The Worcester County Library Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, October 13 at the Berlin branch. Members present were Jeffrey Smith, Nancy Howard, Jennifer Pflaumer, Jocelyn Briddell, Vicki O'Mara, and Kathryn Culbertson. Sandra Buchanan was absent.

Also present were Jennifer Ranck, Director; Betsy Gravenor-Stacey, Assistant Director; Amy Parker; Administrative Services Coordinator; and Laura Bartels, Berlin Branch Manager.

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

Ms. Bartels reported that the branch is fully staffed with the addition of Lindsay Kolankowski and Kim Patrick. It was a busy summer with the summer reading program and story times are averaging 35-50 people. Meeting room use is increasing, and patrons are also asking for small meeting room space for online meetings and phone conferences. A lot of requests for service learners have been coming in, and the branch has been able to accommodate the students. Ms. Bartels is weeding and freshening up the non-fiction section. As a result, circulation has increased.

A motion to accept the minutes from September 15, 2026 was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Culbertson. All present were in favor.

Correspondence
Bayside Gazette – *Library System Seeking New Board Trustee Amid Vacancy; Fundraiser Will Benefit Town Cats, Ocean Pines Library;* and October Upcoming Events advertisement
OC Today-Dispatch – *Worcester Library Board to Fill Upcoming Vacancy* and October Upcoming Events advertisement
County Seat – October 2026 Cooking Up Health Classes this Fall and Maryland STEM Festival at the Library

A letter from Maryland State Library Agency was included, indicating that the Library's "collection and reconsideration policies" are in compliance with COMAR Regulation.

Financial Report – Ms. Parker reported on the September 2026 monies sent to the County Commissioners. Ms. Culbertson asked how much electricity costs have increased at the branches. Ms. Parker will gather this information and present it at next month's meeting. Ms. Pflaumer asked about the rent fees for the temporary Pocomoke library. We will monitor the budget and make adjustments as needed. The board liked the graphs included with the statistics.

Administrative Report – Board members received a copy of the administrative report to review before the meeting. Ms. Ranck reported that Ocean City is now offering "Baby Time" programs. The Community Players presented "The Great Gatsby" on September 18, 19, and 20, with a total of 210 people attending the three performances. Savannah Arena and Emma Trader launched the "Early Readers Book Club" program at the Pocomoke branch in September. The Snow Hill branch resumed their offsite programming. Ms. Scott is working to improve the Pitts Collection archive. In September, the Pop-Up attended Pocomoke Elementary's Resource Fair and Fourth Friday, Little Lambs Back to School Breakfast, and joined Savannah Arena and Dawn Davis at Snow Hill Elementary's Community Resource Fair. Ms. Ranck said that the

Youth and Adult programs had strong attendance in September. Pat Tomasovic will be joining the Library Foundation Board. The next Foundation meeting date has not been finalized but will take place in December or January. Several fundraisers will be underway soon, including the 2026 "Shore Gives 365 Giving Season Campaign," Pocomoke brick campaign, and a raffle.

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 that three staff members attended "RTC Solutions: Social Safe Risk Management," hosted by ESRL on September 29. Four staff members attended Reasonable Suspicion Training, hosted by LGIT at the Government Center in Snow Hill, on October 1. Betsy Gravenor-Stacey and Savannah Arena attended the Maryland Library Literacy Summit in Elkridge, MD on October 6. A question was posed at the end of the summit: how do libraries measure the success of their literacy programs and share this information with the public and policy makers? Ms. Culbertson said the board should be instrumental in sharing information with policy makers. Ms. Ranck mentioned a good annual report is helpful, as well. Betsy Gravenor-Stacey also had the opportunity as a "Tech Buddy" to preview the statewide AI Literacy training series, created by MSLA, over the course of several weeks in September. Ms. Ranck would like to see as many staff as possible complete this training. Staff will receive 20 learning hours if they complete the entire series. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey noted that staff day yesterday was successful, with staff being engaged in the afternoon discussion on AI. The Ocean Pines story walk will be picked up tomorrow and will go to the Berlin Book Festival at the Taylor House Museum this Saturday. Ms. O'Mara commented that she enjoyed the story walk. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey also noted that she is still waiting on the ILL stats for September, which are still being compiled by the Maryland Interlibrary Loan Organization (MILO) and should be ready by mid-November.

OLD BUSINESS:

Pocomoke Project Weekly progress meetings continue. Punch list items are being completed, including exterior sealing and paint touch up. The children's librarian desk was installed on October 12. Sod will be laid and parking lot striping will be completed soon.

Snow Hill Project The main power panel was installed last week. Finishes for cabinetry and the circulation desk are being finalized. We hope to add pendant lighting over the circulation desk.

Organization Structure and Effectiveness Study The proposal from Flourishes Consulting was selected. A kickoff meeting was held on October 7. The timeline to complete the work is aggressive but will help inform FY 28's budget request.

NEW BUSINESS:

Marketing Report Included in your packet is the marketing report for September. Ms. Orf is working to promote the haunted library in Berlin and increase overall attendance for adult programs.

AI Discussion Ms. Gravenor-Stacey shared discussion topics from yesterday's staff day. Cass Dasher presented tips for identifying AI materials. AI presents both opportunities and

threats for libraries. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey will send the board links to a video about AI and to a couple of exercises that test a person's ability to spot AI photographs. A survey can be sent to staff to see how they use AI. Dr. Briddell said we can put this under old business next month for further discussion. We are hoping many Worcester staff members will be able to participate in an upcoming AI Literacy training offered through the Maryland State Library Agency.

Maryland Library Literacy Initiative (MARLLI) The Ocean City branch has signed on to be part of MARLLI, a partnership with the Maryland State Library Agency and the Department of Service and Civic Engagement. Branch Manager Julie Presley will serve as point of contact for the literacy fellow.

Library Board Nominating Committee Ms. Buchanan, Ms. Culbertson, and Mr. Smith will serve on the nominating committee to fill the upcoming vacancy after Ms. Howard's term ends in December. The committee will also develop procedures. Ms. Ranck will post the vacancy information on the library website and social media pages.

Brief break from 11:03 a.m. to 11:07 a.m.

Committee Reports Ms. Pflaumer reviewed the board's self-assessment. Areas to improve include trustee orientation and meeting agenda development, including drafting a schedule for perennial agenda topics. The by-laws will be reviewed at the November meeting. The November meeting will continue from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. to discuss what is important.

Mr. Smith motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Howard seconded. All present were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, November 10 at the Ocean City branch at 9:30 a.m.

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Amy Parker