

BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES FOR BALTIMORE COUNTY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

April 21, 2026

A meeting of the Board of Library Trustees was held on Tuesday, April 21, 2026 at the Towson Library. The meeting was called to order at 8:01 am by Board President Ms. Cheikh. Other Board members present were Ms. Cruz, Ms. Ganguly, Dr. Lin-Chen, Ms. Walsh David, and Ms. West. Mr. Netzer was absent.

Staff in attendance: Erin Baker, Chief Public Services Officer; Ann Beegle, Chief External Affairs Officer; Mike Engle, Security Coordinator; Jen Evans, Executive Assistant; Emily Gamertsfelder, Planning, Projects, and Data Manager; Justin Hartzell, Capital Projects Manager; Rachel Jackson, Chief Steward; Don Osborn, Digital Equity and Virtual Services Manager; Michelle Romney, Human Resources; Helen Rowe, Director of Fiscal Services; and Zeke White, Regional Manager. Also present, Ms. Foglesong of Greenway Strategy Group via Zoom.

COMMUNICATION

Minutes

The Board approved the minutes of the March 17, 2026, meeting **(Walsh David/West)**.

Correspondence

None.

Changes to the Agenda

None.

Comments from the Public

None.

REPORTS

External Affairs

Ms. Beegle shared highlights from the department reports submitted to the Board prior to the meeting.

Adult and Community Engagement staff have been coordinating programs that include Bibliotastic Book Fair featuring author Ann Packer at Catonsville; Community Shred Days at several branches. The Foundation received a \$5,000 donation in memory of a customer who was a frequent user of the Bookmobile. Youth and Family Engagement staff have met with the management team at North Point to discuss how YFE can support the branch during the closure to replace HVAC equipment this summer. YFE led a Be Involved program at Woodlawn where teens painted flower pots for senior citizens. Marketing hosted a Spring Break Staycation campaign for BCPS Spring Break. Philanthropy staff launched a fundraising campaign for Library Giving Day prioritizing re-engaging lapsing donors. Authors

for the 2026-2027 Booked for BCPL events have been booked and should be announced soon. The Foundation Board has awarded 15 grants to support the library totaling \$327,489.

Ms. Beegle also shared that there is \$58 million in the County Executives budget for the new Essex library. BCPL has also secured \$2 million in federal funding and a \$500,000 state bond initiative for the project.

Capital Projects

Mr. Hartzell shared the Capital Projects Dashboard. With the commitment of additional funding, Quinn Evans and Property Management are reviewing the current 30% design for Essex in preparation of starting the project. Masonry work for the Rosedale digital sign started this month and will start in May for White Marsh. Replacement of the lower-level stairs at Loch Raven should begin in May. Grants from the Foundation will provide new children's furniture at Arbutus, a group study room at North Point, and study room acoustical panels at White Marsh. HVAC replacement at North Point is progressing, the branch will close in early June for the most intrusive portion of the project.

Statistical Dashboard

Ms. Gamertsfelder shared the Statistical Dashboard and noted that there are close to 200,000 active cards.

Public Services

Ms. Baker continues to visit branches and has attended several staff events such as the anniversary celebration for the Black Library Workers affinity group. She has also attended the most recent meeting of the Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators. Next month Ms. Baker and Ms. Beegle plan to attend the meeting of the Maryland Library Association.

Ms. Baker shared highlights from the branch and department reports submitted to the Board prior to the meeting. Of particular interest was a dashboard from Mr. Engle, the Security Coordinator. Branches hosted a number of high-impact events including a teen resources and job fair at Woodlawn with 300 attendees and 400 customers receiving tax help from AARP at Arbutus over the tax season.

Ms. Baker also shared that BPCL is ahead of many libraries in the state in having Naloxone available to the public in all the branches and on the bookmobile.

Fiscal Services

Ms. Rowe reported that revenues exceed expenditures by 1.24%, mostly in salary savings due to vacancies. There is no notable change in any category.

The FY 2027 Budget request will reflect a 4.3% increase. This includes a 3% mid-year cost of living increase. BCPL has been asked to pre-pay as many FY 2027 expenses as possible and to look at our turnover rate.

Ms. Cheikh stressed that a 4% increase is not truly sufficient and advocates for BCPL should be ready to make a case for additional funding in FY 2028.

