

Carroll County Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
Library Headquarters
November 17, 2021
Minutes

1. Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum

Ms. Griffith called the meeting to order at 6:08 pm and declared there was quorum.

Present:

Garima Chaturvedi	Leza Griffith	Virginia Harrison
Joyce Muller	David Peloquin	Karen Soisson

Staff Present at Open Meeting:

Andrea Berstler	Jen Bishop	Tony Eckard	Nancy Haile
Bob Kuntz	Patsy Linville	Lisa Picker	Nadine Rosendale
Terri Simmons	Muffie Smith	Dorothy Stoltz	Stephanie Szymanski
Joe Thompson			

2. Close Meeting to Discuss Personnel Matter

Ms. Chaturvedi moved to close the meeting to discuss a personnel matter. Ms. Harrison seconded. Approval was unanimous.

The meeting closed at 6:09 pm.

Reopen Meeting

Ms. Soisson moved to reopen the meeting. Mr. Peloquin seconded. Approval was unanimous.

The meeting reopened at 7:45 pm.

3. Award Presentation

As a member of the Citizen's for Maryland Ms. Muller, who is on the Citizen's for Maryland Libraries Board presented Jen Bishop, Exploration Commons Manager with the Davis McCarn award which recognizes the teaching of technology throughout Maryland libraries. Ms. Muller thanked Bob Kuntz for writing the letter of recommendation.

4. Minutes of October 27, 2021

Ms. Muller moved to accept the Minutes of October 27, 2021. Ms. Soisson seconded. Approval was unanimous.

Ms. Griffith read the following statement: On October 27, 2021 the Board voted to close the meeting per the Maryland Open Meetings Law Section 3-305(b) to discuss a personnel matter. Approval was unanimous, the meeting closed at 6:06 p.m.

5. Staff Report – Summer Reading 2021

Patsy Linville, Library Associate - Children's from Eldersburg, the Summer Reading Team Leader, reported on a very successful program. Tails and Tales began in the land of unknown through the guidance of the 2020 team with lots of questions on what would engage the community. The end results included 293 virtual program views, 1,660 program kits, 98 attendance for in-person programming, and 14 different virtual raffles that supported local businesses. The systemwide summer reading kick-off featured Chris Vaughn, a CCPS physical ed teacher, who produced a virtual program describing fun learning activities to do at home with the library's summer kick-off take-home kit. Six hundred kits were distributed countywide. There were many other programs that included Magician Mike Rose, Sock Puppet Making Kit, and a balloon STEAM car kit for teens. There was also a tie-in with the Summer Celebrating America program. The Beanstack software allows participants to include reviews, pictures and comments. The school system really likes seeing the reviews and quotes. CCPS's media and reading specialists play an important role in engaging the students and encouraging participation in the summer program. Numbers include 7,100 registered readers with 41% completed, 3.4 million minutes read, 62,000 books read, and 4,000 posted reviews. Ms. Linville thanked the team of Lynn Beard, Angie Knight, Shelby O'Leary, Maureen Aversa, Liz Jones, Lisa Picker, Keri Severino, Mandy Davis, Denise Laird, Maria Vilcek, and Kayla King. Next year's theme is Oceans of Possibilities. The Board thanked Ms. Linville for the report and Mr. Thompson noted that Ms. Linville is amazing at engaging little kids in storytime.

6. Financial Statement

Mr. Eckard presented the financials through October 31, 2021. Cash balances are a little over \$3 million, \$862 above last year's number. Revenues are \$17,000 above last year at this time. Salary savings are at \$207,000 a third of that is an adjustment and will go away with accrual. Almost half comes from savings of hourly staff use. In expenses computer maintenance is overspent by \$107,000 due to invoice timing. Computer equipment is overspent due to the purchase of battery backups, budget will catch up. The Exploration Commons Fundraising report reflects another good month largely on one gift from the Kahlert foundation. Ms. Berstler said that we received 2 grants from Kahlert for \$75,000 each. Three weeks ago we received an unexpected third check. After calling Mr. Kahlert to say this was received, Mr. Kahlert asked what we could use it for and we told him \$25,000 could be used to start a fund to cover costs of programs as a scholarship fund for partners like the ARC, Target Inc, Change and the Boys and Girls Club; the other \$50,000 could go towards building costs. Mr. Kahlert has allowed us to keep the third \$75,000 which brings the Kahlert Foundation to \$225,000 in donations and is now the largest private donor. The Makerspace will be named for the Kahlert Foundation. We are in contact with the Community Foundation about starting a fund there with the Kahlert money to be used for the scholarships. Mr. Eckard gave information on estimates of the final costs of the Exploration Commons project and that we will probably still need approximately \$300,000 to cover those costs. We hope to have solid costs for the project in early December. It was noted that we will be requesting the \$1,066,000 in capital funds that the Commissioners approved towards Exploration Commons, that will be reflected in the County Funding line item. Staff will also be discussing the unexpended carryover from FY 22 with the Board and Commissioners to use some of that towards the project. The State has also approved tax credits towards the project but hasn't given permission to place them as yet.

