

BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES FOR BALTIMORE COUNTY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

October 19, 2021

A meeting of the Board of Library Trustees was held via Zoom on Tuesday, October 19, 2021. The meeting was called to order at 8:01 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: Jane Eickhoff, Michael Netzer, Paul Schwab, Aaron Slater, Anne West and Yara Cheikh.

Staff in attendance: Sonia Alcántara-Antoine, Director; Natalie Edington, Assistant Director; Julie Brophy, Adult and Community Engagement manager; Jen Evans, Administrative Assistant; Linda Frederick, Marketing and Development Manager; Emily Gamertsfelder, Planning, Project and Data Manager; Cassandra Miller, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer; Helen Rowe, Fiscal Services Manager; Joey Schenning, Staff Association President; Liz Sundermann-Zinger, Digital Equity and Virtual Services Manager. Other attendees: Bill Early, CLA for the presentation of the FY 2021 Audit.

COMMUNICATION

Minutes

The Board approved the minutes of the September 21, 2021 meeting (**Eickhoff/Slater**).

Correspondence

None.

Upcoming Events

Director Alcántara-Antoine will be holding three in person “Meet the Director” sessions, October 27th at Perry Hall, November 3rd at Arbutus, and November 10th at Cockeysville.

REPORTS

Director’s Report (Alcántara-Antoine)

Director Alcántara-Antoine gave a verbal Director’s Report. BCPL’s annual Staff Day was held on October 11th. Staff Day is one example of how BCPL supports staff by focusing on their development, ensuring they can do their jobs well and be successful in their lives outside of work. Sessions focused on a variety of topics, including personal finance and investing, trauma informed librarianship, and mental health awareness. Dr. Kara Hunt, Director of Education & Outreach for the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights, delivered a presentation on racism and antiracism. Staff also celebrated the winners of the Staff Merit Awards, staff who have distinguished themselves by going the extra mile to be of service to the community and each other.

Investing in staff is a key priority of Director Alcántara-Antoine. Public librarianship has undergone a dramatic shift over the last years. As BCPL focuses on serving the community with an equity lens, a social worker and small business consultant have joined the staff. For staff to evolve with the community, BCPL needs to continue to invest in their growth and development. To help facilitate this, BCPL has hired a Staff Training & Development Coordinator who will create custom learning opportunities for staff so they can be successful.

Safety is also part of BCPL's commitment to investing in staff. BCPL has aligned with Baltimore County on safety protocols during the pandemic and abides by the mask mandate currently in effect for all county buildings.

Statistical Dashboard (Gamertsfelder)

Ms. Gamertsfelder shared the statistical dashboard for September. She noted that BCPL is still working with the Office of Information Technology on accurate Wi-Fi session numbers. There has been a slight drop off in the number of loans and visits, which is normal at this time of year. Ms. West asked about the recent change in meal provision at the branches. This is tied to BCPL's partner, St. Vincent de Paul's Good Harvest. BCPL provides dinner and a snack to close the school year food gap. Ms. Walsh David asked if programs were still all virtual. Programming is currently a combination of virtual, outdoor, and when safe to do so, indoor. Mr. Schwab asked when meeting rooms would reopen to the public. Ms. Edington replied that BCPL is constantly reviewing factors around safety and meeting rooms will reopen for booking when appropriate.

Finance Report (Rowe)

Ms. Rowe provided the Board with the September financial summary. Overall total expenditures are down 4.3%, and revenues are up 2.1%. Ms. Cheikh asked if BCPL received gift funds from the Foundation as a yearly one-time sum. Ms. Rowe clarified that funds from the Foundation are paid to BCPL multiple times a year. Mr. Schwab asked if passport services had resumed. That service is being provided and have generated 22% of the projected income to date.

Equity Audit (Miller)

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer Cassandra Miller discussed the process for BCPL's upcoming Equity Audit. After communication with stakeholders, Ms. Miller will be gathering data in areas including hiring and promotion, collections, programs and services, marketing, facilities, and technology. The collected data will be analyzed and recommendations and goals for moving forward will be developed. There will be additional opportunities for stakeholder feedback before a final plan is brought to the Board in the spring.

Ms. Walsh David asked if a DEI report could be done regularly. Director Alcántara-Antoine will add it to the Board agenda annually, and more frequently as BCPL reaches any milestones.

