BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES FOR BALTIMORE COUNTY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

October 20, 2026

A meeting of the Board of Library Trustees was held on Tuesday, October 20, 2026, at the Towson Library. The meeting was called to order at 8:00 am by Board President Ganguly. Other Board members present were Ms. Cheikh, Ms. Cruz, Dr. Lin, Mr. Netzer, Ms. Walsh David, and Ms. West.

Staff in attendance: Ms. Baker, Ms. Beegle, Ms. Evans, Mr. Figueroa, Ms. Frederick, Ms. Gamertsfelder, Ms. Jackson, Ms. Leitch, Ms. Romney, and Ms. Rowe. Also in attendance were Ms. Capstack and Mr. Richardson from the Foundation for Baltimore County Public Library and, for the closed session, Ms. Gavigan from the Baltimore County Office of Law.

COMMUNICATION

Minutes

The Board approved the minutes of September 15, and October 1, 2026 **(Walsh David/Lin)**.

Changes to the Agenda

With consent from the Board, Ms. Ganguly deferred the Resolution to approve Interim Consulting Agreement and Board Procedures for Appointing Employees Above Grade 173 to the November agenda**.**

Comments from the Public

Ms. Bass, President of IAM Local 4538 – BCPL Library Workers and Apple Store Workers, read from Education Article § 23-406 highlighting the duties of the Board relating to the establishment of personnel policies. Ms. Bass wished to ensure that the Human Resources Department and Administration understand their role working with the Union, Board, and Executive Director.

REPORTS

The Board received written branch and department reports prior to the meeting.

External Affairs

Ms. Beegle provided the Board with highlights from the departments reporting to her.

Adult and Community Engagement presented the final programs from Maryland 250 this month. Those programs included An Insider's Guide to White House Entertaining and Untold Stories of the American Revolution. Other programs around the system included live music at Perry Hall and Towson in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month; virtual programs as part of the Make Your Vote Count series; and Shred Days. Entrepreneur Academy started the seven-session "school year" with 250 participants, covering marketing, business foundations, taxes, finances, record keeping.

ACE said farewell to two mobile services employees—librarian Lisa Jones and driver Wil Tucker. Both played important roles in expanding our services to those who cannot make it into a branch.

Youth and Family Engagement hosted BCPL's second annual Read Out Proud celebration which included a Drag Story Hour with Bootsy Omega, an author visit with Kyle Lukoff, and an hour of crafts and games. BCPL's fourth annual *Dia de los Muertos* celebration will be held later this month at Reisterstown. YFE also worked with Towson branch employees to staff outreach tables at the GBMC NICU readathon, promoting our birth to five services, including 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten and our newborn care kits.

The Foundation for Baltimore County Public Library's "Ask me how a vote for Question N supports Baltimore County Public Library" campaign is well underway. Staff across the system have been participating on designated days by wearing buttons and/or t-shirts. Tabling has taken place, both in branches and at BCPL programs as well as at large community events.

Federal, state, and local elected officials will join the Chiefs, Board, and staff at the Essex branch as BCPL celebrates the public funding for the new Essex branch, including the inclusion of a bond referendum on the General Election ballot.

The Foundation is busy with a special edition of *Booked for Baltimore County Public Library: Celebrating America with Jon Meacham.* The public program has been fully subscribed, and staff are working diligently—alongside an Event Committee—to sell tickets to a special reception immediately following the program. Tickets are still available, and all proceeds go to the Foundation, which in turn supports library programs and services.

The Marketing & Communications team has been busy providing design services, collateral, and event coordination to keep public programs and foundation activities moving forward. Highlights include Sunday Fundays at branches across the system where young visitors have had the opportunity to meet Clifford the Big Red Dog, Curious George, and Peter Rabbit.

Ms. Beegle also shared that she received a photograph of State Senator Ben Brooks with a HUGE smile, which was taken at the Reisterstown Anniversary event where he completed the silhouette activity. She said it is always great to see elected officials smiling at the library!

Finally, Ms. Beegle thanked the Foundation for a grant of $200,000 to expand food pantry services.

Public Services

Ms. Baker shared that Public Services continued to deliver strong customer service, expand access to collections, advance inclusion efforts, strengthen digital access, and support systemwide facility improvements.

Capital Projects remain on track with both Loch Raven stairs and the re-opening of North Point set for late October/early November. Planning, construction, and ongoing meetings are underway for major projects at Essex, Randallstown, Towson, and Woodlawn. With the vacancy of the Chief Operations Officer and Capital Planning Manager. Ms. Baker expressed her appreciation for the support provided by the Facilities and Regional Managers as well as the patience of all staff as the team works to manage these additional duties. There continue to be daily work orders, and she is committed to not only having

Baltimore County Property Management, contractors, and vendors address these issues but to communicate in a timely way to all staff when issues arise. Addressing all maintenance issues and closures are done in direct collaboration with both the expertise of vendors and input from managers onsite to ensure decisions are made in the best interest of staff, customers, and in shared buildings other county agencies as well.

