

BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES FOR BALTIMORE COUNTY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING
February 16, 2021

A meeting of the Board of Library Trustees was held via Zoom on Tuesday, February 16, 2021. The meeting was called to order at 8:02 am by Board President Maureen Walsh David, and a notification of recording was given. Those wishing to speak during public comment were asked to sign-up using the Q&A tool on Zoom. Other Board members present were: Yara Cheikh, Jane Eickhoff, Paul Schwab, Aaron Slater, and Anne West. Mr. Netzer was absent.

Staff in attendance: Sonia Alcántara-Antoine, Director; Julie Brophy, Adult and Community Engagement Coordinator; James Cooke, Assistant Director; Natalie Edington, Assistant Director; Jen Evans, Administrative Assistant; Emily Gamertsfelder, Planning, Projects and Data Coordinator; Helen Rowe, Fiscal Services Manager; Joey Schenning, Staff Association President; Liz Sundermann, Virtual Services and Media Creation Manager; Mary Wilson, Human Resources Manager.

COMMUNICATION

Minutes

The Board approved the minutes of the January 19, 2021 meeting (**Eickhoff/West**) and the February 4, 2021 Special Meeting (**Eickhoff/Cheikh**).

Correspondence

None.

Public Comments

None.

Upcoming Events

None.

REPORTS

Director's Report (Alcántara-Antoine)

Director Alcántara-Antoine thanked the Board and staff for their welcome and support. She also thanked James Cooke and Natalie Edington for their leadership during the transition. She looks forward to all BCPL will accomplish in the future.

As part of getting oriented to the system, Director Alcántara-Antoine will be touring branches and departments and hosting virtual meetings with staff to learn more about the organization and issues through their eyes.

Director Alcántara-Antoine highlighted curbside services, which continue to be extremely popular in branches. Pikesville saw over 200 curbside customers daily throughout the month of January. Staff are working hard to provide services and access to our customers who are very appreciative of their efforts. Youth and Family Engagement's mobile vehicles continue to serve daycares and Head Starts throughout the county by delivering a pack of themed books each

month to use in their virtual or in-person classrooms. Virtual programming continues to be popular with staff presenting BCPL's first Bilingual French Story Time and second virtual Bilingual Spanish Story Times.

Congratulations to Jamie Watson, Collection Development Manager, on her American Library Association Young Adult Library Service Association Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award. The dedication of Ms. Watson and the rest of the BCPL staff helped Director Alcántara-Antoine in successful negotiations with Baltimore County to include library staff in vaccination group 1C as part of continuity of government services.

The Board added their thanks to Mr. Cooke and Ms. Edington for their leadership.

Statistical Report (Gamertsfelder)

Ms. Gamertsfelder reviewed the monthly Statistical Dashboard.

Facilities Report (Cooke)

Mr. Cooke reported that the Reisterstown renovation is 70% complete and remains on schedule. The planning phase for the Catonsville renovation is wrapping up and he hopes to share drawings at the March meeting. BCPL is working with County Property Management and the Towson Chamber of Commerce on a project to update the lighting on the Towson building to illuminate the new mural at night. Mr. Hartzel, Cockeysville Manager, is working to develop a single service desk for that branch.

Finance Report (Rowe)

There was nothing of note in the Finance Report. Revenues and expenditures continue to be under budget.

Staff Association (Schanning)

Ms. Walsh David complimented Mr. Schanning on the Staff Association Annual Report.

Mr. Schanning reviewed highlights from the Staff Association Annual Report which will be made available for staff on the Association website. While activities were limited due to COVID-19, staff participated in a Polar Bear Plunge which raised \$3,000 for the Special Olympics, and the annual Wellness Challenge. The Association awarded a Kathy Slade FUNd scholarship, which was used for personal development, and two Academic Scholarships for staff pursuing library degrees. Staff also took advantage of the Emergency Loan program, which provides funds to staff in need to be repaid within six months.

The Association had 232 active members and 45 retiree members for FY 2020-2021. Members have access to the Sick Leave Bank, scholarships, discounts, and the Staff Association Concerns Committee process. The SACC process allows staff to submit concerns confidentially to the Staff Association. After review, valid concerns are sent to Administration for response within 90 days.

