

**BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES FOR BALTIMORE COUNTY**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**September 20, 2022**

A meeting of the Board of Library Trustees was held on Tuesday, September 20, 2022, at the Towson Library. The meeting was called to order at 8:01 am by Board President Maureen Walsh David. Other Board members present were: Yara Cheikh, Jane Eickhoff, Havaca Ganguly, Mike Netzer, Aaron Slater, and Anne West.

Staff in attendance: Sonia Alcántara-Antoine, Chief Executive Officer; James Cooke, Assistant Director; Natalie Edington, Assistant Director; Jen Evans, Administrative Assistant; Linda Frederick, Marketing & Development Manager; Emily Gamertsfelder, Planning & Projects Manager; Shirley Mason, Woodlawn Circulation Manager; Helen Rowe, Fiscal Services Manager; Conni Strittmatter, Youth and Family Engagement Manager; Mary Wilson, Human Resources Manager; and Zeke White, Woodlawn Library Manager. Making a special presentation before the Board, Jim DeArmey and Patty Sundberg of Citizens for Maryland Libraries.

Ms. Walsh David welcomed Ms. Ganguly who was appointed to the Board in July. Ms. Ganguly is the director of the Middendorf Foundation.

Ms. Walsh David welcomed Mr. Jim DeArmey and Ms. Patty Sundberg of Citizens for Maryland Libraries. Mr. DeArmey and Ms. Sundberg presented the CML Outstanding Employee award to Ms. Shirley Mason, Woodland Circulation Manager, for her exceptional contributions to the library, particularly in areas of customer service and community outreach. Ms. Mason thanked the CML for their recognition of her work. Ms. Walsh David expressed the Board's appreciation for Ms. Mason's achievement and work with BCPL.

**COMMUNICATION**

***Minutes***

The Board approved the minutes of the June 21, 2022, meeting (**Slater/West**).

***Correspondence***

None.

***Upcoming Events***

BCPL's annual Staff Day will be held on October 10. The Citizens for Maryland Libraries' annual Friends, Trustees and Library Supporters meeting will be held the morning of October 15. The Foundation for BCPL's Toast Among Ghosts will be held the evening of October 15. Board members were encouraged to attend all three events if possible.

***Comments from the Public***

None.

## REPORTS

### ***CEO's Report (Alcántara-Antoine)***

CEO Alcántara-Antoine highlighted the Urban Libraries Council's *Lessons from the Field: Growing Your Business Services to Improve Your Local Economy*. BCPL and Enoch Pratt Free Library will serve as co-hosts for this event. The event will highlight BCPL's successful Entrepreneur Academy and will provide best practices on how libraries can support the small business community. Entrepreneur Academy provides knowledge on how to start a successful business, including business strategies and planning, market research, and financial recordkeeping and taxes. Many participants are from marginalized and underserved communities.

BCPL and its incredible staff foster economic opportunity and strengthen the quality of life for its residents every day. During this month, which is Library Card Sign-up month, BCPL will promote the library card as the most valuable card anyone can carry in their wallets.

### ***Statistical Dashboard (Gamertsfelder)***

Ms. Gamertsfelder shared the Statistical Dashboard from June, July and August. She noted that the bump up in registered borrowers in August is from the registration of student accounts. The increase in program attendance shows the start of staff participating in back to school events.

### ***Customer Experience Report (Edington)***

Ms. Edington presented the first Customer Experience Report to the Board. Customers are continuing to return to the branches. Some are beginning to see pre-pandemic numbers in our program attendance. Staff continue to work toward meeting customer needs and the goals of our strategic plan. Currently, programming is a combination of mostly in-person with some virtual programs.

Highlights from the summer included: BCPL hosted several youth workers as part of the County's Summer Youth Employment Program. Youth programs were presented in conjunction with summer meal distribution. The Adult & Community Engagement Department offered business programs such as *Using Facebook to Grow Your Business* and *The Power of Visual Storytelling*. The Artist in Residence Program resumed at Hereford. BCPL also offered community support during severe summer storms, with branches serving as cooling centers, and acting as a water distribution site when there was contaminated water in the county. BCPL partnered with BCPS to support families by providing free notary service at three branches to expedite the processing of BCPS shared domicile forms.