NEW BUSINESS

FY 2021 Audit (Early)

Mr. Bill Early of CLA presented the FY 2021 Audit Report. He was very complimentary of Ms. Rowe and the Fiscal services department. CLA has given BCPL an “unmodified” opinion on the library’s Financial Statements. They noted no material weaknesses, or significant deficiencies but did note the continuing issue around separation of duties. Ms. Walsh David asked how leasing equipment would be designated next year. Mr. Early replied that a determination about whether equipment leasing was capital or operational will be made for next year. Ms. Walsh David expressed the Board’s appreciation of the work of Ms. Rowe and Fiscal services during the audit. The Board accepted the FY 21 Audit (**Eickhoff/West**).

REPORTS – continued

Adult and Community Engagement (Brophy)

Ms. Brophy discussed the organization and work of her department, Adult and Community Engagement (ACE). Implemented in 2017, Adult and Community Engagement’s staff of 13 provide a wide range of traditional and innovative programs and services. Included are author events, shred days, current event programming, Lawyers in the Library, Pro-Bono Days, and Tax Assistance. In partnership with Enoch Pratt Free Library, ACE hosts Entrepreneur Academy, teaching residents how to start a small business. Support for participants is provided by BCPL’s Small Business Consultant. Service to those who cannot come to the library is provided by Mobile Engagement. This bookmobile service focuses on senior communities and day programs. BCPL’s newest vehicle, the Mobile Library Law Center, is also part of ACE. ACE staff also coordinate the work of BCPL’s first social worker. This grant funded program currently focuses on six east side branches, with plans to expand service in the coming year.

Mr. Schwab asked if bookmobile service was available to children as well as adults. Mobile service and programming for youth is part of Youth and Family Engagement.

Ms. Walsh David wondered if the Mobile Library Law Center had popular medical forms. The MLLC has a digital database of forms that can be printed for customers on demand.

Staff Association (Schenning)

Mr. Schenning updated the Board on recent and upcoming Staff Association events and shared that the annual membership drive has started.

Board Report (Walsh David)

Ms. Walsh David expressed her enjoyment of the Foundation event A Toast Among Ghosts. She also had praise for all staff involved in this year’s Staff Day planning and implementation. Ms. Walsh David was pleased to offer the Board’s congratulations to all the Staff Merit Award winners.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS- continued

Policy - Staff Dress and Grooming (Edington)

This policy is currently being reviewed by the Baltimore County Office of Law and will be presented at the November meeting.

Policy -Breaks and Meal Breaks (Edington)

This Policy was last updated in 2014 and is part of the Staff Handbook. During the revision of this policy, Administration reached out to other library systems and Baltimore County Government for information about their policies. The revised policy includes greater clarity around breaks for staff who are minors. Once drafted, the policy was reviewed by Administration and the Baltimore County Office of Law. The Office of Law has advised that a Lactation Break Policy also be created, and BCPL will do so. The Board approved the Breaks and Meal Breaks Policy for immediate implementation.

Policy – Staff Use of Social Media and Personal Websites (Frederick)

Ms. Frederick introduced an update of Staff Handbook section 8-27 titled Staff Use of Social Media and Personal Websites. This policy is not new, but needed an update to outdated language and to better address the intersection of work and personal use of social media. The policy was reviewed by the BCPL management team and by the Baltimore County Office of Law. The Board approved the Staff Use of Social Media and Personal Websites for immediate implementation (**Schwab/Netzer**). Ms. West abstained.

Mr. Slater left the meeting.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Board heard comments from one member of the public. Bridget Fitzgerald expressed her appreciation of the reports on the Equity Audit and Adult and Community Engagement. She requested that information on an open bid on BCPL's website be updated.

ADJOURNMENT and CLOSED SESSION

Ms. Walsh David called for a vote to move to Closed Session and to close the public portion of the meeting. Ms. Walsh David closed the session under General Provisions Art. §3-305(b) "To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals" (**West/Ceikh**). Ms. Walsh David then called for a motion to adjourn the public session at 9:18 (**West/Ceikh**). Board members attending the Closed Session: Maureen Walsh David, Paul Schwab, Jane Eickhoff, Anne, West, Mike Netzer, and Yara Ceikh.

Submitted by

Anne West

Secretary to the Board of Library Trustees