

Kent County Public Library Board of Trustees

Minutes of the October 30, 2023 Meeting

Present: Jay Silcox, President; Judi O'Brien, Vice President; Amy Sine, Treasurer; Erin Counihan, Secretary; Peggy McKee, Trustee; John Murphy, Trustee; Arnessa Dowell, Executive Director; Chris Walmsley, Staff Member; Karen Dower, Staff Member; Olivia Coleman, Executive Secretary; Chris Lehman, Auditor; Jeanee Edwards, Senior Accountant for Kent County.

Mr. Silcox called the meeting to order at 4:31 pm.

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

Ms. Dowell reviewed the meeting agenda.

Public Comment

Mr. Silcox opened for public comment, and there was none.

Audit Presentation

Mr. Lehman began the audit presentation. He explained that what was audited was the June 30, 2023 financial statement, and that there were no instances found of fraud, that the auditing process had the full cooperation of library management in receiving all of the records necessary for the audit, and that there were no audit adjustments to the items provided. He noted that there was a negative change in the net position of the library of \$33,898, leaving the entity at a total net position of \$481,150. Mr. Lehman then went on to explain the audit process to the trustees. First, they assessed the control environment, which they determined to be effective. Then they evaluated key processes, including treasury, estimation, financial reporting, expenditures, payroll, revenue and fixed assets, all of which was determined to be effective for the period under audit. Then, the determined net position was explained. The library's total assets were determined to be \$787,329, with liabilities \$306,179, leaving the library at a net position of \$481,150. The library's revenue was \$1,090,721 and its expenditures were \$1,124,619 resulting in the negative change to the net position of \$33,898. Mr. Lehman added that he had no items of concern like fraud to report. He then provided the trustees with his contact information. Mr. Silcox noted that there was a plan in early stages to look into reduce holding in the unrestricted fund. He said that he would reach out to Mr. Lehman before the next Kent County Public Library Finance Committee meeting to discuss this. Mr. Walmsley requested a soft copy of the audit presentation packet be sent to him so he could present it to the state. Mr. Murphy, who was

attending digitally, asked that a hard copy of the packet be set aside for him. Mr. Lehman and Ms. Edwards then left. Ms. Sine moved to accept the audit, Ms. Counihan seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Officer Reports

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Sine reviewed the current bank balances with the trustees, which were \$218,918 in People's Bank, \$65,516 in PNC Checking, and \$31,241 in PNC Savings. She also noted that all funds for fiscal year 2023 to be sent by the Eastern Shore Regional Library had been received.

Finance Committee Report

The finance committee had their meeting on October 17th. They discussed the November 6th meeting at 6 pm for the Rock Hall branch discussion, which will be addressed in committee reports. They also discussed the need for funds for soundproofing the library and updating the patron computers. They were looking at ways to fund these, and one of the options was reducing the reserved fund. Mr. Walmsley sent them some historical information about this, which they will discuss at their next meeting, and present to the trustees. Ms. Sine explained that anything taken out of the reserved funds will go against fiscal year 2025's budget, as \$100,000 is reserved for that. If this is reduced, there will not be enough funds to make a workable budget. It was next noted that the Foundation for the Kent County Public Library had agreed to the grant request for new material drop boxes. The foundation will reimburse funds used to acquire new drop boxes, up to the full amount spent. They will only be able to provide as much money as they have received at the end of their annual collection. It was explained that, generally, they send out letters for the collection in November, close the collection mid-January, and send money to the library in February. Mr. Silcox added that the Disparities Grant had provided a total of \$5,000 to the library, \$3,500 for the KCPL Cares initiative and \$1,500 for outreach. Ms. Sine asked if this grant would free up some funds, which Ms. Dowell confirmed. She added that an additional \$1,800 had been given to the library by the Women's Literary Group. Ms. Dowell explained that the library would use the funds that it had been granted before going into the reserve fund. Ms. Sine asked what money from the Eastern Shore Regional Library could be used for, and Ms. Dowell explained that it was already budgeted for, and that the KCPL Cares initiative fell under the \$18,000 programming budget.

Secretary's Report

Ms. Counihan began by saying that she had heard from Ms. O'Brien as the Friends of the Kent County Public Library representative that one of their board members had passed away. She had a card for the trustees to sign to express their condolences to the Friends. She added that she received a letter from The Chestertown Library, Inc. including \$1,843.63 to be used for

purchasing books. Mr. Walmsley noted that this amount had not been budgeted for, as it is a different amount each year and sometimes comes with specific instructions for what the funds must be used on.

Foundation for the Kent County Public Library Representative

Mr. Murphy reported that the Foundation for the Kent County Public Library had their annual meeting on Friday October 27th, 2023. Mr. Murphy had not been able to attend, but left a report for them detailing the accomplishments of the library through the past year. He also presented them with concerns including the new Rock Hall branch library and an update on that, the behavior being exhibited by some library patrons and how there were plans to address this with acoustic dampening, and the need for new public computers including the link to a Google document with their use statistics.