Moving into fall, the age restriction on Storyville has been lifted to reduce barriers and be more welcoming. Branch staff and the bookmobile will attend many Back to School events and will promote all of the resources BCPL offers to support student learning. BCPL will host a Teen Entrepreneur Academy, a job fair for adults with developmental disabilities, and a number of health screening programs in partnership with Baltimore County.

Ms. Eickhoff asked if the age limit at Storyville had been raised or removed. It has been removed.

Ms. West asked if the library would consider using adult volunteers. While BCPL is currently focusing on staff, we do have a number of partnerships that use volunteers.

Ms. Walsh David applauded the amazing creativity of staff, and how much BCPL is able to accomplish with limited funds.

### ***Operations Report (Cooke)***

Mr. Cooke shared that the Reisterstown Renovation won an Association of Builders and Contractors Award. There have been a few HVAC and plumbing issues around the system. The replacement of the HVAC at Cockeysville necessitated the closure of the branch. The worst of the plumbing issues are at Catonsville; these will be fully addressed during the renovation.

BCPL accomplishes a great deal with a limited amount of capital funding dollars. Recently, the Pikesville parking lot was resurfaced and re-stripped and the interior refreshed. The parking lot at White Marsh was also resurfaced and re-stripped. Two major capital projects are moving forward. The six-million-dollar Catonsville renovation will be going out to bid soon, with an anticipated March 2023 project start. Work on the Woodlawn renovation design has begun and the renovation is projected to receive \$13 million in funding for a renovation and expansion.

Mr. Cooke introduced Ms. Alex Houff, the new Digital Equity and Virtual Services Manager. Ms. Houff shared that the DEVS department will be mainly focusing on digital equity in the near future.

Ms. Walsh David welcomed Ms. Houff and inquired about the lending of hotspots and Chromebooks. The lending period for those items is 21 days. The DEVS department is going to be piloting a project for a longer loan of Wi-Fi enabled devices in the near future.

### ***Finance Report (Rowe)***

Ms. Rowe provided the Board with the May financial summary. The current Fund Balance will be used to fund the additional cost of contract items. Fees for services revenue is slightly above the projected amount. Salary spending is below budget. However, Human Resources is filling vacancies and that amount should re-align over the next few months.

Ms. Walsh David asked for the number of open positions. Ms. Wilson shared that there were currently 35 vacancies around the system. Ms. Walsh David inquired if BCPL was having difficulty finding good applicants. Ms. Wilson indicated that there have been some issues with specialized positions, but nothing like other agencies are facing.

### ***Human Resources Report (Wilson)***

Over the last several months, Human Resources has been working on several projects simultaneously. The team has been drafting, revising and reviewing policies in conjunction with the Memorandum of Understanding with the IAMWA and redesigning their recruitment process to develop a more holistic, system-wide process and to incorporate a "highly qualified list"

model. They instituted a Labor Management Committee comprised of representatives from management and the Union. This will enable labor and management to pull together in a spirit of cooperation. The Staff Training and Development Coordinator has conducted a survey of system-wide training needs. Ms. Wilson also works closely with BCPL's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, focusing on the needs of the staff.

Ms. West asked where BCPL advertised to recruit staff. Ms. Wilson shared that her department submitted ads to social media platforms, the Maryland Library Association, and other associations as necessary based on the recruitment.

#### ***Board Report (Walsh David)***

Ms. Walsh David shared her pleasure at having a fully executed MOU with IAMWA. Ms. Walsh David and Ms. Cheikh both spoke at the County Council Legislative session in support of the MOU. The County Council was very positive about the work of the library staff. The Board will work with administration on revising policies to align with the MOU. She also applauded the social media campaign around Library Card Sign Up month.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

##### ***Strategic Plan XI Extension (Alcántara-Antoine)***

CEO Alcántara-Antoine requested the Board extend Strategic Plan XI to end in FY 2026, rather than FY 2024. With the suspension of normal operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, BCPL has not had sufficient opportunity to work towards accomplishing the goals laid out in SPX XI. An extension of SPX XI until FY 2026 was approved by the Board (**Eickhoff/Cheikh**)

##### ***Youth & Family Engagement Report & Summer Reading Wrap-up (Strittmatter)***

Ms. Strittmatter provided the Board with an overview of the work of her department. The department helps the system meet the needs of youth and families through outreach, programs, spaces and staff support. YFE works with several partners to accomplish department goals, including BCPS, Judy Centers, WIC, PAL Centers, Vision to Learn, and St. Vincent de Paul. The department provides story times, Summer Reading, civic engagement programming for teens, panels for parents and more.