Customer Support Services manages more than 3,000 customer interactions across phone, email, and text while also supporting meeting room reservations and interlibrary loan services.

Collection Development managed the annual increase in new releases, improving workflows to get high-demand materials into customers' hands faster. The department also supported the Board-approved change aligning PACREG eContent borrowing limits with physical materials beginning January 1 and secured grant funding to expand the Library of Things collection.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion continued advancing inclusive services through cultural programming, community partnerships, and staff development. Highlights include Read Out Proud, Día de los Muertos planning, multilingual outreach efforts, and training focused on serving new Americans and leading with equity. The call for 2027 BCPL Affinity Group Planning Teams was also released to all staff. These teams help shape priorities, activities, and resources while creating opportunities for connection, learning, and support. Planning efforts include the Black Library Workers Affinity Group, B Proud Affinity Group for LGBTQIA+ Library Workers, Neuroverse Affinity Group for Neurodiverse Staff, the reactivation of the 50+ Library Workers Affinity Group, and development of an Asian American and Pacific Islander Affinity Group in response to staff interest. The department also launched the newest Beginning Conversations training module, *Beyond Behavior: Creating Libraries Where Every Teen Belongs.*

Digital Equity and Virtual Services continued expanding access to technology and digital inclusion initiatives. The department is working with OIT to implement systemwide credit card reader updates, collaborating with Programs & Partnerships to establish new community partnerships that will expand the reach of the Digital Navigator program, and increasing the LTE Chromebook fleet available through the long-term lending program to improve internet and device access for customers who need it most.

Branch highlights this month demonstrate the impact of these efforts across the system. Catonsville completed collection improvements that created additional shelf space and improved browsing for customers. Loch Raven expanded access through its Spanish Book Checkout partnership with Oakleigh Elementary School. Essex staff reported strong community enthusiasm for the future Essex Branch project, while branches across the system successfully hosted back-to-school outreach events, connected with community organizations, and welcomed new customers through engaging programs and services.

Overall, the month reflected continued progress toward our goals of excellent customer service, equitable access, strong collections, digital inclusion, welcoming communities, and modern library spaces that meet the evolving needs of Baltimore County residents.

Ms. Walsh David commented that as Board members, everyone feels well informed. Board members are always excited to see how much each branch and department is doing. Ms. Walsh David was recently asked to put together a program about what the library has to offer, and it made her realize just how much there is. She then shared her appreciation and commitment to not take what BCPL does for granted.

Ms. Cheikh commented that even though the North Point Branch is closed, they won an award for their work with the Family Crisis Center. She also noted that the Board appreciates the data-driven approach of the Cataloging and Processing department.

Capital Projects

A Capital Projects dashboard was provided to the Board before the meeting.

Statistical Dashboard

Ms. Gamertsfelder reported that there was nothing unusual on this month's dashboard. The closure of North Point and the Woodlawn mini library have had some impact on the number of tech sessions provided. Ms. Gamertsfelder noted that there were fewer programs in September, but an increase in attendees over this time last year, due to engagement efforts that have been getting people in the door.

Fiscal Services

Ms. Rowe reviewed the Finance Report which was shared with the Board prior to the meeting. BCPL is currently on track, and expenses remain below budget. Grant funds from the Foundation will be credited soon.

Human Resources

Ms. Romney shared a written report prior to the meeting. BCPL has 495 employees and is working to fill 12 open positions.

Ms. Romney continues to advocate for a new HRMS system.

HR staff attended the Morgan State University Fall Career Fair and engaged with 90 students. Collaborated with Fiscal Services to prepare for the upcoming change in payroll systems. Prepared for negotiations with the Union, including work on the Longevity plan. Arranged grief counselling after the death of an employee. Human Resources will also continue working on Employee Handbook policies and structure as necessary.

Ms. Walsh Davis asked if BCPL has seen any of the students from the Morgan State University event apply for positions. Ms Romney shared that HR would monitor applications to see if the visit had an impact.

Union Report

Ms. Jackson, Chief Steward, thanked Ms. Cruz for her attendance at Essex Day. The staff spoke with roughly 800 people during this event.

Ms. Jackson shared that negotiations should begin in November. She also shared some general updates.

There were no new or updated grievances. Two grievances were settled, on with a signed agreement, and one within the branch.

General concerns included the "Freedom of Information Act" being used to limit written communication, and the amount of time buildings remain open without electricity or water.

Resolved health and safety concerns included treatment for bed bugs at Towson, sewage issues at Arbutus, general and drinking water issues at Hereford, and loud construction noise at Loch Raven.

Upcoming topics for the Labor and Management Committee include clarifications around the Maryland Public Information Act, staff use of personal accounts for work business, and desk shifts.

