

The Worcester County Library Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, September 12, 2023 at the Snow Hill Branch. Members present were Jeff Smith, Sandra Buchanan, Nancy Howard, Patricia Tomasovic, Kathryn Culbertson, Vicki O'Mara, and Jocelyn Briddell.

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

Regular meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Mr. Smith. Recording device was acknowledged.

Ms. Herz was introduced to the Library Board. She reported she has been on staff for a little over the month and has had the opportunity to meet with the Snow Hill staff individually and as a team during her first couple of weeks. She gave the staff a survey to fill out and the results showed the branch's main focus is to work on community outreach. The branch will offer programs to coincide with other Town events such as Dickens Weekend. Ms. Herz has also reconfigured some of the furniture to create more work stations available to patrons who bring in their own device. There are plans to upgrade furniture and highlight the local history collection as well. Ms. Herz would like to continue her work with ECI to help with an ethics program and offer her services to the Worcester County Jail to see if they need assistance in improving their library.

A motion to accept the Minutes from the June 13, 2023 meeting was made by Ms. Tomasovic; seconded by Ms. Howard. All present were in favor.

Correspondence – *The Coastal Dispatch* and *Ocean City Today* had several articles on the Pocomoke library project. *The Ocean City Today*, *Coastal Dispatch*, and *Bayside Gazette* ran articles about the artists display at the Berlin library. *Coastal Dispatch* and *Bayside Gazette* had articles on the Friends of Ocean Pines Library annual book sale. The *Coastal Dispatch* mentioned the Delmarva Power land swap in Ocean City continues. Ms. Ranck said the power station is still being built behind the Ocean City library in 2024. Street access around the water tower will still be open. The *Ocean City Today* mentioned the One Maryland One Book – “There There.” Ms. Howard complimented the Pop-Up Library's booth at the Maryland Association of Counties Conference. Ms. Ranck said she was very grateful we could be there and appreciated Governor Moore and his team stopping by.

Financial Report – Ms. Parker reported on the branch expenses for July and August 2023. Ms. Parker also reported on the FY23 and FY24 monies that have been sent to the County Commissioners. No comments were made on the statistics.

Administrative Report – Board members received a copy of the Administrative report to review before the meeting. Ms. Ranck reported on several staff changes. Library Services Assistants were hired in Berlin and Ocean Pines, Julie Johnson and Claudette Keyser respectively. Marshall Shord and Ryan Ellis have left the Ocean City branch and Seth Nedrow is transferring to the Ocean Pines branch. Interviews are underway for the open positions. Ocean Pines Youth Services Specialist Jake Nail is leaving at the end of December to pursue graduate work. We would like to hire a Youth Services Specialist in time to train with Mr. Nail before he leaves. Ms. Ranck said all branches had a great summer. In Berlin, Kris Merritt and Dave Nedrow created the Kindness Café for Boothy. The children loved coming to the desk and taking “orders” for pizza and coffee, as well as interacting with their parents and families. In Ocean City, between the Pod and Studio OC, quiet study spaces were used 627 times. Ocean City staff member Jo Ann Strouse started a weekly Mahjong Club in August and it has seen a steady increase of patrons. One of the Mahjong participants was so happy they donated two folding card tables to the Ocean City Branch. The Friends of the Ocean Pines Library's Annual Book Sale set a new record, with approximately 1,400 people attending the sale over a three-day period, generating over \$15,000. Ms. O'Mara said they are going to do things differently next year with the vendors. The library's graphic designer Mike Carmean held a comic book workshop called “Heroes Unite” at the Pocomoke Branch, which was well received. The Pocomoke Branch once again participated in a wonderful collaboration with the Homeless Outreach Team and 15 other organizations for another resource fair. Ms. Ranck said we are going to try this in Ocean City in January. Note - Ms. Briddell entered the meeting at 9:48 a.m. Local History Librarian Erin Scott attended the Indigenous Education in Maryland's Lower Eastern Shore Workshop sponsored by the Maryland State Archives, Maryland State Department of Education, and Maryland State Arts Council in August. Ms. Ranck said that the bookmobile was a huge

success during the summer. Amanda Laick shared statistics for the bookmobile in her report to the board. Commissioner Bertino said Ms. Laick has “the zest for this program.” Ms. Culbertson questioned Ms. Laick’s hours on the road. She is concerned Ms. Laick is getting burned out. Ms. Ranck agreed. August was a very busy month. The Foundation is planning a Paint Night on September 28 at the Berlin library and a bus trip to Longwood Gardens on November 30. Ms. Ranck told the board she will be attending the Association of Rural and Small Library conference next week.