Mr. Schwab thanked Mr. Schenning for his explanation of the staff concerns process and acknowledged the important service SACC provides in giving staff the ability to confidentially submit concerns to the Administration.

Ms. Cheikh asked about the size of the total active staff, which is currently 585 members.

Board Report

Ms. Walsh David expressed the Board's enthusiasm to have Director Alcántara-Antoine on board. She also made note that two companion bills on collective bargaining are included in this legislative session. While the Board supports the right of BCPL employees to collectively bargain, the Board feels the bills need some amendment. Ms. Walsh David and Director Alcántara-Antoine have been submitting testimony and are working with the sponsors of the bills on those amendments.

OLD BUSINESS

FY 2022 Budget (Rowe)

The FY 2022 Budget Request was formulated with guidance from Baltimore County's Office of Budget and Finance. The budget is for pre-pandemic levels for expenses and slightly lower revenues. The outcome is a budget request with a County General Fund increase of about 2%, with the budget being phased in as more normal service resumes. The requested funding amount for FY 2022 is \$43,378,279.

Mr. Schwab inquired about the decreased amounts for security and utilities. Ms. Rowe shared that those numbers are provided by Baltimore County and are projected to be lower in FY 2022.

The Board approved the FY 2022 Budget Request (**Cheikh/Schwab**).

Mobile Library Legal Center Update (Brophy)

Ms. Brophy updated the Board on the status of the Mobile Library Legal Center (MLLC). She included drawings and photographs of the look and layout of the vehicle. Adult and Community Engagement is still working toward a late spring launch of the vehicle. Current plans are to focus, in particular, on foreclosure and eviction issues.

The Board is eager for the vehicle launch to help with these crucial legal issues facing our communities. Ms. Walsh David also noted that the Board had received a heartfelt thank you from former Director Paula Miller, for the contribution Board members made to the project in her honor.

NEW BUSINESS

Circulation Policy: Removing Barriers to Access – Fine Free for Youth (Edington)

During the 2020 session of the Maryland General Assembly, the Building Lifelong Learners Act was introduced. The bill required that all public libraries cease charging minors (youth under 18) overdue fines for library materials and outlined several other provisions regarding library fines and fees for minors. This bill was vetoed by the Governor during the start of the pandemic,

along with any bill that had fiscal impact. In early 2021, the Senate and House overrode the Governor's veto and with the passage of this bill, all public libraries that have not already eliminated overdue fees for youth, must do so. As the Board approved the temporary suspension of extended loan fees due to the pandemic, this does not present a new loss of revenue. The Director and Board Finance Committee are currently exploring ways to offset future loss of revenue. Additional state funding will be available beginning in FY 2023.

Ms. Cheikh asked if BCPL would continue to have the student cards which allow BCPL students to check out materials. Ms. Edington assured her that that program will continue as the program allows students to get the library cards automatically.

Ms. Eickhoff asked if this would present a hardship to smaller libraries. Ms. Edington noted that many Maryland library systems, including smaller ones, had already adopted policies that eliminated fines for minors.

The Board approved Baltimore County Public Library going fine free for youth by eliminating extended loan fees for minors' accounts (youth under age 18) to become effective by the required date. This would include removing any outstanding extended loan fees that appear in minors' accounts **(Slater/West)**.

Personnel Policy: Diversity & Inclusion Floating Leave (Wilson)

Baltimore County Government recently approved two additional days off to be used by employees for cultural or holiday activities. To align with the county's addition of these days, the Board approved implementing two Diversity and Inclusion days for full-time and part-time staff to use as "floating holidays". Once implemented, leave accrual will be based on employment start date, with current full-time staff receiving 8 hours of leave in FY 21, and 16 hours of leave in FY 22. Current part-time staff will receive 4 hours of leave in FY 21 and 8 hours of leave in FY 22. The Board approved the implementation of the floating leave days **(Cheikh/West)**.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board meeting adjourned at 9:00 am **(Schwab/West)**.

Submitted by

Anne West
Secretary to the Board of Library Trustees