

The Worcester County Library Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, September 10 at the Snow Hill Branch. Members present were Jeff Smith, Sandra Buchanan, Nancy Howard, Patricia Tomasovic, Jocelyn Briddell, Vicki O'Mara and Kathryn Culbertson.

Also present were Jennifer Ranck, Director; Betsy Gravenor-Stacey, Assistant Director; Brittney Herz, Snow Hill Branch Manager; and Amy Parker, Business Manager.

Regular meeting was called to order at 9:39 a.m. by Mr. Smith. Recording device was acknowledged.

Ms. Herz said the Summer Reading Kick Off Event with Bluey and Bingo was a huge success, with at least 84 people in attendance. The Reptile World program was also a big draw, attracting over 70 people. Total program attendance was 690 this year which was a huge jump from last year. The branch tried two night programs this summer for families. About 12-15 people attended each program; all seemed to enjoy the activities. Ms. Herz said the branch will try more of these programs. The new nature center display by the garden is growing and more outdoor programs are being planned. Circulation stats are doing well. The Non-Fiction collection is being weeded. The book club at Tides & Vine is going strong and Ms. Schilb is creating a special holiday ornament celebrating the one anniversary. Ms. Herz will be meeting with the jail next month. One idea to generate more summer reading participation is to partner with the schools and summer academy to see if completing badges can be turned into "eagle bucks." The branch is excited to be part of the Town of Snow Hill's Dickens Week, slated for the second week in December.

A motion to approve the June minutes was made by Ms. Tomasovic, seconded by Ms. O'Mara. All present were in favor.

Correspondence – *Ocean City Today-Dispatch* and *Bayside Gazette* had articles on the State board approving funds for the new Pocomoke library. *Ocean City Today-Dispatch*, *The Courier* and *Bayside Gazette* had articles on the Ocean Pines ground breaking for the new outdoor learning space. *Ocean City Today-Dispatch* and *Bayside Gazette* featured an article on the Pocomoke library to relocate to the former firehouse. *Bayside Gazette* announced the Ocean Pines library annual book sale. *Bayside Gazette* had an article on the Berlin library displaying new pieces by local artists. *Bayside Gazette* featured an article on a Johnny Cash program at the Ocean Pines library in August. *Ocean City Today-Dispatch* and *Bayside Gazette* featured articles on the free classical music concert at the Ocean Pines library. *WBOC* and *Bayside Gazette* had articles on the Worcester County Library to receive funding for the Worcester County Heritage project. *Ocean City Today-Dispatch* and *Bayside Gazette* featured articles on the County's donation of the Snow Hill library property for the Bank Street promenade project to move forward. *Ocean City Today-Dispatch* featured Carlos Caceres, Ocean City volunteer, receiving the Volunteer Spirit Award.

Financial Report – Ms. Parker reported on the branch expenses for July/August 2024. Ms. Ranck said the County Commissioners approved the changes to Bank Street. Ms. Smith asked about the budget. Ms. Ranck said the budget is steady. She will talk to the branches about the book budget. We never use the whole amount so we will try to spend down. We do set aside some of the ESRL grant monies for the collection. Ms. Ranck said the survey results showed patrons are wanting more new titles. Ms. Ranck mentioned she is worried about the Pocomoke budget. Ms. Ranck will ask the County Commissioners if the unspent money from last year can be used to help. Ms. Howard asked if the State can help. Ms. Ranck replied no. Mr. Smith noted the door counts increased from last year. The Pop-Up

numbers were down because of rain and the MACO conference in August. Other than that they are doing very well. Mr. Smith commented it was nice to see the Pop-Up at the Buckingham open house.

**Administrative Report** – Board members received a copy of the Administrative report to review before the meeting. Ms. Ranck said the two assistant branch managers in Ocean City did a terrific job handling the branch since Alec Staley left. Julie Presley, new Ocean City branch manager, started September 3 and will be a great addition. Savannah Arena will be the new Youth Services Coordinator, filling the position left by Sara Wheatley. Ms. Ranck said the Chamber Music by the Sea Festival events were successful at the Berlin branch. The Berlin branch’s Mad Laboratory will span four days this year: October 28-31. Work on the battery storage facility adjacent to the Ocean City library continues. Ms. Ranck submitted a small project to the County to help improve the parking lot at the Ocean City branch. Ms. Howard asked if we could talk to the church next door to see if the staff could park there. Ms. Ranck said that is a possibility. The Friends of the Ocean Pines Library (FOPL) held its annual Book Sale during the final week of July, raising \$14,000. The FOPL’s Classical Music Concert drew 130 people. Ms. Ranck said the collaborative art wall in Pocomoke for Summer Reading is amazing. New crafts have been added each week. The next Foundation meeting is scheduled for September 17. A paint night fundraiser will be this Thursday.

