

The Worcester County Library Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, May 11, 2021 via Zoom Conference. Members present via Zoom Conference were Leslie Mulligan, Nancy Howard, Vicki O'Mara, Patricia Tomasovic, and Jeff Smith. (Ms. Ranck was absent due to bereavement leave.)

Also present via Zoom Conference were Rachael Stein, Assistant Director; Amy Parker, Business Manager; Harry Burkett; Ocean Pines Branch Manager; and Bethany Hooper, Reporter for the *Coastal Dispatch*.

Regular meeting was called to order at 9:31 a.m. by Ms. Mulligan. Recording device was acknowledged.

A motion to accept Minutes from the April 13, 2021 meeting was made by Ms. O'Mara; seconded by Ms. Tomasovic. All present were in favor.

Correspondence – Ms. Mulligan commented on re-opening and said numbers are up. *Bayside Gazette* reported on the Library Board looking to fill two vacancies. *Ocean City Today* reported on Ocean City Library's shingle roof replacement project. Pictures of the Snow Hill & Ocean Pines display boards were also included in the board packet.

Financial Report – Ms. Parker reviewed branch expenses for April 2021. Mr. Smith asked why the general maintenance budget in Berlin was over. Ms. Parker reminded the board the reason was trees were removed at the Berlin branch. Ms. Mulligan asked about the Snow Hill water. Ms. Parker did reach out to the Town of Snow Hill when she noticed the bill increase. The Town of Snow Hill conducted an investigation and nothing was found. We believe it is from the irrigation system over the spring/summer period. The bill seems to be higher around that time frame. Ms. Parker also noted the propane rates are up in Ocean Pines. No comments were made on the statistics.

Administrative Report – Board members received a copy of the Administrative report to review before the meeting. Ms. Stein said that Wendy Helmuth has filled the full-time position at the Ocean City branch. We filled the two part-time positions, one starting May 17 and the other person starting June 1. Summer Reading Program plans are well under way, plans will be finalized in early June once we know more about the COVID restrictions in place for the summer. Alec Staley put the family folders on our website due to the requests. (<https://worcesterialibrary.libguides.com/localhistory/FamilyFolders>). Outreach Adult Program Manager Elena Coelho attended the Lower Shore Vulnerable Task Force One Stop outreach in West Ocean City. Several new partnerships were discussed including, the Veteran's Association, Worcester Gold, and the Grace Center. The different agencies offer free food and vaccinations. Library staff members were there signing people up for library cards. Ms. Stein said it is a valuable partnership. The mobile job unit will be coming out to all branches in the future. Three scholarship recipients were selected. Announcements will be made during Senior Award Nights at each of the three high schools. The board asked if there will be a press release announcing the winners, Ms. Stein said she would handle that.

Staff Development Report - A copy of the Staff Development report was sent in each board member's packet to review before the meeting. Ms. Stein reported staff day on April 30 was successful. The message was "Don't Sweat the Flops". Ms. Stein did a demonstration with the flop ball for the board. Lisa Voss and Marie Northam graduated from the Advanced Library Associate Training Institute via Zoom. Local history librarian Alec Staley attended an Oral History Workshop that gave him tools to inform the oral history project that he is planning to carry out.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

**EDI Grant / Committee** Ms. Stein said the order has been placed for new children's materials. A calendar of displays has been created and given to each branch so we are staying consistent each month. A draft EDI statement is ready and will be discussed at the June meeting.

**Facility Updates** The carpets have been cleaned in all the branches. Special thanks to Ms. Parker for scheduling this. New security systems were successfully installed at the Ocean City and Pocomoke branches. Planning for the new shingle roof in Ocean City continues, the project timeline currently shows a completion date of mid-June.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Library Reopening** On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, library branches expanded hours. Operating hours are almost back to normal except for closing 15 minutes to allow for end of the day cleaning. Ocean Pines will pilot reopening their large meeting room on May 15. They will include an additional form requiring those reserving the space to follow state/local mask and social distancing requirements at the time of the meeting. The form will also help if contact tracing is needed. Capacity will be set at 25% (which equals 25 people) for the large meeting room for safety and to maintain a 6 ft. distance.

