story Walk Memorandum of Understanding

Ms. Dowell reported that the MOU was already signed by Jillyn Coleman from Parks and Recreation. The story walk will be in Worton Park, and the MOU outlines everyone's responsibilities. Ms. Dowell asked if there were any needed corrections. Ms. Counihan said it was fine as long as staff had the capacity to fulfill their obligations. Ms. Dowell, Ms. Durso, and Ms. Coleman worked together to explain what a story walk was. Mr. Murphy moved to approve the MOU and Ms. Baker seconded the motion. There was discussion on who receives the data from the storywalk and how. Ms. Dowell explained that the data is collected through a QR code and given to both the library and Parks and Recreation. Ms. Counihan asked to make an additional, physical collection method to make the data collection equitable, as not everyone can scan a QR code. With this addition, the MOU was passed unanimously.

Boys and Girls Club Memorandum of Understanding

Ms. Dowell noted that she had contacted the Boys and Girls Club, and had not heard back from them. She suggested the trustees approve the MOU, contingent on the Boys and Girls Club providing transportation for students to the Community Center. Ms. Counihan asked what the library's involvement in this project is, and Ms. Dowell explained that it was mostly having staff trained to use the equipment installed by the Club. Mr. Murphy asked if a staff member would be there, and Ms. Dowell explained that the Teen Services Clerk would be sent there sometimes. Ms. Durso asked for clarification on transportation and approval, and Ms. Dowell explained that it should be an all or nothing approval contingent on transportation. Mr. Murphy suggested the

trustees say they can only approve the MOU if transportation is included. The trustees decided to table this topic until the MOU was updated.

Privacy and Confidentiality Policy Review

Ms. Dowell noted that this was the last policy besides the whistleblower to be reviewed. A line was changed in the policy to say that the library uses security cameras in cooperation with the county. The procedures were also removed, as they can change. This policy was discussed with senior team and reviewed by the CORE committee. Mr. Murphy suggested this be tabled for a vote when more of the trustees are present. It will be included on the April agenda.

Security Camera Upgrade Proposal

For the Hearse House, \$3100 would be used to upgrade security cameras, and \$8000 would be used for the main Chestertown building. The goal is to get the cameras on one system accessible by the library, the town police, and the county whenever needed. Currently, the library can only access the cameras through the county network. Additionally, the library would like to have greater camera storage so film can be kept for 30 days. The original amount had been \$7000, but additional cameras were added to address blind spots which increased the cost. The library has \$5000 from the Friends to put towards this project. Ms. Counihan asked if the Finance Committee had reviewed this proposal and budgeted for it, which Ms. Dowell confirmed, though the estimate was about \$850 less when they saw the proposal. Mr. Murphy asked why the cameras for the main building and the Hearse House were separate. Ms. Dowell explained that connecting them would require tunneling under the ground, and if the Hearse House cameras were separate, they could be funded through the renovation grant instead of library funds. Ms. Durso asked if an additional MOU between the library and the Chestertown Police Department would be needed, and Ms. Dowell said this was possible, however an MOU should exist that could be reviewed and updated. Mr. Murphy asked if trustee approval was needed for this proposal, which Ms. Dowell confirmed. Ms. Counihan moved to approve the proposal and Mr. Murphy seconded the motion, but asked to clarify that this project would be contingent on the budget. Ms. Dowell said that it would be, but noted that the trustees could select which items to cut from the budget if need be. The proposal was approved unanimously.

Update on Fiscal Year 2024 Goals

Ms. Dowell explained that these were updated every month, and would be updated again on April 10. The document outlining the goals and their status is accessible to all Senior Team members. Ms. Dowell added that many of the fiscal year 2024 goals were already met. She noted that Mr. Walmsley, Director of Information Services Michael Sampson, and herself had looked into an upgraded time clock system that day. It was an integration from Microsoft Teams, which

was a service paid for by the Eastern Shore Regional Library, and would therefore be of no cost to the library. Currently, the library uses the Google suite for its time clock, time sheets, and leave tracking, S3W for its schedule, and a payment system. Using Microsoft Teams Shifts would consolidate everything but the payment system, bringing three different systems down to two. Involved library staff are working with a contact from the Eastern Shore Regional Library to look into this.

Educational Leave

This has already been approved by the trustees when they approved the updated Employee Handbook, but Ms. Dowell wanted to discuss the procedures for this leave type, which involves a three part application for approval. In the first part, staff must list the courses that they want support for. The second part is for scheduling accommodation requests, constituting a change in schedule hours, but not reduced hours worked. The third part is the paid educational leave request, which includes a point system determining how many hours of paid educational leave a participating employee receives. Ms. Baker asked if there was a specific turnaround time for the approval process. Ms. Dowell explained how this would work, and why educational leave was offered. Overall, she said, it benefits the organization. She also clarified to Ms. Counihan and Ms. Durso that this was only for classes.

