

BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES FOR BALTIMORE COUNTY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

May 14, 2024

A meeting of the Board of Library Trustees was held on Tuesday, May 14, 2024, at the Pikesville Library. The meeting was called to order at 8:04 am by Board President Yara Cheikh. Other Board members present were: Maureen Walsh David, Claudia Cruz, Jane Eickhoff, Havaca Ganguly, and Anne West. Mr. Netzer was absent.

Staff in attendance: Sonia Alcántara-Antoine, Chief Executive Officer; James Cooke, Chief Operations Officer; Natalie Edington, Chief Customer Experience Officer; Jen Evans, Executive Assistant; Melissa Gotsch, Pikesville Library Manager; Robin Linton, Human Resources Manager; and Helen Rowe Fiscal Services Manager. Also presenting to the Board were Bernie Marczyk and Jenna Sublett from Cornerstone.

COMMUNICATION

Minutes

The Board approved the minutes of the March 19, 2024, meeting **(West/Walsh David)**.

Correspondence

The Board received a thank you card from one of the candidates interviewed in April.

Upcoming Events

Highlighted were the BIG Give and the kickoff event for Summer Reading.

Comments from the Public

None.

REPORTS

CEO (Alcántara-Antoine)

CEO Alcántara-Antoine highlighted the Maryland Library Association Conference in her report. At the conference, Digital Equity and Virtual Services Manager Alexandra Houff received the Davis McCarn Technology Award from Citizens for Maryland Libraries. BCPL's Marketing team received an honorable mention award for their *Sundaes for Sunday* promotion. CEO Alcántara-Antoine delivered the keynote, alongside her esteemed colleague, 2024 LJ Mover and Shaker Jennie Pu. The CEO expressed her appreciation of all the BCPL staff who presented at MLA, BCPL is a leader in libraries, and BCPL's staff share their expertise to colleagues around the state.

Last week was the "groundbreaking" of the new Randallstown Library and Recreation Center at 8212 Liberty Road. There was a great deal of energy and enthusiasm for this new project. The CEO was joined by County Executive Johnny Olszewski, Speaker of the House Adrienne Jones,

Councilman Julian Jones, and BCRP Director Bob Smith to celebrate this milestone moment for BCPL, Baltimore County Recreation and Parks, and Baltimore County. This project will be a game changer for the Randallstown community. The Randallstown Branch is incredibly busy and high on the social vulnerability index. The community needs, and uses the public library. Randallstown has the highest computer usage of any of our branches. It is an active tax preparation site and this tax season they assisted 998 customers with their taxes. The new building will have 50,000 sq. ft. of space, which will meet the state standard of having 1 sq. ft. of public library space per capita in the Randallstown service area. Later this month, County Council will vote to officially authorize the purchase of 8212 Liberty Road.

The CEO expressed her pride in the capital improvements made over the last few years. BCPL has or will make major investments in many facilities – renovations at Reisterstown, Catonsville and Woodlawn, and brand-new buildings at Randallstown, Lansdowne, and Essex. The goal is to have 21st century libraries around the county. That leaves 8 facilities that will need significant investment in the coming years. Towson Library is part of the 8. BCPL recently hosted the Towson Chamber of Commerce at the Towson Library to share the results of the Towson Economic Impact Study and highlighted the opportunities ahead for a newly imagined Towson Library. The CEO will be working closely with BCPL's partners in the County and State, the Foundation for BCPL, and Cornerstone to plan, strategize and advocate for the future.

The CEO introduced Bernie Marczyk and Jenna Sublett from Cornerstone.

Cornerstone – Marczyk & Sublett

Mr. Marczyk discussed the work Cornerstone has done on behalf of BCPL. This year, \$27.9 million in capital funding was secured for the New Randallstown Library and Recreation Center. Many thanks to Governor Moore and Speaker Jones for their commitment to the Randallstown Community. Mr. Marczyk shared that the presence of BCPL staff and Board members in Annapolis was great to see and contributed to BCPL's success. He encouraged the Board and staff to write letters of thanks to Governor Moore and Speaker Jones.

In addition to the success with Capital Funding, The Freedom to Read Act, Public Libraries – Collective Bargaining, and County Public Libraries – Minors, Children, and Teens – Prohibited Practices were passed.

The Board expressed their appreciation of Cornerstone's work.

Statistical Dashboard – Cooke

Mr. Cooke presented the Statistical Dashboard. He pointed out a small dip in visits to Pikesville during parking lot resurfacing.

Pikesville Branch Report – Gotsch

Ms. Gotsch shared that Pikesville was the second highest circulating branch of BCPL. This year her staff has focused on out reach to schools in their service area. This has resulted in much higher participation in programs like Battle of the Books. Outreach has included “library at lunch” service where staff visit schools during lunch to provide information.

