

The Worcester County Library Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, April 14 at the Snow Hill Tourism Office. Members present were Jeffrey Smith, Nancy Howard, Sandra Buchanan, Jennifer Pflaumer, Jocelyn Briddell, and Kathryn Culbertson. Vicki O'Mara was present via phone.

Also present were Jennifer Ranck, Director; Betsy Gravenor-Stacey, Assistant Director; and Amy Parker; Business Manager.

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

Ms. Ranck gave the branch manager report in Ms. Herz's absence. March was the first full month of being in the temporary space and things are going well; the patrons have been very considerate and patient. We can offer almost all of our services except for faxing. We will look for a solution; in the meantime, we are sending patrons to the Business Center. Baby time and story time bring an average of 18 people each week. Brittney Herz, Savannah Arena, and Rachel Jones have been working with the community to line up locations and partners for summer reading programs. Ms. Herz is still providing an enrichment program via proxy at the jail. Ms. Ranck thanked Ms. Herz and the Worcester County Jail for their partnership. Ms. Howard suggested we send a story idea to the newspaper thanking our partners, Worcester County Tourism and Worcester County Recreation and Parks, for allowing us to use their space for programming.

A motion to amend the minutes from March 10, 2026, noting that Kathryn Culbertson was absent, was made by Dr. Briddell, seconded by Ms. Buchanan. All present were in favor.

Correspondence – Bayside Gazette and OC Today-Dispatch featured our upcoming events. Mr. Smith noted he likes the library event advertisements in the papers. Ms. Culbertson said upcoming program posts look great on social media. Bayside Gazette mentioned the Berlin council meetings will temporarily shift to the library. Discussion about locking doors at 6 p.m. is a concern. Ms. Ranck will talk to branch staff and ask County IT if the times could be changed temporarily. Bayside Gazette also featured an article on new artwork on display at the Berlin library.

Financial Report – Ms. Parker reported on the March 2026 monies sent to the County Commissioners. Ms. Ranck said we are a little behind in spending the ESRL grant funds but are looking forward to replacing the two book drops in Ocean City. Ms. Culbertson said more people came into the temporary Pocomoke space than last year and that the new building is coming along nicely.

Administrative Report – Board members received a copy of the Administrative report to review before the meeting. Ms. Ranck commented that the branches are doing well. We filled the three Youth Services positions; they will start in June. Laura Bartels and Dave Nedrow launched "Once Upon a Pizza" in the booth in the Children's Department. The garden club is getting ready. Ocean City is happy to report they had six people for the passive book club. Ocean City also has a new full color digital sign, which they can control. Library Assistant Sylvia Hamilton was selected by her peers as Employee of the Year in Ocean Pines. Worcester County Sheriff Matt Crisafulli sent a \$200 Serpone's gift certificate to the Ocean Pines library staff as thanks for overall assistance and the use of the branch's meeting rooms for three days. The AARP tax assistance sessions are ending. Erin Scott has had a few requests for history items that are

currently in storage, but all patrons have been understanding. The Pop-Up will be joining the Worcester Recreation and Parks for their Free Movie nights throughout the county. The bowling for books fundraiser was held on Saturday. Thank you to Ms. Culbertson and for many staff members attending the event and showing their support. Caroline Bloxom from the Foundation Board and County Commissioner Caryn Abbott attended the fundraiser as well.

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 many staff are squeezing in training sessions before the summer. Rachel Jones attended the Virtual Public Library Association (PLA) Conference. Avery Castellani and Angie DiMarco graduated from the Advanced LATI program and are now Library Associates. Amanda Laick and Shelby Windsor completed the Early Start program in the January cohort, and Stephanie Smith and Jack Pruyn have already completed the assignments for the March cohort of Early Start; they went through the program quickly. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey brought the Maryland 250-themed Mobile Storywalk® children's book, "John, Paul, George, and Ben" for the board to see. A section has been added to the New Employee Orientation virtual course on Niche Academy on procedures for inspecting books and other materials for pests upon check in. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey said we are working on the summer program booklet, and the game boards are in progress.

OLD BUSINESS:

Pocomoke Project Ms. Ranck said the roof and brick work are complete. The interior columns have been installed, and drywall is currently being finished on the second level; some drywall began on the first level in office and work room areas. The concrete work and roof have been completed on the exterior porches; they are waiting to install the finish features. Keller is waiting for permanent power but has the "cut in card;" gas hook up in progress. The next progress meeting is scheduled for tomorrow. Ms. Ranck said she will inquire about door access and the "people counter" at tomorrow's meeting.

Snow Hill Project Harkins Contracting, Inc. was selected to perform the renovations for the project. Harkins is currently working on the Wicomico Library project as well.

Grievance Policy Dr. Briddell said she will send Ms. Ranck the updates.

NEW BUSINESS:

Termination of Hoopla Resource The Eastern Shore Regional Library will no longer offer the digital media service Hoopla effective June 1, 2026, as the "pay-per-use" model has become unsustainable as the service has increased in popularity. Ms. Ranck thanked Ms. Gravenor-Stacey for posting public announcements via social media and the library website. WMDT-47 and WBOC reported on this change as it impacts all eight counties on the shore.

Spring Staff In-Service Day The next Staff Day will be Friday, April 24 from 9 am until 11:30 am at the Berlin Branch. Maurice Coleman of Coleman and Associates has been contracted to

present “Helping Customers (and Family and Friends) with Technology.” Mr. Coleman has a lot of experience working in libraries and presenting workshops on a variety of topics for library clients.

FY 25 County Audit Worcester County hired a new firm for the FY 25 audit, CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA). CLA has requested additional information from the Library this year, including financial records from the Library Foundation and the Riley fund. They are seeking to understand how the library fits within the County Government structure. A discussion about current state law followed.

Ms. Ranck received a phone call at 10:11 a.m. to present the FY 2027 budget to the Commissioners. Ms. Howard motioned to close the meeting at 10:12 a.m.; Ms. Buchanan seconded. All present were in favor.

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, May 12, at the Ocean Pines branch at 9:30 a.m.

Amy Parker