Kent County Public Library Board of Trustees

Board Meeting Minutes of: September 29th, 2025

Call to Order

Present:

Rachel Durso, President; **Melissa Walters**, Vice President; **John Murphy**, Treasurer; **Erin Counihan**, Secretary; **Clara Rankin**, Trustee; **Bruce Riedel**, Trustee; **Deborah Westerland**, Trustee; **Annie Woodall**, Director of Public Services; **Tobi Brown**, Executive Secretary

Ms. Durso called the meeting into order at 4:33pm and noted all trustees were present.

Disposition of Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meetings were reviewed. Mr. Murphy moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Mr. Riedel seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Review of Agenda

The agenda for the meeting was reviewed. Ms. Durso added a discussion about the newest revision of the Meeting Room Policy.

Public Comment

Ms. Durso noted that there were no members of the public present.

Officer Reports

Treasurer

Mr. Murphy reviewed the bank balances and noted there was $40, 525 in the PNC Checking account, $21,247 in the PNC Money Market account, and $219,533 in the Truist Money Market account.

Mr. Murphy noted that, as per the motion at the July Board meeting, all funds previously housed in the Peoples Bank Savings Account were moved to the Truist Money Market account. Mr. Murphy noted that the transfer occurred on August 19th and is already seeing a higher yield than with the previous account.

Mr. Murphy noted that there was a recent balance transfer of$10,000 from the PNC Money Market account to the PNC Checking account. Ms. Durso explained that this transfer was made to cover upcoming expenses while the library waits for grant reimbursement.

Secretary

Ms. Counihan noted that the library received a memorial donation from a community member. Ms. Counihan stated she was preparing a letter of gratitude for the donor.

Ms. Counihan asked the Trustees how their new communication tools were working for them. The Trustees discussed the effectiveness of these tools.

Friends of the Kent County Public Library

Ms. Rankin stated there were no recent updates from the Friends of the Library.

Foundation for the Kent County Public Library

Ms. Westerland noted the Foundation met on Friday, September 26th; Ms. Durso and Mr. Walmsley (Director of Office Administration) were in attendance. Ms. Westerland stated that Senior Staff sent two funding proposals to the Foundation, a request for collection development funds and new shelving. Ms. Durso stated that the proposals were created in collaboration with Senior Staff and aimed to address shortcomings in the current budget that directly affect library services. Ms. Durso noted that by having library representation present, the Foundation was able to discuss the library's collection development process.

Ms. Westerland stated that the Foundation unanimously approved the proposals, which were estimated at between $28,000-$30,000. Ms. Westerland said that the Foundation will be raising funds until January to meet these proposal goals.

Reports of Committees

Finance Committee

Mr. Murphy noted that the library ended FY2025 under budget. Mr. Murphy stated that the Finance Committee was looking for ways to improve cashflow for FY2026.

Mr. Murphy proposed a motion to move library reserve funds to cover upcoming expenses for the Chestertown Library Inc. Building renovation project. Ms. Durso stated that the library was expecting grant funds for the project and explained that the proposed cashflow transfer would cover expenses until the grant was awarded.

Mr. Murphy moved to transfer $75,000 in reserve funds between library accounts to cover upcoming expenses for the Chestertown Library Inc. Building renovation. Ms. Durso seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

New Board Member Scouting

The Trustees discussed recent efforts to recruit candidates to fill the upcoming vacancy on the Board. Ms. Durso noted that the application deadline is Friday, October 3rd, and that the Trustees have received a few applications so far. Ms. Durso stated that the goal was to propose a new Trustee candidate to the County Commissioners by the end of October.

Ms. Durso noted that the Ms. Rankin, Ms. Westerland, and Mr. Murphy are members of the Board Member Onboarding Committee

Librarian Report

The Librarian's Report was provided by Ms. Woodall.

Facilities

Ms. Woodall provided progress updates on the Chestertown Library Inc. building renovation. Ms. Woodall noted the progress of the demolition and construction, recently paid expenses, and collaboration with the Women's Literary Club.

Collections

Ms. Woodall provided an overview of recent collection developments.

Ms. Woodall discussed the library's new Creator Studio Kits. Ms. Woodall explained these kits were grant-funded by the Upper Shore Regional Council with support from the Kent County Department of Economic & Tourism Development. Ms. Woodall explained the kits' contents, their intended purpose, and upcoming initiatives to promote public interest.

Ms. Woodall reviewed recent developments in collection and material funding. Ms. Woodall explained that the 2025 Hedgelawn Foundation Grant provided funds to purchase and add materials to the Rock Hall Branch collection.