Human Resources

Ms. Romney shared highlights from the Human Resources Report. BCPL has 503 active employees. HR recruited talent for 12 open positions. HR continues to develop a Longevity Plan.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Ms. Miller reviewed the DEI report that was shared with the Board prior to the meeting. Ms. Miller highlighted the success of the Pocketalk translation devices, which continue to see use around the County. Additionally, seven BCPL branches offer ESOL conversation groups in partnership with CCBC.

The department participated in cultural programming around the County. Programs included Dia de los Muertos Celebration with Yuyi Morales, Lunar New Year programming with Gene Luen Yang, and “Be Involved” programs.

Ms. Cordova, New Americans Outreach Specialist, has attended more than 70 outreach events this fiscal year. Those include WIC Farmers Markets, resources fairs, school events, and Library at Lunch. Ms. Cordova has also been appointed to the Baltimore County Immigrant Affairs Commission.

The department has also been developing educational opportunities for staff including Beginning Conversations Modules on the topics of homelessness and understanding neurodiversity.

Ms. Miller was a panelist at the State Library Resource Center Conference and gave a presentation at the Public Library Association Conference.

Union Report

Ms. Jackson reviewed the Union Report for the Board. She thanked Ms. Beegle for providing her with the opportunity to attend the recent Percival Everett luncheon which provided an opportunity for her to hear the thoughts of Foundation donors.

The Union continues to support a new Human Resources Information system.

Health and safety concerns this month were a water leak at Hereford which closed the branch during the repair. Temperatures at North Point were elevated during the recent warm weather; Property Management has provided fans until the HVAC units can be replaced. Parkville has seen ants in several areas, and some mold and mildew in the lower level.

The Labor Management Committee will be discussing the Longevity Plan when it is ready and will review and discuss any updated staff policies.

Board Executive Committee

The Executive Committee met this month to discuss the draft April Board agenda, revisions to the FY 2027 Budget request, and the ongoing impact of the recent staffing changes.

Bylaws Committee

Ms. Walsh David reported that the Bylaws Committee met this month. The revised Bylaws should be ready for Board approval next month.

Search Committee

The Search Committee will be reviewing submissions related to the RFI for Interim Director and the RFP for an Executive Search Firm.

Closed Session

At the March closed session, the Board discussed the appointment of an employee.

Board President's Report

Ms. Cheikh expressed her appreciation for the recent Booked for Baltimore County Event and thanked all the BCPL staff who made it a success.

Ms. Cheikh and the Board are excited about the proposed bond initiative for the new Essex Library in the County Executive's Budget Message. The Board is ready to advocate with the County Council to ensure its inclusion in the final budget.

The Board looks forward to working with any new collective bargaining unit that may emerge from the recent change in legislation.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Strategic Plan XII

Ms. Gamertsfelder and Ms. Foglesong updated the Board on the progress of Strategic Plan XII and requested approval of the language used in the strategic plan framework. The Board gave their approval **(Cruz/West)**.

Policy – Office of Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy

Mr. Osborn shared that this policy, written specifically for BCPL by former DEVS manager Ms. Houff, needs to be acknowledged by staff annually and will be implemented through the staff technology training portal. The Board approved the OIT Acceptable Use Policy **(Walsh David/West)**.

Mr. Osborn also shared that changes are being made to the process for long-term lending. DEVS will be creating bundles with a Chromebook and hotspot that will be a regularly circulating item with a loan period of three months.

Policy – Photography, Filming, and Videography Policy

Mr. White shared that the current policy is out of date. The draft policy presented to the Board was updated in consultation with legal experts to create a policy that does not infringe on the legal rights or restrictions established by law. The Board approved the policy update **(Lin-Chen/Ganguly)**.

Employee Handbook Policy Revisions

The Board voted to approve the Employee Handbook policy updates as a group **(Walsh David/Ganguly)**.

The Board approved revisions, as recommended by Human Resources and BCPL's attorney, to the following Employee Handbook Polices: Section 4-7(b) Lactation Break Policy; 8-25 Reasonable Accommodation Procedure Policy; 8-33 Anti-Bullying and Response Policy **(Walsh David/Ganguly)**.

CLOSED SESSION AND ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Cheikh called for a motion to close the public portion of the meeting at 9:54 am under General Provisions Article § 3-305 (b) (1) to consider personnel matters related to a specific employee or employees and to adjourn from closed session **(West/Cruz)**. Aye: Cheikh, Cruz, Ganguly, Lin-Chen, Walsh David, and West. Absent: Mr. Netzer. Ms. Beegle and Ms. Baker were present for the closed session.

A statement about the closed session will be provided at the next regular meeting of the Board.

Submitted by

Claudia Cruz

Secretary to the Board of Library Trustees