7. Correspondence

A thank you letter from Sharon Hafner Yingling was noted. CCPL had wonderful press in the *Carroll County Times* and staff received a delightful voice message from Jan Flora, former Friends Board member, singing the praises of the Finksburg Library staff.

8. Citizens Time

No citizens were present.

9. Staff Association Activities

Nancy Haile, Materials Manager – Children and the secretary of the Staff Association gave highlights from Association President Emily Ogg's video report for Staff Day. The video explained the history of the Association. At the general meeting Vanessa Hill was voted in as President and Tina Mawhinney as Vice President. This was Emily Ogg's final term as president. This year the Humane Society was chosen as the Association's charity, \$200 was donated by staff. Canned goods are being collected by staff to donate to Carroll County Food Sunday. At this time, 104 staff members have joined the Association. The Board thanked Ms. Haile for the report.

10. Executive Director's Report

Ms. Berstler noted that meetings with the Strategic Planning groups are almost complete. The first report to the Board will be in July 2022. With a 3-4 year plan, not all strategies will be worked on at the same time. Staff have been great in giving feedback and input and helping develop the strategies above the Strategic Planning group including recommendations from the EDI Taskforce. Staff Day was great even virtually. We will be holding vaccination clinics at all our branches. Ms. Berstler said it will be sad to see Dorothy Stoltz leave us at the end of December and now Muffie Smith has announced her retirement at the end of January 2022. Ms. Berstler and Ms. Picker are working on creating a new position called Development and Community Engagement Manager to fill Ms. Stoltz's shoes. The next Board meeting is scheduled on Wednesday, December 15, the EC Donor event will be on Thursday, December 16, and the ribbon cutting will be held on Friday, December 17. It will be a very busy week.

11. EC50 Update

Bob Kuntz reported on progress of the project. One month away from the ribbon cutting grand opening, the contractor is moving along quickly. The HVAC units are on the roof and will be fired up by the end of the week with some balancing work to be done. The hoods in the kitchen haven't been run and the fire systems need to be tested. There was a walk through of the tower and main gallery space. 99% is done inside except for paint touch ups, and signage. In the branch upstairs the mechanical work above the ceiling is being done, then additional lights, drywall, and painting will hopefully be completed for a possible Dec 6 re-opening of the branch. There are a few more partner tours planned. Today Commissioner Wantz came through and was very happy and saw the potential for the space. EC Manager, Jen Bishop said staff is getting ready for programming to start as soon as the space is open. They have done some live online cooking programs. Tomorrow is a Talking Turkey program. Staff is getting excited to do the programming and have modeled their chef coats and aprons for program attendees. Inspections for the elevator, fire systems, electrical, plumbing and the kitchen with the health department all still need to occur. The health department has been working with staff all during the design phase and have been very helpful along the way. There will be regular health department inspections however as part of the County, CCPL won't have to pay for inspections. Our staff will also learn what restaurant owners go through when inspections take place.

11b. Trustee Interview Date

If the prospective candidate can attend, the interview will be held on December 15 as part of the Board meeting. It is preferred to hold the interview in person.

12a Preliminary Budget

Mr. Eckard gave an overview for the preliminary FY 23 budget request. The Budget Office has sent out direction with a plan to fund CCPL at 3% over our current level of funding for an appropriation of \$10,140,700. The County's Operating Plan is planned and balanced over 6 years, it becomes the starting point for conversations, everything is subject to change, there is no basis in law for it. State Aid is based on two variables: per capita support of \$16.70 which is not scheduled to increase and population. The 2020 census information would suggest an increase in population for Carroll County, if so we could see an increase of approximately \$29,000. Traditionally CCPL puts State Aid increases into the materials budget. Other revenues are estimated at just under \$500,000 with carryover being the biggest part, the second is revenue from passport services. Other activities include meeting rooms, copiers and print fees. Ms. Berstler noted that Maryland libraries plan to ask for formula increases in the upcoming legislative session. The County does not tell CCPL how to use the 3%, traditionally we have added it to salaries; however, the County has included a 5.55% increase for their staff through FY 25 and in two years beyond a 5% increase, that increase is not built into the Operating Plan for CCPL. With the County's operation plan as it stands, this would create future budget squeeze for CCPL. To build our salaries from FY 22 and grow them at the amount that County staff salaries will grow, we will fall behind budget each year by a significant amount. We need to communicate to the budget office this predicament. The starting point is to get CCPL salaries on par on the way the County staff are treated. Mr. Eckard used a theoretical job position to demonstrate how our salaries would fall behind. We are also competing with neighboring library systems, it is important for the Commissioners to see we are fighting an uphill battle to be the kind of library system we aspire to be. It was noted that we traditionally got the raise that County employees got but that has gone away and that school system employees get more because of maintenance of effort. Other points that were brought up include: an excellent children's staff person is leaving Carroll for Frederick where the salary scale is higher, we are competing within our own county and funded mostly by the county, one commissioner brags that we have the best library in the state, the school system does have a low pay scale in comparison with the rest of the state, the possibility of talking with our budget analyst, we need to try and get our raises into the 6-year plan. Staff will prepare talking points for Board members and work to recruit some of the Friends to help. Board members noted that our staff makes the difference and customers always compliment the staff and Exploration Commons is going to be crucial for the state and it is all staffed on the current budget. Other expenses that will also show some growth include cost of security guards, contractual services such as the auditors, higher costs related to inflation and supply chain pressures.