Ms. Woodall reviewed recent changes in the shelving layout at each of the three library branches.

Programming

Ms. Woodall provided statistics and feedback from the 2025 Summer Reading Program. Ms. Woodall stated that the staff felt that the program was an overall success, with collaborative feedback being considered for next year's program.

Ms. Woodall provided an overview of upcoming library programs and initiatives for Fall.

Staff

Ms. Woodall noted that the Branch Manager position was now vacant. Ms. Woodall noted that the Senior Staff created a temporary solution for staffing concerns created by this vacancy. Ms. Woodall stated that though KCPL has the staff capacity to cover all branch operating hours, the current solution is not sustainable long term.

Ms. Woodall reviewed the key takeaways from the September 26th all staff training day.

Ms. Counihan noted that Ms. Durso and herself would be in attendance of the October 3rd all staff meeting. Ms. Woodall stated that Trustee attendance was encouraged to help improve KCPL Staff-Trustee communication and collaboration.

Old Business

Staff Handbook Overview and Updates

Ms. Woodall noted that the Senior Staff was reviewing the Staff Handbook. Ms. Woodall stated that the revisions should be finished and put before the Trustees for approval by the next board meeting. Ms. Counihan added that she was assisting with the revisions to provide Trustee input. Ms. Durso explained that these handbook revisions were being made to allow staff insight, noting that previous revisions had not been reviewed with the staff before being implemented. Ms. Woodall stated that the new revisions also provided updates to ensure the library remains within the confines of the law.

Meeting Room Policy Revision

Ms. Durso stated that additional revisions were needed to the Meeting Room Policy to address concerns raised by staff. Ms. Durso stated that the new revisions removed the Chestertown patio area as a requestable space. Ms. Rankin asked if there was a reason why the patio was not requestable. Ms. Woodall stated that the reasoning revolved around logistical concerns when reserving an exterior space. Ms. Durso added that exterior events can cause safety concerns since they are unmonitored by KCPL staff.

Mr. Murphy moved to approve the proposed revisions to the Meeting Room Policy. Ms. Counihan seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Mr. Riedel departed the meeting at 5:30pm.

New Business

Revisions of KCPL Board of Trustees Bylaws

Ms. Durso stated that the bylaws should reflect the Trustees' decision to revise the position of Executive Secretary. Ms. Durso advised editing the bylaws to remove language around the Executive Secretary's term and stipend, as both are no longer relevant to the position. The Trustees discussed this revision of the bylaws.

Ms. Counihan moved to approve the removal of the Executive Secretary's term and stipend from the KCPL Board of Trustees Bylaws. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Mr. Murphy noted that the Trustees previously discussed revising the bylaws to shorten the Trustee term from 5 years to 3 years. The trustees discussed this potential change and the logistics surrounding it. Ms. Woodall advised reaching out to the County Commissioners to discuss revisions that change the term or expectations of the Trustees. Ms. Durso agreed and stated that further revisions to the bylaws would be postponed until the proposed changes were cleared under Maryland law.

Ms. Durso proposed exploring revisions to Board's expectations of the Executive Director within the bylaws. Ms. Durso expressed a need to revise the bylaws to clarify language and communication around the expectations between the KCPL Board of Trustees and the Executive Director. The Trustees agreed to discuss this further at a future meeting.

The Trustees went on to discuss further potential revisions to the bylaws.

Mr. Murphy referenced the July 28th board meeting minutes and asked about the status of the revisions made to the Rock Hall Branch building lease. Ms. Woodall stated that she was unsure of the status but stated that Mr. Walmsley may be able to provide more insight.

Kent County Public Library Board of Trustees

Board Meeting Minutes of: September 29th, 2025

Closed Session

Mr. Murphy moved to close the meeting. Ms. Rankin seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. The meeting went into closed session at 5:34pm.

Adjournment

The closed session ended at 6:03pm. No further business was brought before the trustees.

Ms. Durso moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Counihan seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:05pm.

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: ______; Time:____; Location:________________;
Motion to close meeting made by: __________________ Seconded by____________________;
Members in favor: _____________________________; Opposed: __________________________;
Abstaining: ___________________________; Absent: ____________________________________.

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) **( )**		
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4. **This statement is made by ______________________________, Presiding Officer.**

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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: ____
Purpose(s):____
Members who voted to meet in closed session: ____
Persons attending closed session:____
Authority under § 3-305 for the closed session:____
Topics actually discussed: ____
Actions taken:____
Each recorded vote:____

➢ **For a meeting recessed to perform an administrative function (§ 3-104)**: Time:______
Place:____
Persons present: ____
Subjects discussed: ____