Ms. Strittmatter also provided end of year statistics for this year's Summer Reading. There were 6, 545 youth registered of whom 3,061 completed the program. Youth read 82,249 books over 727,021 minutes.

##### ***Foundation Report (Frederick)***

Ms. Frederick presented a FY 2022 Foundation wrap-up. Fiscal year 2022 was very successful for the Foundation. Projects supported in FY 2022 included the Reisterstown Branch Preservation Station, Summer Reading Challenge, Social Worker in the Library, STREAM Vehicle, and a Capital

Campaign consultant. Upcoming events include A Toast Among Ghosts and a to-be-determined fall giving event.

Ms. Walsh David asked about a spring fundraiser like Taste of the Town. Ms. Frederick stated that that would be a decision made by the new Development Manager once they were onboard. Ms. Walsh David thanked Ms. Frederick and her team for their hard work in support of BCPL.

***Vendors over \$50,000 (Rowe)***

The Board was presented with a list of vendors with whom it is anticipated BCPL will do in excess of \$50,000 of business in FY 2023. These vendors are sole source or part of an ongoing contract. The Board approved the vendor list (**Eickhoff/West**).

***Fine Free Report (Edington)***

Ms. Edington presented a report to the Board examining about one year of data from a year of being Fine Free for All. Over the past year, the number of active accounts for youth and adults has shown a steady increase. More than 7,000 customers whose accounts have been blocked began using the library again. Fine Free has not had a significant impact on the availability of materials for browsing. There were a few variables around the wait time for holds, but the limited data did not show a notable increase in the average wait time. While more items reached lost status, once lost they were more likely to be returned and were returned more quickly over the last year. Overall, going Fine Free for All has had a positive impact on the communities BCPL serves.

Mr. Netzer left the meeting at 9:35 am.

***Policy – Fee Schedule (Edington)***

The Board was presented with revisions to the Fee Schedule approved in June 2021. Included were the elimination of the fee for Holds Not Picked Up, some replacement fees, removal of fees related to the discontinuation of a service or special collection, removal from the table of replacement costs those now included in the item record, and the elimination of some replacement costs. Also included was a new fee for Meeting Room Technology Package. The policy also gives the CEO the authority to adjust or suspend fees on a limited basis.

Before the vote, Ms. Walsh David again clarified that the policy also gave the CEO the authority to adjust or suspend fees on a limited basis. The Board approved the revised Fee Schedule (**West/Eickhoff**).

Ms. West asked if it would be possible to allow customers to indicate they no longer wanted their holds by replying to the message received when holds were available. Staff will look into the possibility.

***Staff Handbook Policies***

At Mr. Slater's suggestion, the Board voted on the policies under revision for the Staff Handbook as a group in a single vote after a summary of changes by Ms. Wilson. The changes to the Staff Handbook were made to align policy with the current Memorandum of Understanding with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace workers. Section 6-2 Personal Leave was pulled from the agenda for further clarification. The Board approved the changes to the Staff Handbook: Section 2-5 Bulletin Boards, Section 4-2 Types of Employment, Work Hours, Section

5-15 Overtime, Section 6-3 Holiday Closings, Section 6-4 Sick leave, Section 6-14 Bereavement Leave, Section 6-19 Floating Holiday Leave, Section 7-4 Conferences & External Training Attendance, and Section 8-31 Work Shifts & Remote Work Activities **(West/Eickhoff)**.

Ms. Walsh David advised that the closed session to seek legal advice would be updated to allow the Board to discuss a personnel matter. The Board will not return to public session.

**CLOSED SESSION & ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Walsh David called for a motion to close the public portion of the meeting under General Provisions Article § 3-305 (b) to discuss a personnel issue and adjourn the public portion of the meeting **(West/Ganguly)**. Aye: Walsh David, Cheikh, Eickhoff, Ganguly, and West. Absent: Netzer, and Slater. Also present in the closed session was Director Alcántara-Antoine and Ms. Wilson.

Mr. Slater voted to close and adjourn the meeting but did not participate in the closed session.

Submitted by

Anne West

Secretary to the Board of Library Trustees