

## **Kent County Library Board of Trustees**

### Minutes of the March 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; Chris Walmsley, Executive Secretary; Jeanne Geibel, Staff Member; three members of the public

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

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

Ms. Dowell reviewed the agenda for the meeting. No changes were made to the agenda.

#### Public Comment

Ms. Lori Walters welcomed the trustees, and expressed gratitude for the library and having the branch in Rock Hall. Ms. Walters shared that the book club, Pageturners, had returned to having regular meetings inside the branch location, and were looking forward to guidance from library staff. Ms. Walters noted that she would like to see a more equal level of service between the branches. Ms. Walters reviewed the program and session counts between the three locations based on the library events calendar and demonstrated that there was significantly less programming in the Rock Hall branch than in other locations. The trustees thanked Ms. Walters for her comments. Ms. O'Brien asked how often the book club met. Ms. Walters said that the group met monthly.

Ms. Sine asked what kinds of programs would Ms. Walters like to see in the branch. Ms. Walters identified technology help, environmental or history oriented programs may appeal to residents and visitors.

Mr. Ed Hatcher noted that he would like to echo the comments of Ms. Walters and share frustration over the size of the space, which limited the services that could be provided. Mr. Hatcher expressed that the library was able to provide a lot of services that were needed by residents of Rock Hall such as access to technology and a place to share resources.

Mr. Silcox noted that the trustees shared the desire to move into a larger space, and that several challenges had been encountered related to finding a new space. Ms. Dowell reviewed efforts to find a new space.

The trustees thanked Mr. Hatcher for his comments.

### Treasurer's Report

Ms. Sine reviewed the bank balances, noting that there was currently a balance of \$135,417.80 in the PNC Checking, \$31,239.46 in the PNC Money Market, and \$218,823.24 in the Peoples Bank account as of February 28, 2023.

### Friends of the Kent County Public Library

Ms. Dowell noted that the Friends had contributed over \$700,000 over the past 50 years, and had committed to \$20,000 for the next fiscal year.

### Foundation for the Kent County Public Library

Mr. Murphy reported that the foundation was waiting to hear about activity and progress related to the website redesign.

### Director's Report

Ms. Dowell reviewed the Goals & Action Items of the current fiscal year, noting that some had been achieved, and that progress had been made on most. Ms. Dowell noted that Ms. Natalie Donoso had accepted the position of Director of Tech Services and would be leading the website redesign.

Ms. Dowell presented a revised budget for Fiscal Year 2024, noting that the overall request had been increased based on a revised quote for computer upgrades, and that the county was asking for a larger increase in employee wages than the library, so the library's salary request was increased to align with the increase for county employees. Ms. Mckee moved to approve the budget as revised and recommended for Fiscal Year 2024. Ms. Sine seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Ms. Sine asked what the process would be once the library was notified of funding for the next fiscal year. Ms. Dowell said that a revised budget would be presented to the Finance Committee and then the Trustees based on the actual allocation, which the library expected to receive notice in late May or early June.

Ms. Dowell reviewed language from other libraries related to how subpoenas would be handled by staff and the library, and noted that she would like to incorporate language related to this to the staff handbook. Mr. Silcox noted that trustees should review the language provided and send comments to Ms. Dowell ahead of the next meeting.

Ms. Dowell provided updates related to several grants to the trustees. Ms. Dowell noted that the Cubicall meeting pods, which had funding provided through the LSTA grant process, had been received and installed. Ms. Dowell noted that there was a comment related to the ADA accessibility of the current pod, but that funding had limited the scope of the project. Ms. Mckee questioned what aspect of the Cubicall limited accessibility. Ms. Dowell noted that the Cubicall was above the floor, so there was a lip which did not allow a wheelchair inside, and that the space was small, limiting what would fit inside.

Ms. Dowell reported that she was awaiting edit suggestions from the grantor for the Maryland Historical Trust Grant. Ms. Dowell noted that she was working with the county related to matching funds for the grant.

Ms. Dowell informed the trustees that two letters of intent had been submitted related to capital projects for the next funding cycle, one of which was related to a new Rock Hall location, and another for funding the meeting room renovation in Chestertown. Ms. Dowell noted that matching funds had not been secured for either project. The trustees discussed the projects, the scopes of the projects, and potential hurdles in the grant process.