Ms. Cheikh stated that the Maryland Public Information Act affects every Marylander, including the Board of Library Trustees and all staff. It is not something we can influence.

Ms. Jackson felt that there was some misunderstanding of the law among the staff.

Board Evaluation Committee

Ms. Cruz reported that the committee has continued to meet and conduct skip level meetings and should be finished by the end of the month.

Board President's Report and Closed Session Statement

This month the Board appointed Jason Homer as the Executive Director. Mr. Homer starts on December 1st. Ms. Ganguly thanked the members of the Search Committee for their work. She also thanked the staff who participated in the process by watching videos and taking surveys. Their input mattered.

Ms. Gangly shared that the Branch and Department reports always help the Board better understand all that is happening round the library system. Ms. Ganguly highlighted Sunday service, and the impact of those hours have on the availability of third space, materials, and service for our customers. She enjoyed the mentions of back-to-school nights and the push by Cataloging & Processing that resulted in an increase in output of 13.7% over five weeks.

Ms. Ganguly congratulated the Foundation on their success in receiving a monetary award from the Osprey Foundation in support of food security.

Ms. Ganguly then called for a moment of remembrance for Ms. Scott who passed away last month.

Closed Session Statement

The Board met in closed session on October 1, 2026. The meeting was closed at 1:07 under General Provisions Article § 3-305 (b) (1) to consider personnel matters related to a specific employee or employees. Voting Aye: Cruz, Ganguly, Lin, and Walsh David. Absent: Cheikh, Netzer, and West.

The Board discussed the promotion of an employee. No votes were taken. The meeting adjourned at 2:15.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Vendors over $50,000

Ms. Rowe presented the Board with a list of ongoing contracts or sole source vendors where purchases will reach or exceed $50,000 in FY 2027. The Board questioned purchase from several vendors. Ms. Rowe clarified purchases from Amazon where for circulating material as necessary due to Baker & Taylor ceasing operations; BCPL purchases circulating Hotspots from both Verizon and T-Mobile, though most are purchased from T-Mobile; and BCPL is part of an energy consortium with WGL Energy Services as a utility vendor selected by Baltimore County.

The Board approved the list of Vendors over $50,000 **(Lin/Cruz).**

Employee Handbook Policies

Ms. Ganguly asked if any member objected to voting on the Employee Handbook policies as a single item. Hearing no objections, the Board voted to approve the following new or updated Employee Handbook Policies **(Walsh David/Lin).**

Section 4-18 Employee Self-Reporting Arrest and Criminal Charge Policy
Section 6-8 Parental Leave
Section 8-13 Nepotism and Conflicts of Interest Policy

Media Relations and Communications Policy

The Board approved the Media Relations and Communications Policy ***(Walsh David/Lin)*** which will combine information from several areas of the Employee Handbook into a single policy.

Resolution to Create a Government Affairs Committee

Ms. Ganguly read a resolution to create a Government Affairs Committee and called for a motion for approval **(Cruz/Lin).** The Board adopted the resolution, and Ms. Ganguly appointed Ms. Cheikh as chair, with Mr. Netzer, and Ms. West as the other members.

CLOSED SESSION AND

Ms. Ganguly called for a motion to close the public portion of the meeting at 8:41 am under General Provisions Article § 3-305 (b) (1) to consider personnel matters related to a specific employee or employees and General Provisions Article § 3-305 (b) (8) to consult with staff, consultants or other individuals about pending or potential litigation **(Cruz/West)**. Aye: Cheikh, Cruz, Ganguly, Lin, Netzer, Walsh David, and West. Others present for personnel discussion: Ms. Baker, Ms. Beegle, Ms. Capstack, (Foundation for BCPL); Mr. Figueroa; Ms. Frederick; Ms. Leitch, Mr. Richardson (Foundation for BCPL), and Ms. Romney. Ms. Bolmarcich, BCPL legal counsel, joined by phone.
Others present for discussion of pending or potential litigation: Ms. Baker, Ms. Beegle, and Ms. Gavigan (Baltimore County Office of Law).

Mr. Netzer left the closed session at 9:58 and did not vote.

The Board returned to open session at 10:37 am **(Cruz/Lin).**

The Ms. Ganguly called for a motion regarding personnel action **(Walsh David/Lin)** and the Board voted unanimously to authorize Human resources to take the recommended personnel actions. Aye: Cheikh, Cruz, Ganguly, Lin, Walsh David, and West. Absent: Netzer

The Ms. Ganguly called for a motion regarding the advice from counsel **(Walsh David/West)** and the Board voted to accept the recommendation for counsel regarding a termination hearing. Aye: Cheikh, Cruz, Ganguly, Walsh David, and West. Abstaining: Lin. Absent: Netzer.

ADJOURNMENT
The meeting adjourned at 10:42 am **(Lin/Cruz).**

Submitted by

Anne West

Secretary