

Carroll County Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting - Virtual
December 16, 2020
Minutes

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis the Carroll County Public Library (CCPL) Board of Trustees met virtually on December 18, 2020. CCPL had been closed to the public since March 14, 2020; branches re-opened on a limited basis on September 21, 2020.

1. Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum

Ms. Muller called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm and declared there was quorum.

Present:

Bill Bates	Leza Griffith	Virginia Harrison	Joyce Muller
David Peloquin	Cindy Piazza	Karen Soisson	

Staff Present:

Andrea Berstler	Tony Eckard	Mary Honeman	Bob Kuntz
Christina Kuntz	Rita O'Brien	Lisa Picker	Muffie Smith
Dorothy Stoltz	Patty Sundberg	Stephanie Szymanski	Joe Thompson
Mary Wells			

Also in attendance: Erica Karmes-Jesonis, facilitator for the Strategic Plan Focus Group

2. Westminster Branch Report

Westminster branch manager, Christina Kuntz presented A Year in the Life of COVID. With lives dominated by COVID staff have learned how to work from home, they learned new tools, and quickly switched to online programming. Library Associate Children's-Rebecca Garrahy created a program called Emmett's Playhouse that dealt with anxiety; Library Associate Children's Maureen Aversa presented an owl snack storytime, Library Associate Children's Amy Miller Myers has a wonderful talent of speaking directly to kids online, and children's services supervisor Ghislaine Hockensmith did an innovative storytime on how a house is built. From the LA adult staff: Stella Fouts did a program featuring her chickens and a virtual food program called That's Delicious that had 351 in attendance; Pat Hahn created Scary Campfire Stories and an online Ghost Walk that was viewed by 428 students from a local middle school. Pat Hahn's program on the birth of a foal won a Staff Day Award. Circulation clerk TJ Finecey started the Diverse Voices Book Club with adult services supervisor Liz Jones' assistance and has contributed to the branch's book reviews that are available on social media. Ms. Kuntz gave a shout out to the Westminster and Outreach staff for working through the Exploration Commons construction this year. On short notice staff have handled groups of construction workers moving in and out of the branch; managed to respond successfully to shifting spaces, opened ceilings, and other unexpected situations. In addition to the interior progress, the excavation project on the back of the building for the egress stairways created a large hole next to the branch. The amazing staff have also worked with a layer of anxiety with working through the time of COVID. They also planned on a one week shut down for an electrical upgrade but didn't know for certain if it would happen when it was planned. After the closure the staff had 10 bins of new materials, 28 boxes of delivered materials from other branches, pulled 1000 holds and pulled 10 full carts from the Monday book drop. Ms. Kuntz also shared the story of library associate II Craig Patterson who returned to work after a long recovery from a brain hemorrhage, and the stories of two power customers, one who has helped Mr. Patterson as much as Mr. Patterson has helped him. This year's holiday window highlighted COVID. It's been a year of being flexible, supporting each other, and learning new skills. Ms. Muller thanked Ms. Kuntz for the report.

3. Minutes of November 18, 2020 and December 2, 2020

Ms. Muller read the following: On November 18, 2020 the Board voted to close the meeting per the Maryland Open Meetings Law Section 508-10a to discuss a personnel matter. Approval was unanimous, the meeting closed at 7:05 pm, and on December 2, 2020 the Board voted to close the meeting per the Maryland Open Meetings Law Section 508-10a to discuss a personnel matter. Approval was unanimous, the meeting closed at 7:06 pm.

Mr. Bates asked that a correction be made to the November 18, 2020 minutes to reflect that not the whole contribution he and his wife gave to Exploration Commons has been paid.

Mr. Bates moved to approve the corrected November 18, 2020 Minutes, and the December 2, 2020 Minutes. Mr. Peloquin seconded. Approval was unanimous.

