

Kent County Library Board of Trustees

Finance Committee

Minutes of the February 14, 2023 Meeting

Present: Jay Silcox, Chairman; Amy Sine, Treasurer; Judi O'Brien, Vice President; Arnessa Dowell, Executive Director. Note: Mr. Silcox needed to leave the meeting early.

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

The minutes of the reviewed and adopted without change.

Grant submissions:

Ms. Dowell reported to the Committee about the FY2024 budget. Ms. Dowell noted that the budget request did not include funds for a "rebranding" that she would like to pursue to make library brand more inclusive and accessible, which she would like to do before proceeding with the website rebuild, which has already been funded by the Foundation.

Ms. Dowell informed the committee that the budget request is an increase of \$80K over the FY23 request. Ms. O'Brien requested clarification if that meant over our FY23 request or final FY23 budget. Ms. Dowell clarified that FY24 request for \$835K, is 5% more than our FY23 budget request, and 17% more than what the county provided.

Ms. Dowell reviewed the budget in terms of several expense items:

- Staffing: Restructuring and staffing reorganization, which she hopes to have in place by 4/1. Ms. Dowell noted that there is a projected increase in salaries, due to increase in the Maryland minimum wage. Ms. Sine asked if the projected salary increases included the funding for the Board secretary duties, Ms. Dowell said she would need to check with Chris Walmsley. Clarification was requested about the rate at which the Board Sec would be compensated.
- Employee health benefits: Ms. Dowell reviewed health insurance status and reimbursement.
- Rock Hall branch: Ms. Dowell discussed the situation with the Rock Hall branch, indicating that the property owner of the current branch location has stated that as long as he has no buyer for the property, he will not kick the library out at the end of the current lease.
- Security system upgrades: Ms. Dowell indicated that the security system was not functioning when she started, and there are costs included in the budget reflect getting security system to functioning and maintenance.
- Materials: Increases in materials as library expands into other towns within KC.
- Ms. Dowell indicated that computers need to be replaced. Last upgrade cost \$17,000. Ms. Sine asked about line item for computers, Ms. Dowell indicated it is typically capital, versus office supplies.

Ms. Dowell indicated that we have a quick turnaround on budget request, and that because she has not received our 6-month accruals yet, she doesn't know where we stand this year, complicating projecting into next year.

Mr. Silcox asked for an update on possibly housing of the Rock Hall branch in the Board of Education building. Ms. Dowell indicated that she had spoken to Dr. Couch, who said there was no room at RH BOE building. Ms. Sine volunteered to follow up with another BOE contact to determine if there is any other space.

Ms. O'Brien asked about ESRL and computers, and Ms. Dowell clarified that ESRL coordinates purchases of computer hardware.

Mr. Silcox asked for details about the proposed rebranding, suggesting that hiring a consultant for this might be costly. Ms. Dowell said that there is currently no style guide, the lettering of the logo is hard for some patrons to read, and the desire to make sure everything matches. Mr. Silcox asked if this was prompted by a patron complaint or public comment. Ms. Dowell responded that both were contributing to the need for rebranding. The committee discussed the potential cost of a rebrand, the lack of funding for it, and whether it might be pushed off to next year.

Discussion of what ESRL provides us: 5K marketing budget

Ms. Sine suggested that signage, marketing, etc., should be outlined in terms of the big picture, as in a 2-year plan. Ms. Dowell said she would put the 2-year plan in the Board packet. Need sound panels, Building "not designed to be a library in the modern era".

Ms. Sine asked what will happen in the event that the county flat funds our budget again, or we're given only a minimal increase. Ms. Dowell responded that some of the capital projects would have to come off the table, but that salaries, rents, utilities, healthcare are necessary, fixed expenses, everything else is negotiable. Ms. Dowell noted that previously our book budget needs were higher, but now that we're part of a consortium, book expenses can come down if needed.

Ms. Sine asked if the 2% salary increase would have to be rolled back if the County does not approve our budget request. Ms. Dowell said that would depend on how much they approve.

The budget presentation will be in April, but approved budget doesn't come until June.

Ms. Dowell discussed the different grants and grant application deadlines:

- Ms. Dowell reported that the Cubicals are being delivered on 2/23 or 2/24 and installed on 2/27, in Chestertown and North County.
- Ms. Dowell reported that we are approved to do full application to MHAA, and that she is working with Ara Lee from Heartland stories. The application is due March 6.
- Teen space grant from KCLMB Board, due March 1. Ms. Dowell would like to purchase VR goggles, staff training, furniture, and computers, as well as sound panels. Grant is ~\$30K. Notification comes in April.
- MD Capital Grant LOI due 2/24. Committee discussed different priority projects for Capital Grant request.

Ms. Dowell reported that she would be attending legislative day the following day, in which she would have 15 min meeting with state legislators, we need legislator to sign off. The committee discussed prioritizing the Rock Hall branch as our second request, as it would likely garner strong support from County Commissioners and our State Delegate.

The committee discussed the feasibility of several possible ways forward for the Rock Hall branch, including new construction, purchase of an existing structure.

Ms. Sine, Ms. Dowell, and Ms. O'Brien agreed that the order of priority for letters of intent to apply for MD Capital funding would be Rock Hall branch as priority 1, and the Chestertown branch meeting room as priority 2.

The committee discussed what was on the agenda for the upcoming meeting of the full board.

Meeting adjourned 3:41 pm.