Customer Experience (Edington)

Ms. Edington highlighted programming from around the system available during various heritage month celebrations. April’s Arab American Heritage Month and Autism Acceptance Month included Sensory Movie night and Moroccan Mosaic Tile Craft. May is Jewish American Heritage Month and Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Heritage Month. Programming includes The Healthy Jewish Kitchen with Chef Paula Shoyer and DIY Zen Garden.

Operations (Cooke)

COO Cooke shared that there has been another delay to the opening of the Catonsville Branch. It is now anticipated to have an August opening. Ms. Cheikh asked how this was going to be communicated to the public. Mr. Cooke assured her that information was on the branch webpage and Marketing would connect with social media.

Mr. Cooke reported that there have been \$3 million in improvements to the Pikesville Branch over the last few years that have refreshed the look of the branch. Planning for a replacement of the HVAC system at the North Point Branch is underway. The project should begin in March 2025 and the library will remain open for most of the installation.

Mr. Cooke was pleased to share that BCPL has signed a Memoranda of Understanding with Baltimore County Property Management to allow BCPL Facilities staff to resume some maintenance duties in the branches.

Fiscal Services (Rowe)

Ms. Rowe provided the Finance Report. There were no notable changes from last month.

Human Resources (Linton)

Ms. Linton shared she is continuing to learn the skillset of the Human Resources Team and is beginning to develop an HR strategy. Human Resources continues to recruit to fill vacant positions and provide benefits orientation to new staff members. Updates to Staff Handbook polices will be coming before the Board over the next months.

Board Report (Cheikh)

Ms. Cheikh stated that this month’s statistical dashboard demonstrates growth in programming and the overall number of customers utilizing BCPL’s services. This is a testament to the CEO’s leadership and the commitment and expertise of employees.

Ms. Cheikh recognized and thanked Cornerstone for their continued collaboration. Their expertise is critical in navigating the changing political and economic landscape.

Ms. Cheikh attended the launch of the new Randallstown library in partnership with Baltimore County Parks and Recreation. This project is only possible through the support and funding of our County and State governments and the leadership of Speaker Adrienne Jones. Ms. Cheikh extended the Board's heartfelt thanks to those partners, and also thanked the CEO for bringing her vision of twenty-first century libraries to the attention of our funding authorities. The Board offers continued enthusiastic support of that vision.

Ms. Eickhoff's second term on the Board will end on June 30. Ms. Cheikh acknowledged her tremendous contributions over the past decade to the Board and her lifetime of service to libraries.

Ms. Eickhoff had a long library career that started in 1974 working as a children's librarian with the Anne Arundel County Public Library. In March 1980, Ms. Eickhoff joined BCPL as an assistant library manager at the Cockeysville branch. During her career at BCPL Ms. Eickhoff also served as Pikesville Library Manager, BCPL Special Project Manager, and Technical Services Manager. In 2003, Ms. Eickhoff became the associate director of the Harford County Public Library.

A number of notable things happened during the 10 years Ms. Eickhoff served on the Board:

The Board hired the first 1st Woman Director, 1st Person of Color as CEO, renovations of: Catonsville, Reisterstown, Essex, Hereford, and Randallstown, celebrated BCPL's 75th Anniversary and implemented the Fine Free initiative, started the Library of Things, issuing Passports, offering Notary services, established the Entrepreneur Academy, and began Story Trails.

Ms. Eickhoff's attention to detail, extraordinary institutional knowledge, straightforward manner and graceful presence will be sorely missed by the Board.

Ms. Cheikh presented Ms. Eickhoff with a citation from Baltimore County in appreciation of her service and a plaque from BCPL.

Ms. Cheikh appointed a nominating committee who will present a slate of candidates at the June meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

April Closed Session Report (Cheikh)

Ms. Cheikh reported that in the April Closed Session the Board voted unanimously to authorize the personnel action recommended by Human Resources. The Board also interviewed candidates for the upcoming vacancy.

Revised FY 2025 Budget Request (Rowe)

The Board approved revisions to the FY 2025 Budget Request made at the suggestion of the Baltimore County Office of Budget and Finance. Ms. Cheikh thanked Ms. Rowe and her team for their work on the Budget. CEO Alcántara-Antoine thanked Mr. John O’Neill of the Baltimore County Office of Budget and Finance for his role in the budget process.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

CLOSED SESSION

Ms. Cheikh called for a motion to close the public portion of the meeting under General Provisions Article § 3-305 (b) to conduct the evaluation of CEO Alcántara-Antoine (**Eickhoff/Cruz**). Aye: Cheikh, Cruz, Eickhoff, Ganguly, Walsh David and West. Absent: Netzer.

CEO Alcántara-Antoine, was also present for the Personnel portion of the closed session.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board resumed open session at 10:50 (**West/Walsh David**). The meeting adjourned at 10:50 (**West/Walsh David**).

Submitted by

Havaca Ganguly

Secretary to the Board of Library Trustees