The trustees discussed how a facility in Rock Hall could be supported, and what funding options existed. Ms. Dowell noted that fund raising of some variety would need to occur related to a new facility.

Mr. Silcox created a committee to examine solutions to the Rock Hall facility. Mr. Silcox appointed Ms. Mckee as the committee chair, and Mr. Murphy as a member of the committee.

Ms. Dowell reported that the library would be receiving \$15,000 from the Local Management Board. The identified project was for sound dampening panels in the wave room.

Ms. Dowell noted that the library could request up to \$5,000 from the Town of Chestertown. Ms. Dowell informed the trustees that she planned to request funding for patio furniture for the Chestertown location, and identified specifics for the furniture such as movable.

Ms. Dowell reported that the website redesign had a meeting scheduled for later in the week to begin the process, and that an update would be coming following the meeting. Mr. Silcox asked if Ms. Donoso would be continuing as the Youth Services Director. Ms. Dowell said that she would not be, but that the position had been advertised internally, and that candidates were under review.

Ms. Dowell provided the trustees with updates related to the Capital Projects Priorities for the upcoming fiscal year.

Old Business

## Telework Policy

Mr. Silcox noted that the current version of the telework policy was contained in the packet. Ms. Dowell noted that the telecommuting policy recently adopted by ESRL was also included in the packet for comparison. The trustees discussed similarities and differences between the policies. Mr. Silcox asked if there would be the opportunity for remote work or telecommuting for all employees, and Ms. Dowell noted that all employees could perform some aspects of their position remotely. The trustees discussed what would qualify as telecommuting, how much use the policy would see, and if there were specific needs identified by staff for remote work.

## Memorandum of Understanding - Chestertown Library, Inc. Building

Ms. Dowell reported that she had met with the Literary Club and Chestertown Library, Inc., who wanted the language related to the length of the memorandum to include in perpetuity for their agreement. Ms. Dowell noted that some projects were awaiting the finalized memorandum to move forward. Mr. Silcox questioned if there were downsides to the language. Ms. Dowell answered that the memorandum included use of the space for as long as it exists by the Literary Club and the Chestertown Library, Inc. The trustees discussed language that may work for the group. Ms. O'Brien suggested the addition of language that the agreement would stand until or unless it is modified by the agreement of all parties.

Ms. Counihan moved to approve the memorandum as revised. Ms. O'Brien seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

## New Business

### Memorandum of Understanding - Friends of the Kent County Public Library

Ms. O'Brien presented a memorandum to clarify the expectations between the Friends and the Library. Ms. O'Brien noted that the Friends had reviewed the document and approved it as presented. The trustees discussed the obligations of the library as laid out in the agreement.

Ms. O'Brien moved to approve the memorandum as presented. Ms. Mckee seconded the motion. Mr. Silcox called for discussion. Ms. Counihan questioned if the proposed renovation of the meeting room would impact the memorandum. Ms. O'Brien noted that the memorandum left room for alternatives to the meeting room. No further discussion was had. Mr. Silcox called for a vote, and the motion was approved unanimously.

### 50th Anniversary Celebration - Friends of the Kent County Public Library

Ms. O'Brien noted that she was unable to attend the previous meeting of the Friends, and was unsure if there was any discussion related to a celebration. The trustees discussed what a celebration or recognition of the significant contribution by the organization may look like. Mr. Silcox created a Friends of the Library Anniversary Committee, chaired by Ms. Baker. Mr. Silcox appointed Ms. Counihan and Ms. Sine to serve on the committee.

#### Retirement Celebration - Ms. Jeanne Geibel

Ms. Dowell reviewed the celebrations planned for Ms. Geibel's retirement. Ms. Dowell noted that the library would be open from 10 am to 4 pm, and closed for the celebrations between 4 pm and 6 pm to enable staff to attend the events. The trustees discussed some additional ways to recognize and celebrate Ms. Geibel.

#### COVID-19 Protocols

Ms. Dowell reviewed the current procedures, noting that the library was posting signs related to the current COVID community level as presented by the CDC. Ms. Dowell noted that the current Public Health Emergency was scheduled to expire on May 11, 2023. The trustees discussed what should happen following the end of the Public Health Emergency. The trustees decided that a transitional statement informing patrons of resources, which would be displayed for a month following the end of the Public Health Emergency.

No further business was brought before the trustees. Ms. Baker moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Mckee seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:41 pm.