

The Worcester County Library Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, March 10 at the Ocean City branch. Members present were Jeffrey Smith, Nancy Howard, Sandra Buchanan, Vicki O'Mara, and Jennifer Pflaumer. Jocelyn Briddell arrived at 9:45 a.m. Kathryn Culbertson was absent.

Also present were Jennifer Ranck, Director; Betsy Gravenor-Stacey, Assistant Director; Amy Parker; Business Manager; Julie Presley, Ocean City Branch Manager; Stephanie Smith, Library Services Assistant, Ocean City branch; and Jack Pruyn, Library Services Assistant, Pocomoke branch.

Regular meeting was called to order at 9:32 a.m. by Mr. Smith. Recording device was acknowledged.

Ms. Presley said the month of February was a cold and quiet one for Ocean City. Traffic is increasing so we will start seeing our seasonal patrons return. With the coastal blizzard, we had to cancel three programs. Ms. Presley said we hope to reschedule them. We thank Ms. Howard for the partnership with the Henry Hotel program. Ms. Presley said book clubs seem to be a challenge, so the branch is trying passive book clubs. Patrons will be invited to return to the branch after reading a selected book and share a few sentences about the book to be entered into a drawing to win free books. The automatic doors to the building have been broken since December. Ms. Ranck said that the maintenance department has a plan to repair the doors. Ms. Presley said this year the parking passes will be purple, and patrons will have to start using them April 1, 2026. Ocean City is in the process of getting two new blue book drops thanks to the help of Ms. Ranck. Ms. Presley welcomed Ms. Smith and Mr. Pruyn to the board meeting. Part of the LATI requirement is to attend a board meeting. Ms. Presley mentioned she will be having bingo in June, July, and August this year. Stay tuned for more new programs. After the meeting if you get a chance, please walk around and look at the fabulous displays throughout the branch.

A motion to accept the minutes from February 17, 2026 was made by Ms. Howard, seconded by Ms. Buchanan. All present were in favor.

Correspondence – Bayside Gazette and OC Today-Dispatch featured our upcoming events. Mr. Smith noted he likes the calendar of events. Bayside Gazette mentioned free tax preparation at the Ocean Pines, Berlin, and Ocean City branches.

Financial Report – Ms. Parker reported on the February 2026 monies sent to the County Commissioners. Ms. Parker passed out the statistics to the board. Ms. Howard asked about the Ocean City electric budget. Mr. Smith noted the Pocomoke door count was higher.

Administrative Report – Board members received a copy of the Administrative report to review before the meeting. Ms. Ranck reported that Alice Paterra has retired and Michelle Ernat is leaving. Sue Lund from the Berlin branch is also leaving at the end of March, leaving a part-time position open in Berlin. Berlin is trying "Service Squad," which is a way for local high school students to earn their service-learning hours while helping the library and their community. AARP tax assistance takes place in the branches except Snow Hill one day a week. Ms. Ranck thanked Ms. Herz for applying for the Snow Hill handicap ramp grant; the branch was awarded \$10,000. The pop-up delivered 35 programs in February and will be picking up a stop at the Ocean City 50plus Center starting in May. Most of the Pop-Up's items have been made "holdable" to help increase circulation. The Youth Services team has been doing a lot of planning for summer reading. The library continues with Maryland 250 programming. A Pocomoke patron won the Adult Winter reading challenge. Imani Black gave a

presentation on “The Black History of Chesapeake Bay Aquaculture” in February. The next Foundation meeting is March 17. The annual scholarship application is currently open until March 24. A Bowling for Books fundraiser will be held on April 11 at the Eastern Shore Lanes in Pocomoke.

Assistant Director’s Report – A copy of the Staff Development report was sent in each board member’s packet to review before the meeting. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey said Avery Castellani and Angie DiMarco will be graduating from the LATI program tomorrow morning. They will now be Library Associates. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey is happy to report that 20 people will be attending the MLA conference this year in Cambridge. The cost of the conference has gone up. We will be having a half day staff training on April 24 in Berlin. The tech department is still running, processing invoices and carts. Ms. Ranck has been helping to stamp books. The Ocean Pines staff members have offered to help as well.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Pocomoke Project** The substantial completion date is now showing June 24, 2026. The roof is finished and the interior columns have been placed. Permanent power on site is expected this week. There is a small carpet issue going up a ramp in the children’s area and Ms. Ranck is working with Mr. Schoellkopf to get this resolved. Ms. Ranck thanked branch manager Dawn Mackes and assistant branch manager Nicole Panches for continuing to help with furniture and finish decisions.

**Snow Hill Project** Eight bids were received on March 4. Project costs look on target and the County is evaluating the bids. Mr. Smith asked for a timeframe. We are hoping work will begin in April. The temporary branch is working out well, with all services except for faxing available on site. We are hoping to offer a couple of summer reading programs at the schools and will also utilize the pavilion at Sturgis Park.

**Grievance Policy** The Grievance Policy was sent to the library’s attorney for review, and the suggestions were given to the Policy Committee. This will be tabled until next month.

**Policy Committee - Board of Trustees Guide** – This will be tabled until next month.

**Marketing Report** A copy of the marketing report is included in your packet. Ms. Orf is looking to highlight Baby Time programs and a new product called Wonder Books now circulating. Ms. Orf will also look into starting a TikTok account for the library.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**“Before the Settlers”** This local history video was part of a grant project from the Institute of Museum and Library Services through the Maryland State Library Agency. Ms. Ranck and Ms. Herz worked on the script and Unscene Productions provided the video production. The video was shown during the Ocean City Film Festival, March 2026.

**Closed Session – Library Personnel**

Closed Session – Personnel Matter

Ms. Howard made a motion to have a closed session at 10:19 a.m. under Maryland Open Meetings Act General Provisions Article § 3-305 (b) (2); Ms. Pflaumer seconded. All were in favor. At 11:00 a.m. Ms. Buchanan made a motion to come out of closed session, Ms. Pflaumer seconded. Ms. Howard motioned to adjourn the meeting; Dr. Briddell seconded. All present were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 11:01a.m.

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, April 14, at the Worcester County Tourism office, 107 West Green Street, Snow Hill, MD at 9:30 a.m.

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Amy Parker