

Kent County Public Library Board of Trustees

Minutes of the April 30, 2024 Meeting

Present: Jay Silcox, President; John Murphy, Vice President; Amy Sine, Treasurer; Peggy Mckee, Trustee; Rachel Durso, Trustee; Chris Walmsley, Director of Office Administration; two members of the public

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm.

The trustees introduced themselves, reviewing how long they had been on the board and their current role with the trustees.

Mr. Silcox reviewed the agenda for the meeting.

Disposition of Minutes

Ms. Durso moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Ms. Mckee seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Public Comment

Ms. Jean Taylor stated that there was a desire for Saturday hours at the branches. Ms. Taylor cited that this would give people an opportunity to access the computers. The trustees discussed what services may be needed most during times that the library was currently closed, and how the current use statistics may inform how hours could be adjusted or changed.

Ms. Gladys Russum introduced herself and asked if there was a specific budget for each library location and how it was allocated. Mr. Silcox stated that a lot of the distribution was based on staffing, hours of operation, and usage. Ms. Russum continued that she encountered a lot of people who did not know that the library existed. The trustees discussed options to raise awareness of the library. Ms. Taylor suggested inviting the local newspaper to cover programs and other events may be a way to increase awareness of everything occurring in the library.

Ms. Sine asked if there were specific things they would like to see in their local branch. Ms. Russum stated that she would like more new books in the library.

Ms. Taylor asked if there was an interim director. Mr. Silcox stated that there was not at present. Ms. Durso noted that the hiring committee was reviewing applicants. The trustees, Ms. Russum, and Ms. Taylor discussed options related to the promotion of the library including updating the current sign, television and newspaper promotions, and ways to partner with the town of Galena itself.

Ms. Russum noted that there were Saturday hours prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and that the people in Galena would like to see the library grow as it was currently a big part of their lives.

Officer Reports

Ms. Sine noted that there had not yet been a notice from the Commissioners related to the funding request for Fiscal Year 2025. Ms. Sine reported that Ms. Dowell had presented to the commissioners following the Finance Committee meeting.

Ms. Sine noted that the electric usage for the library was still being investigated.

Ms. Sine continued that Ms. Dowell submitted a letter of intent to apply for a capital grant for a replacement roof of the main branch of the Kent County Public Library. Ms. Sine noted that the grant would potentially cover half the cost of the roof, which would relieve some burden from the county.

Ms. Sine noted that the check for the book drop replacements was received from the Foundation for the Kent County Public Library, and that new book drops had been ordered for the North County and Chestertown locations. The trustees discussed options related to the Rock Hall book drop and the remaining funding.

Ms. Sine stated that the LGIT renewal packet was in the supplemental materials, and that the refund had been received, which was lower than budgeted but not significantly.

Secretary's Report

Mr. Silcox stated that the secretary had provided a written update. Mr. Silcox reviewed the update, which included that the whistleblower policy would ideally be presented at the May meeting.

Foundation Representative

Mr. Murphy reported that the Foundation for the Kent County Public Library had met on Friday, April 26 and had discussed the Rock Hall facility. Mr. Murphy noted that the discussion was a good, open discussion. Mr. Murphy shared that the Mid Shore Community Foundation had noted that they would like to give grants to libraries, and would be open to applications for grant funding in July, closing on October 1. The trustees discussed funding options and grant submission.

Mr. Silcox stated that he had presented at the Foundation meeting on the book drop replacements, the Rock Hall facility, the website, and the director transition.

Friends of the Kent County Public Library Representative

Ms. Durso reported that the Friends had met on April 6, at which they noted that they had mailed out close to 400 newsletters and membership renewals. Ms. Durso continued that a lot of members had given additional funds, and there were some new lifetime members of the Friends. Ms. Durso noted that the Friends were looking to update their website.

Mr. Durso stated that she was soliciting comments from the group about what they would like to see from the new Executive Director, which would be shared with the hiring committee and trustees.

Committee Reports

Rock Hall Facility Committee

Ms. Mckee stated that capital grants through the state could not be pursued this year due to a lack of committed funding, but that some supporters still had a grand vision for the library. The trustees discussed options for the library facility in Rock Hall including revisiting the civic center, a few rental options, and available funding for these locations.

The trustees discussed a draft Memorandum of Understanding between the town of Rock Hall and the library related to a facility.

The trustees discussed next steps and if the library should renew the current facility or try to identify a new location.

Executive Director Search Committee

Ms. Durso reported that herself and Ms. Counihan had been attending senior staff meetings to help maintain continuity. Ms. Durso noted that there had been three applicants for the position so far with varying levels and types of experience, who would be rated and scored before Monday, with qualifying candidates being invited to an interview. Ms. Durso stated that Ms. Annie Woodall had attended a training related to best practices for hiring a director and provided a written report of outcomes from the training. The trustees discussed the interview process and costs related to advertising.

Library Representative Report

Mr. Murphy left the meeting.

Mr. Walmsley reviewed the budget statement and projection for Fiscal Year 2024, noting that the library was still on track to underspend this fiscal year. Mr. Walmsley noted that the insurance renewal for the next fiscal year would be 6.1% higher than the current fiscal year.

Mr. Walmsley reviewed current grants with the trustees, noting that the book drop replacement grant had been reviewed earlier in the meeting.

Mr. Walmsley presented an Employee Wellness Program for the trustees to review and approve. The trustees asked questions related to the potential costs associated with the program. Mr. Walmsley noted that the program called for employees to identify costs associated with requests, and while there was no stated maximum cost, those approving the forms could deny based on the cost. The trustees discussed the language used in the program, revising the document to better clarify between this program and formal accommodation requests under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Mr. Silcox moved to approve the program as revised. Ms. Mckee seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Old Business

Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

This item was tabled until the next meeting.

Trustee Recruitment

Mr. Silcox appointed Ms. Sine as chair of the trustee recruitment committee with Ms. Mckee and Mr. Murphy serving on the committee.

New Business

Public Information Act Request

Mr. Walmsley informed the trustees that a public information act request had been received by the library and that he had reached out to the county attorney related to guidance regarding the request.

No further business was brought before the trustees.

Ms. Sine moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Durso seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:12 pm.