12b. Meeting Room Policy

Mr. Thompson asked the board to consider changes to the meeting room policy. Changes included ways to delineate what are acceptable and unacceptable uses of the branch meeting rooms. Unacceptable uses in the judgement of the Executive Director could include uses that are loud, messy, protests or causes substantial disruption. It was noted that for-profit groups can rent branch and Exploration Commons meeting rooms. These changes will allow staff to step in and address any problems. How to make reservations and other operational guidelines have been removed, this will allow staff to make operating procedure changes as necessary.

Ms. Muller moved to accept the revised Meeting Room Policy. Ms. Harrison seconded. Approval was unanimous.

12c. COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement, Testing Policy and Mask Mandate

CCPL staff have created a policy to bring the library into compliance with The U.S. Department of Labor's Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) for COVID 19 Vaccination and Testing. This ETS will be enforced by Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Much of the language was created from the FAQs and policy templates from OSHA that were shared with us by the County. It has not been vetted by the County Attorney but since we are working with a December 5, 2021 deadline, staff brought this to the Board for approval.

This policy allows for testing, which is a choice each organization can make, and has accommodations based on religious beliefs and for those whom the vaccine is not medically recommended. The cost of testing for non-covid exposure is approximately \$100 per test. We are hoping to piggyback on a contract the county has with Labcorp which will lower the cost to approximately \$30 per test. Insurance does not pay for work required tests. OSHA standards say the test cannot be self-administered so self or home tests cannot be used.

Administration created a vaccine incentive program called "Thank you!" for staff who have been vaccinated. This gives staff who can prove they have received both vaccinations by December 31, 2021 an additional day off in 2022 and a \$100 gift card. Staff have been slow to sign up for the incentive. The hope was the incentive would create a more enthusiastic response because we knew the mandate was coming.

Aspects of the policy were discussed and included privacy and storage of records including HIPPA rules, the high costs of violations, the possibility of push back, and what will happen if the ETS is overturned. The initial ruling from one court to overturn the ETS does not apply to Maryland. There is also a possibility of staff leaving due to the mandate. Nadine Rosendale, Eldersburg Branch Manager said that at Eldersburg only 8 staff members haven't responded to the "Thank you!" program, but she has heard through the grapevine that some staff were offended by the "Thank you!" program and that some staff do not want to share the information whether they are vaccinated or not.

Ms. Berstler noted that staff will have to pay for the tests themselves and unvaccinated staff will be required to wear masks. We will pay a staff member up to 4 hours to receive the vaccine and give staff up to 2 days administrative leave to recover from any after-effects. Problems that could occur if the policy is not passed were discussed and included the possibility of incurring heavy fines. The discussion also covered that the Board has a fiduciary responsibility to keep that from happening. January 4, 2022 is when those who have not been vaccinated will have to start testing. It was noted that booster shots are not included in the ETS and the ETS is designed to last 6 months.

Ms. Soisson moved to accept the COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement, Testing Policy and Mask Mandate with the County Attorney's approval. Ms. Chaturvedi seconded. Mr. Peloquin was opposed. The motion was approved.

Ms. Berstler said if the ETS is reversed we will let the Board know. This subject was also discussed at today's Town Hall. Ms. Berstler and Ms. Smith said HR will work with staff and be respectful and private, vaccine records will be kept separate from other employee records.

12d. Liaison to the Friends

With Ms. Soisson leaving the Board at the end of December, it has become necessary to choose a new Liaison to the Friends Board. Ms. Picker gave background on the CCPL Board Liaison to the Friends Board and noted that it usually includes attending the Friends Board meetings 5 times per year. The Friends main annual activity is supporting the CCPL Battle of the Books. Ms. Chaturvedi agreed to be the new CCPL Board Liaison to the Friends Board.

Ms. Griffith asked to add an item to the agenda to Create a Nominating Committee to present a Slate of Officers for calendar year 2022 at the December meeting. Ms. Muller and Mr. Peloquin agreed to serve as the Nominating Committee.

13. Adjournment

Mr. Peloquin moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Chaturvedi seconded. Approval was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 pm

Leza Griffith
Chair