Teen Feedback Report

Ms. Dowell went through the report of the 14 teen patrons polled. Most of those polled come in daily and enjoy that they can “chill” in the teen area. They said they were frustrated that they are often asked to leave, are not allowed to curse, and that the library does not have certain games on the Playstation 5. They noted that they check out computers, headphones, and use school materials. They detailed what books, movies, video games, and board games they liked. They also noted what sorts of programs they would like to see. In addition to the current Pizza and Make a Thing Program series, they would like to see a blacklight party, which Ms. Dowell noted was planned as a summer program, and have field trip opportunities. Ms. Dowell noted that Minary’s Dream offers field trips, and is able to use that as leverage to persuade the teens to follow the rules. The teens like the game room, and the use of the library, but they do not like the strictness of library policy. Mx. Battcock noted that they felt the teens were behaving more appropriately, for example picking up their trash.

Executive Secretary Search Report and Transcription Proposal

Ms. Coleman explained that the search for her replacement was not going well, as many library staff feel they are either not well suited for the position, or do not have the time for the additional tasks. The trustees asked why a new Executive Secretary was needed, and Ms. Coleman

explained that she was moving away for family reasons, and therefore leaving the library. Ms. Dowell suggested the option of signing up for a transcription service, and finding someone to adjust any errors to the transcript. Mr. Murphy noted that a recording instead of meeting minutes is allowed under the Maryland Open Meetings Act, though he does not find a recording to be as valuable as minutes. Ms. Dowell added that the work of the Executive Secretary could be included in the job description of the proposed Human Resources position, which she suggested could be a remote position, reporting to the trustees and the Executive Director and not coming into the office as much. This would also mean that the stipend for the Executive Secretary would not be needed, as work would be included in the position. Regardless, Ms. Counihan noted that the trustees would have to have something in place for the April meeting. Mr. Murphy suggested the video recording option. The trustees agreed that the April meeting could include a Zoom option which would record the meeting, create a transcript, and allow trustees who did not want to come to the North County Branch where that meeting will be held an alternative option.

Old Business

Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request of the Town of Chestertown

This request has been put in.

Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request of the Foundation for the Kent County Public Library

Ms. Dowell reported that the Foundation is looking to someone else to cover the cost of computers, so she suggests making the more minor request of funding patio furniture to the Foundation for fiscal year 2025.

Executive Director Departure Update

Ms. Dowell reported that she and Mr. Walmsley had completed the budget. Mr. Walmsley will also be taking care of the Hearse House and book drop projects. Ms. Hagan will be taking care of the website project. On April 10, Ms. Dowell will be completing staff evaluations, determining fiscal year 2025 goals with staff, and sorting out succession planning. She plans to leave her successor a list of all of the important dates that she has accumulated over her employment so the staff, trustees, and new director know when things are due. The Executive Director Search Committee is taking care of the hiring of a new director, the Rock Hall Facility Committee is taking care of the Rock Hall project, policies have been reviewed, and summer reading plans are very well along. Ms. Dowell and Ms. Woodall are working on hiring a new Director of Branch services, while Director of Youth Services Honey Raines is working on filling the two youth services positions. Ms. Dowell reported that her last day in office would be April 22, though she will be using some leave, so her last official day is May 2. She will send out an email to amend

her letter of resignation with the new date. She will be moving to Guam, where she will be the supervising librarian at Anderson Air Force Base. She thanked the trustees. Ms. Baker noted that Ms. Dowell's impact on the library was tremendous, and that her legacy will be appreciated. Ms. Baker said that Ms. Dowell had taken good care to make a difference, and accomplished things like transforming summer reading. Ms. Dowell added that she will be going to the Public Library Association and the Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators conferences before she leaves to represent the Eastern Shore.

Ms. Counihan moved to move to closed session, Ms. Baker seconded the motion, and it was agreed upon unanimously. The open meeting adjourned at 6:20 pm, and entered into closed session. The meeting was reopened and immediately adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

**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: 3/25/24 Time: 6:37; Location: KEPL;
Motion to close meeting made by: Erin Cunniff Seconded by Andy Brown
Members in favor: An (Gina, Ann, Rachel Benson, John Murphy) Opposed: None
Abstaining: None; Absent: Jay Sisco, Perry Meekel, Amy Sowa

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."

Continued →

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) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	DISCUSS RECRUITMENT OF NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND SUCCESSION PLAN	PERSONNEL MATTER THAT AFFECTS MULTIPLE STAFF MEMBERS
§3-305(b) <input type="checkbox"/>		
§3-305(b) <input type="checkbox"/>		
§3-305(b) <input type="checkbox"/>		
§3-305(b) <input type="checkbox"/>		

4. This statement is made by John Murphy, 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: KCPL MEETING ROOM

Purpose(s): DISCUSS RECRUITMENT & SUCCESSION PLAN - EX. DIRECTOR

Members who voted to meet in closed session: JOHN, ERIN, ALEX, RACHEL

Persons attending closed session: " " " "

Authority under § 3-305 for the closed session: #1

Topics actually discussed: SUCCESSION PLANNING - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Actions taken: NONE

Each recorded vote: VOTE TO APPROVE CLOSED MEETING - UNANIMOUS.

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

Place: _____

Persons present: _____

Subjects discussed: _____

Closed. 647