4. Financial Statement

Mr. Eckard reviewed the Financial Report that ended November 30, 2020. Cash balances are at \$2.9 million, 1.2 million more than this time last year. This is due to the timely submission of reimbursement requests for Exploration Commons, this will be short-lived, there is a bill scheduled to be paid to Lewis Contractors of \$700,000. So far we have held off the need to tap into the line of credit loan from the County this is thanks to our supporters and timely response to reimbursement requests from the County and State. Revenues are ahead of budget by \$8,400, in November the unspent budget from FY 20 of \$250,777 was recognized, without the unspent prior year budget we are \$67,309 behind budget. There is \$311,000 unspent in salaries. We are closing in on \$700,000 of cash and pledges towards Exploration Commons fundraising. This month \$75,000 was received from the Kahlert Foundation and we also have a commitment from M&T Bank for \$5,000. Mr. Peloquin asked about the computer maintenance item. Mr. Eckard related that it is unusual to have an item overspent at this time of year however it is due to service contracts that renew at the first of the fiscal year and budget will catch up. Also, pre-pays save money and reflect a commitment to extra years in contracts, these items put budget lines behind, but those lines will improve later in the fiscal year.

5. Correspondence and Announcements

Ms. Muller welcomed Mary Honeman, Westminster circulation clerk, to the meeting as staff association representative. A grateful North Carroll customer sent a note of appreciation. Ms. Muller expressed her delight that staff are receiving good feedback from people who cherish the library.

6. Citizen's Time

There were no citizens present.

7. Executive Director's Report

Ms. Berstler noted that the written report covers Exploration Commons, the budget, strategic plan and the Equity Diversity Inclusion Task Force's work. There have been COVID exposures at the North Carroll and Eldersburg branches. North Carroll is closed through Saturday because the positive individual worked with almost the entire branch staff, so that branch did not have enough staff to keep the building open after the thorough cleaning. The Eldersburg branch exposure happened last Friday, since that branch has more staff, managers there were able to pull together shifts to keep the branch open. The staff at both branches and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) are given kudos for managing through the crisis. Ms. Smith and Ms. Simmons from Human Resources are keeping an eye on the situation. Due to the rising positive COVID cases in Carroll, Ms. Berstler worked with Ms. Muller, to make plans to move back to Stage 1 with contactless service. CCPL will go back to Stage 1 on Monday, December 21, the earliest possible date to go into Stage 2 will be January 18. Calvert County is the only system that will be open to customers in the state; where numbers are going down.

Staff will still provide customers with Express Pickup, Information Service, and Readers Advisory. CCPL closed today at noon and will remain closed on Thursday, December 17 due to snow. Mr. Bates said he strongly supports the decision to go back to Stage 1. Ms. Muller thanked Ms. Berstler and the staff for this decision and Muffie Smith for her diligent work.

8a. FY 22 Operating Budget

Mr. Eckard presented the proposed FY 22 Operating budget that was discussed in November. Changes since November include identification of expenditures that meet the County's definition for inclusion of expenses that are outside our control. We plan to ask for an additional \$245,000 which equates to an increase of 2.6%. The higher costs of these items are outside of our control and if they are not addressed now it will take years to recover from the impact of flat funding two years in a row. In expenditures: this is the second year in a row not to offer salary increases but minimum wage is increasing per state law, state retirement for staff not in the state teacher's retirement system is being figured at \$108,000; mileage reimbursement, audit and bookkeeping fees due to contract with new auditors will rise by \$1,000; copier rent and maintenance, computer maintenance will go up 3% and the Integrated Library System – Polaris will increase by 2.5%. We also include a \$75,000 increase for materials to defray inflation costs of online subscriptions and databases, in the last few years the range of cost increases has been from 5% to 12%. There will be increases for software support to Paycom and Neon. Some line items will go down those include author events. Mr. Eckard noted the efforts of IT manager Gary Bowman for working on earned e-rate credits, \$30,000 of those revenues are going to Exploration Commons this year, next year we expect \$15,000, but it is not an ongoing steady revenue and could be dedicated to other items if needed. This year we will have to make our case to the County and share our difficulties if we are flat funded.