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 the new Calendar of Events booklets are out. The community art project from the Pocomoke library is featured on the cover. Kudos to Mr. Carmean and the staff who work on the Calendar of Events. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey met with Alicia Blake, Staff Development Coordinator at Eastern Shore Regional Library, on August 31 to discuss Worcester’s training needs and priorities for the year, based on staff survey responses, as well as impressions of trainings hosted by ESRL over the past year. The most common current training needs reported were related to “Core Library Skills,” including learning more about the Polaris and Marina/ILL systems, and “Community Engagement,” including tips for partnering with organizations to reach those in need. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey mentioned there is a new resource called “Udemy” similar to the Gale Courses but slightly different that will be available with your library card. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey will take a training on it next week. The Mobile Multisensory Storywalk®, featuring “Itty-Bitty Kitty Corn” by Shannon Hale, will be at the Worcester County Fair in Byrd Park in Snow Hill from September 14-17. Staff Day is scheduled for October 9 at the Ocean Pines library. Planning is underway.

OLD BUSINESS:

Pocomoke The County Commissioners approved the architect’s proposal and the design process can move forward. Ms. Ranck said there will be a core team Zoom meeting Thursday or Friday of this week and another meeting scheduled for the week of September 25.

FY 23 Budget Ms. Ranck said the transfer request will be due this Friday to the County Budget Officer.

Telework Policy Human Resources had several questions about the proposed policy. Ms. Ranck would like to send it back to the policy board. Ms. Briddell asked for the list of concerns. Ms. Ranck said she will send it to the board via email.

NEW BUSINESS:

Appoint Officers Each September the board elects new officers. Ms. Howard motioned to retain the current President, Jeff Smith, and current Vice President, Sandy Buchanan; Ms. O’Mara seconded. All present were in favor. Thank you to Mr. Smith and Ms. Buchanan for serving another term.

Email Signature Policy Ms. Ranck understands why the County wants to keep things clean and professional. Ms. Ranck will find out if the library will be required to follow the County’s same format.

Capital Improvement Plan Updated projects for the Snow Hill and Pocomoke branch libraries were submitted. Ms. Ranck said she will need help from County Administration to see how the Snow Hill project can be phased and if the Pocomoke project funding lines up with projections on their end. Ms. Ranck did apply for a small project for the Ocean City Branch to add carpet tiles in the meeting rooms and purchase tables and chairs that are lighter and easier to move.

Creative Aging with Care grant Adult Program Coordinator Elena Coelho worked very hard on this grant, and Ms. Gravenor-Stacey helped. Ms. Coelho had arranged for several different types of programs that will run throughout the Fall and Winter. A segment on DelmarvaLife (WBOC) will air later this month talking about the program series. Ms. Briddell asked about amount of the grant award; the grant funding totals \$5,500.

Memory Kits Several Memory Kits with different themes have been added to the library collection, including the Pop-Up Library. These kits have been developed to foster conversation and communication between people with memory loss and those that care for them. Some of themes include animals, holidays, and even decades, like the 60s and the 70s.

2023 Annual Conference The 2023 Annual Conference for Friends, Trustees, & Library Supporters will be held at the Bowie branch Saturday, October 21 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. If anyone would like to attend please let Ms. Ranck know. Ms. Ranck will send out registration information via email.

Ms. Howard asked about the Snow Hill parking down by the river. Ms. Culbertson said it is part of the Bank Street plan in which she is part of the committee for the Town. Ms. Ranck has met with the Town and County Administration about this. Discussion followed. The board agreed to put on the next month's agenda. Library property is owned by the County; any decisions about property lines will be made by the County Commissioners.

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, October 10 at the Berlin branch at 9:30 a.m. Ms. Briddell motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Buchanan seconded. All present were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 10:42 a.m.

Amy Parker