**Summer Reading** We are hoping for good weather, but do have back-up locations planned in case of rain. Ms. Stein said the Ocean City branch will open late on June 30, July 14, and July 28 to accommodate the larger events inside the branch. Other programs will take place on the porch. In Ocean Pines, programs will be on the lawn or in the large meeting room with proper social distancing and masks. The Berlin branch will use the children's porch for their programs – the location will work even during inclement weather. The Snow Hill branch will use the Pavilion at Sturgis Park (not far from the library). The site should also work if we have rainy weather. The Pocomoke branch will use their lawn or the downtown pavilion if it rains. We continue to monitor mask mandates and social distancing requirements.

**Bylaws** A copy of the Board of Trustee bylaws are also included in the packet. The board took a few minutes to read through the bylaws. After discussion, Mr. Jeff motioned to change the wording under Article IV: Officers, Section 1: Appointment – “Officers shall be a President and Vice President, but the board may elect Treasurer and Secretary if appropriate” and under Section 3: Duties – d. “The Secretary may delegate duties to staff”; Ms. O’Mara seconded. All present were in favor.

**Board Applicants** Several applications were received. The board discussed the applicants and has chosen to elect Sandra Buchanan to represent the Pocomoke area. Ms. Howard made a motion; Mr. Smith seconded. All present were in favor. Ms. Mulligan said she would reach out to Ms. Buchanan to invite her to the June meeting. Ms. Parker mentioned Ms. Ranck will have to send a memo to the County Commissioners so they can approve Ms. Buchanan. After further discussion, the board has agreed to keep the second position open at this time to search for more diverse candidates. The board would also like to see more introductions and proceed with in person meetings starting in June with a Zoom option.

**FY 21 Budget** The County’s Annual Budget Hearing took place on May 4. Enclosed in the board meeting reminder is a link to the presentation. The board agreed to table this until next meeting.

**MSL Grant Opportunity** In lieu of the Maryland State Library’s competitive grants cycle, MSL will be providing funds through the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA). Ms. Ranck and Ms. Stein are working on getting the grant in. It will be a quick turnaround.

Mr. Burkett said people are trickling back in. Curbside service has dropped off. We can look forward to more progress in the garden. Ken Whited and Maintenance have done a lot of work to improve the drainage in the garden. But unfortunately, that meant digging up irrigation lines and plants and removing trees because that particular area of the garden had to be clear of any root systems. There was a "garden summit" between the volunteer gardeners, Ken Whited, and Ed Tudor of Development Review and Permitting (Mr. Whited consulted Mr. Tudor because he's a master gardener). Mr. Whited explained why the gardeners were prohibited from planting anything in the new drainage area, which derailed some of their original plans. The gardeners came away with a much better idea of the parameters. They began work on a new landscape plan that would incorporate plants with shallow root systems and decorative grasses,

which in some ways was better than the original.

**Closed Session – Personnel / Library Director Evaluation**

Mr. Smith made a motion to have a closed session in a breakout room via Zoom as noted on the meeting agenda at 10:41 a.m. under Maryland Open Meetings Act General Provisions Article § 3-305 (b) (2); Ms. O'Mara seconded. All were in favor. At 10:55 a.m. Mr. Smith made a motion to come out of closed session, Ms. O'Mara seconded. Ms. Mulligan noted the meeting reconvened in open session at 10:55 a.m., and stated the board discussed a Personnel/Library Director Evaluation matter during the closed session. No new policy was adopted.

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, June 8, 2021 at the Pocomoke branch with a Zoom option at 9:30 a.m. Ms. Tomasovic motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Howard seconded. All present were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 10:57 a.m.

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Amy Parker