Ms. Soisson moved to accept the FY 22 Operating Budget as presented. Mr. Peloquin seconded. Approval was unanimous.

8b. EC50E Update

Mr. Kuntz reported that progress is being made. Bad weather days have slowed up work on the backside of the building but hasn't delayed the project. Construction is still expected to be complete on March 8, 2021. Photos of the makerspace were shared with the raised floor installed which is made of plastic discs that weigh 15-20 pounds and will have vinyl tile installed on top. Interviews for staffing have been held and hiring of 5 new staff members, for a total of 7 is complete. It will take staff 2 to 2.5 months to complete the space for opening after construction. The preview makerspace is busy with people making appointments to make gifts. The ARC came in and built a 3D printer, the Boys and Girls Club will also build 3D printer. There is a possibility of another closure of the branch to complete installation of steel to support the HVAC units, however, the work may be completed during the time we are going back to Stage 1, with only staff in the building.

9a. Circulation Policy Update

This item was tabled for a future meeting.

9b. Holiday Closings

Ms. Berstler said acting on a suggestion from the Board to do something for the staff for working through the COVID 19 crisis she proposed giving the staff two 4-day weekends in a row. She asked the Board to approve closing on Saturday, December 26; Thursday, December 31; and Saturday, Jan 2 to provide this for the staff.

Ms. Piazza said she feels this is a great way to say thank you; Ms. Harrison agreed.

Mr. Bates moved to approve the additional dates for closure. Ms. Piazza seconded. Approval was unanimous.

9c. Confirm Board Roster for January 2021

Ms. Muller reported that the prospective candidate to replace Ms. Piazza agreed to join the Board pending the Commissioners approval. Ms. Piazza has agreed to stay on the Board until a replacement for Mr. Bates, representing the Mt. Airy area, is found. Ms. Muller read a citation on behalf of the Board in honor of Mr. Bates' service to CCPL. The citation reflected Mr. Bates' contributions and accomplishments as an exemplary liaison between the Mt. Airy community and the Board, including distinctive leadership and support, work on the 403b review committee to ensure optimal savings for staff, insights into donor support, and willingness to be the Board rep for the Open Meetings Act. Ms. Muller recognized Mr. Bates' gift to Exploration Commons and applauded his idea to increase book sale prices. Ms. Smith said she has been glad to have a fellow Human Resources professional to work with. Mr. Bates said it has been a pleasure to be on the Board and getting to know everyone.

9d. Open Meetings Act Board Rep

Ms. Muller agreed to be the Board rep for the Open Meetings Act and will take the Open Meetings Act virtual class.

9e. Strategic Plan Focus Group

Patty Sundberg, Mt. Airy branch manager and chair of the Strategic Planning Committee, introduced Erica Karmes-Jesonis, facilitator for the Focus Group. The Strategic Planning Committee, with Ms. Karmes-Jesonis as facilitator, has held focus groups with elected officials, business people, and customers. Ms. Karmes-Jesonis said it has been wonderful working with Ms. Sundberg and gave some information on their work with the other focus groups and noted tremendous support for the library system that came out of those meetings. Ms. Sundberg also thanked Mr. Bates for his service to the Board and said it has been great working with him and expressed hope that he will continue to visit the Mt. Airy branch. The Board participated in the focus group discussion.

Ms. Piazza said she loves the 2020 CCPL ornament. It was designed and manufactured in the preview makerspace. Ms. Muller said this is her last meeting as president, she will be turning over the gavel to Ms. Griffith. She said it has been a great 2 years working with Ms. Berstler. Ms. Berstler thanked Ms. Muller for her caring, compassion, and leadership. Ms. Muller wished everyone a healthy holiday.

10. Adjournment

Ms. Piazza moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Harrison seconded. Approval was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 8:51 pm.