**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 she helped with summer reading programs this year since Ms. Wheatley left. Laura Bartels in Berlin helped with the story time at the Ocean City airport. Ms. Ranck and Ms. Parker helped with the story time at Chesapeake Bay Farms. Overall, we had 741 children registered as readers. 146,202 reading minutes were logged. The fall Calendar of Events is out. Ms. Howard mentioned she loves the cover and it was a very good choice. Graphic Designer Michael Carmean does a great job. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey said that September is library card sign up month. We will be having the mobile story walk at the County Employee Appreciation night on October 8 and at the Taylor House Museum book festival in Berlin on October 19. We are working on the agenda for staff day on October 14. We are exploring the idea of making 2025 “the year of play.” A hobby fair for adults at the Berlin branch is in the works. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey brought up the idea to visit the Pratt library in Baltimore and take a SRLC tour for the April staff day to the board. This means the library would be closed the whole day instead of the half day. Ms. Howard suggested asking the Community Foundation for a grant to cover the bus and expenses.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Pocomoke** Ms. Ranck said the design phase is complete and a pre-bid meeting will be held today at 2 pm. Ms. Mackes and Ms. Punches are doing a wonderful job laying out the temporary space. Ms. Ranck shared the layout and photos of the space. The branch is working on a large weed to pare down the collection. Ms. Ranck is not sure where or how much it will cost to store some of the collection. Mr. Smith suggested moving the books to other branches instead of storing them. The church across the street said we can use their kitchen so the staff have somewhere to eat their lunch.

**Strategic Plan** Results from the public survey are included in the board packet. 265 people responded to the survey. Ms. Ranck contacted Beacon to help with public information sessions. The cost per

session will be \$1,000. We will likely have two public sessions in early November, one in Snow Hill and one in Ocean Pines. In the meantime, Ms. Ranck is working on a presentation about the library including a bit of history, current statistics, and list of services. The survey results were discussed.

**Borrowing Policy Update: “County Public Libraries - Minors, Children, and Teens - Prohibited Practices”** As mentioned before, a new regulation for libraries will take effect October 1. Borrowing policy could be updated to read:

***REPLACEMENT COSTS***

*Once an item is three weeks overdue, your account will be charged the replacement cost of the item. These charges will be waived when the item is returned. In addition, you will still be responsible for items that are damaged or missing parts. Your card will not be usable until the late item is returned, or the charges are paid. If an item is returned within six months of paying the replacement fee and is in good condition, the library will refund the replacement cost to the cardholder.*

A form was created and will be given to the County’s Accounts Payable person. The County would then issue a check and send to the patron. Ms. Howard motioned to update our borrowing policy; Ms. Tomasovic seconded. All present were in favor.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Appoint Officers** Ms. O’Mara motioned to keep the same officers in place for the new year, with Jeff Smith serving as President and Sandra Buchanan as Vice President. Ms. Howard seconded. All present were in favor.

**Capital Improvement Plan** Ms. Ranck submitted updated projects for the Pocomoke and Snow Hill library branches. The CIP is typically approved in December.

**Save the Date: 2024 Annual Conference for Friends, Trustees and Library Supporters** This conference is scheduled for Saturday, November 2 at the Bowie Branch of the Prince George’s County Memorial Library System. Details forthcoming.

**Library Promotion** Ms. Howard asked if we could partner with county and city organizations by placing an advertisement in their publications aimed for tourists. The board liked the idea.

Ms. Ranck briefly discussed the idea of a mascot. The board discussed and Ms. Briddell mentioned the possibility of a community wide contest.

Phase one of the outdoor patio is done in Ocean Pines.

Ms. Buchanan motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Briddell seconded. All present were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 10:47 a.m.

Worcester County Library Board of Trustees  
Minutes, September 10, 2024  
Page 4

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, October 8, 2024 at the Berlin branch at 9:30 a.m.

---

Amy Parker