

The Worcester County Library Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, October 13, 2020 via Zoom Conference. Members present via Zoom Conference were Leslie Mulligan, Vicki O'Mara, Patricia Tomasovic, and Jaime Bailey. Nancy Howard, Jeff Smith and Holly Anderson were absent.

Also present via Zoom Conference were Jennifer Ranck, Director; Rachael Stein, Assistant Director; Amy Parker, Business Manager; Alice Paterra, Berlin 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 September 8, 2020 meeting was made by Ms. O'Mara; seconded by Mr. Bailey. All present were in favor.

Correspondence - *Coastal Dispatch* reported that Ocean City branch is the last branch to open with contactless Library To-Go services and limited services by appointment. The *Bayside Gazette* featured an article about the donated artwork to the Ocean Pines branch from the Doellgast family. Ms. O'Mara asked about the status of the 10,000 flower project in Berlin. Ms. Ranck said she believes it was put on hold due to Covid-19 but she will reach out to them.

Financial Report – Ms. Parker reviewed branch expenses for September 2020. Ms. Ranck reported on the statistics; and noted we have finally have some door counts. Children's programming participation is down, most likely because of screen time fatigue, however adult participation numbers are still in line with in-person programming. The library's downloadable circulation, which includes materials from Overdrive and Hoopla, continues to increase.

Administrative Report – Board members received a copy of the Administrative report to review before the meeting. Ms. Ranck reported all branches are open by appointment and things are going smoothly. Our visitors have done a wonderful job of following our new procedures and we cannot thank them enough for their help. We have had ongoing One Maryland, One Book and NEA Big Read programs. Brain Health kits have been distributed to Harrison House and Meals on Wheels. These kits include: markers, coloring pencils (regular, fluorescent, and metallic), coloring books, Sudoku, crossword puzzles, word find, and jigsaw puzzles. The library will collaborate with other long-term facilities, and will also have kits available at the branches for distribution.

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 that the State Library is offering webinars on safety and customer service. The Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee met for the first time, for a total of four hours over two days. They began to review the vocabulary of EDI and make plans for the coming year.

The 2020 Maryland Library Association conference will take place throughout the month of October on Tuesday and Thursdays, as will the State Library Resource Center Conference. We expect several staff members to attend many of these sessions.

**Old Business** – A copy was sent in each board member's pack to review before the meeting.

**Pocomoke Library Pre-Design** The Phase 2 Environmental report came back late August. Unfortunately, the site is not a viable option for the library. Ms. Ranck is not certain what will happen with the State Grant that was submitted back in May.

**New Business** –

**Reopening** Ms. Ranck said patrons are asking to come into the branches to browse the shelves. Library staff, including Ms. Ranck, are on the fence about this next step and what benchmarks to use in order to expand services. Currently, computers by appointment, use of the copiers, and library card registrations are being offered inside the branches. Curbside pick-up of library materials and print requests continues. Ms. Mulligan recommended limiting visitors at first; staff safety is a priority, and possibly alternate branches. Ms. Ranck said she would ask the branch managers for assistance at their next meeting, scheduled for this afternoon at 2 pm. Ms. O'Mara said we are not ready to open for

browsing yet. Ms. Ranck said she appreciates the staff and their willingness to move forward through all of this. Service levels will remain the same but this will be reviewed again at the November Board meeting.

**Outdoor programming** Two recent requests for after-hours outdoor programs have been sent to Library Administration. Both requests were to use the outdoor space for performances with proper social distancing and masks would be required. It was decided that since the library is not offering any programming right now, regrettably the library would not be able to approve these requests.

**Strategic Plan / Community Survey** A draft Strategic Plan has been included in the board packet.

**EDI Grant / Committee** – The newly formed Equity, Diversity and Inclusion committee met twice in September and will continue to meet monthly during this year-long project. Enclosed in the board packet is a stakeholder report. Some of the results have been incorporated into the draft strategic plan and will become action items for the EDI committee to complete.

Ms. Ranck also said the annual Citizens for Maryland Libraries Trustee’s meeting will be held virtually this Saturday from 10 am to 12 pm. In addition, there are still spots available for Dr. Kendi statewide virtual talk scheduled on November 2.

Ms. Paterra reported that the Berlin staff is reconnecting with patrons. Appointments for library service have increased. The branch has agreed to participate in a buyback program through Baker & Taylor. This will allow weeded material to return to Baker & Taylor and the branch will receive a credit to purchase new materials. The branch is in the process of weeding and shifting books. Ms. Paterra reported the Town of Berlin had to shut off water to the branch (and other surrounding areas) on two different days. Skateboarders continue to misuse the porch and ramp. The Town police have been notified.

Upcoming program via Zoom November 10 – in conversation with Author Nathaniel Philbrick, “In the Heart of the Sea”.

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, November 10 at via Zoom at 9:30 a.m. Mr. Bailey motioned to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Tomasovic seconded. All present were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 10:22a.m.

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Amy Parker