Friends of the Kent County Public Library Representative

Ms. O'Brien was not yet present, so it was noted that their next meeting would be Thursday November 2, 2023, and the trustees agreed to return to this item when Ms. O'Brien arrived, which she did following the employee introduction in the Librarian's Report. She discussed the passing of one of the Friends board members, and the card that would be presented to their board in condolence. Ms. O'Brien also noted that the Friends book sale had been held, but they had not met since so there was not yet an earnings total to present. Finally, she told the trustees that their 50th anniversary celebration was to be held on Thursday November 2, 2023 at 5:30 pm in the Wave Room, and that Mr. Silcox had been invited to speak on behalf of the trustees.

Committee Reports

Rock Hall Facility Update

Ms. McKee began by informing the trustees that the Rock Hall facility community meeting would be on Monday November 6, 2023 at St John's Roman Catholic Church in Rock Hall, Maryland. She explained that several groups in Rock Hall had posted the flier online, and would be asked to do so again on Friday and Monday to promote the meeting. Ms. McKee had many flyers printed and had them posted around town and handed out. The principal of Rock Hall Elementary School agreed to speak to faculty about the meeting and ask them to send any ideas for the new Rock Hall branch to Ms. McKee in an email, and to send out the flier to parents in an email. The Town of Rock Hall will also be posting the signs. Ms. McKee will also be contacting two daycares in the town to see if they will send fliers home with the children they work with. The trustees then discussed some ideas for the branch that had been suggested so far, like a quiet space for people with neurodiversity.

Librarian's Report

Employee Introduction

The new Director of Branch Services, Karen Dower, introduced herself to the trustees. Each trustee introduced themselves to her in turn.

Hearse House Update

Ms. Dowell informed the trustees that she and Mr. Silcox had been in discussion with the County Administrator Ms. Shelly Heller about the Hearse House Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Ms. Heller had reported to Mr. Silcox about two weeks prior regarding her discussion with the county administrator in an email. Mr. Silcox interpreted her email to say that the existing MOU could be left unmodified and referenced in another MOU between only the Kent County Public Library and the Kent County Commissioners.

African American Heritage Preservation Grant

The organization offering the grant asked for more information from the library on how the theme of Black resistance applies to the library's work and programming. The library supplied them with this information. They will be in touch with the library again in December.

Memorandum of Understanding with Choptank Community Health

Ms. Dowell noted that the CORE committee looked over this MOU and found no issue with it. She explained the agreement to the trustees. Once a week, Choptank would have access to the study pods to facilitate behavioral health appointments. Ms. Sine asked for clarification on how the reservations would work, and Ms. Dowell explained that on Thursdays the study pods would only be available for these telehealth appointments. Mr. Murphy asked if Choptank would be using the library's computers for this, and Ms. Dowell explained that they would be bringing their own iPads in both Chestertown and North County, where they can use the study pods. In Rock Hall, they will bring a bus that they will park near the branch and do in person appointments; they will simply require use of the branch bathroom. The Rock Hall portion will additionally be in collaboration with the Rock Hall Town Council. Ms. Counihan motioned to approve the MOU, Mr. Silcox seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Website Update

Ms. Dowell told the trustees that the library was currently working on a site map for the website and that potential designs for the new logo were being evaluated. She also noted that the library had submitted their request for reimbursement for the first half of the project payment to the Foundation for the Kent County Public Library, but had not yet received a check. Ms. Dowell added that Director of Technical Services Ms. Natalie Hagan would send the trustees a link to the website renovation timeline.

Training Days

Ms. Dowell reviewed the proposed training days. The January or February safety training day will cover deescalation as requested by the trustees. It will also cover other matters including active shooter and shelter in place training. She also noted her belief that the Maryland Library Association conference training day was important and useful for the staff. Mr. Silcox clarified that the November 15, 2023 training day was a reschedule of the original November 17, 2023 training day, the December 14, 2023 training day was new, the January or February training day was being proposed, and the May 9, 2024 training day was new. The original schedule had included 2 full and 2 half days, but the proposed update would include 3 full and 2 half days for training. Ms. McKee motioned to approve the new training day schedule and Ms. Sine seconded the motion. Mr. Murphy asked Ms. Dowell if an additional full day in place of the 2 half days would be more efficient, but Ms. Dowell noted that the nature of the half day topics made them uncondusive to a full day training schedule. Ms. Counihan added that she would be present for the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility training as a representative of the trustees. The training schedule was then unanimously passed.

Old Business

Study Pod Policy

Ms. Dowell explained that a line had been added to the policy to say that any MOU regarding the study pods would supersede the policy. Mr. Silcox motioned to include the addition, Ms. McKee seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

New Business

Main Branch Signage

The Friends of the Kent County Public Library had brought up a concern to the trustees that there was not enough signage at the front or rear of the library property denoting that it was a library, no notification of parking at the rear of the property, and no highway sign indicating the presence of the library. The signage that is present at the rear of the library property is obscured by the landscaping, and there is no town signage for the library like there is for the hospital. There is a road sign in Rock Hall that points to the old branch that could potentially be repurposed for the Chestertown branch, or used for the new Rock Hall branch. The potential implementation of this involving the Town of Chestertown and the County was discussed. Mr. Murphy will get in contact with the County sign manager at Public Works, and Ms. McKee will inquire with Rock Hall authorities regarding the potential use of the old sign.

Closed Session

Mr. Silcox moved to enter closed session at 5:40, which Ms. Sine seconded, and this was agreed upon unanimously.