

The Worcester County Library Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, October 14 at the Berlin branch. Members present were Jeff Smith, Nancy Howard, Vicki O'Mara, Kathryn Culbertson, Sandra Buchanan, and Jocelyn Briddell. Patricia Tomasovic was absent.

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

Regular meeting was called to order at 9:47 a.m. by Mr. Smith. Recording device was acknowledged.

Ms. Paterra reported on the September back-to-school events. Buckingham Elementary School will be visiting on Thursday as part of their walking tour of Berlin. A carpet repair was made in the meeting room. Preparations for Haunted Library / Dr. Maddockter program have begun. Last year, over 1,000 people visited, and we are hoping for more this year. Ms. Howard said she would contact WBOC & WMDT to help spread the word. Ms. Ranck said marketing coordinator, Lexi Orf, will create a monthly ad for the newspaper with our events and the October ad will promote Halloween events at the library branches. Ms. Paterra said she is grateful for the new storage closet in the children's area. The dramatic play area now features a puppet theater complete with red curtains and lights. The Saturday Writer's Group has been growing and the branch is looking for ideas on how to accommodate, perhaps by offering two sessions. Ms. Bartels will be attending a mini-conference next week on building community-based summer services. Ms. Howard complimented assistant manager Dave Nedrow and said she appreciates his help with meeting room set up during meetings and events in the branch.

A motion to accept the minutes from the September 9, 2025 meeting was made by Ms. O'Mara, seconded by Dr. Briddell. All present were in favor.

Correspondence – *OC Today-Dispatch* had an article on Library board members sought. No comments were made on the statistics.

Financial Report – Ms. Parker reported on the September 2025 monies sent to the County Commissioners. Ms. Ranck noted the periodical budget is already over and we will monitor the budget throughout the year to account for the overage. Ms. Ranck mentioned the equipment budget line, which covers the hotspots. The library keeps the bigger hotspot in case of an emergency requiring offsite internet access, and the pop-up has used it before. Expenses for carpet cleaning and outdoor power washing will likely show up on next month's report for Ocean Pines.

Administrative Report – Board members received a copy of the Administrative report to review before the meeting. Ms. Ranck said Lorraine Tomlin has retired from the Ocean Pines branch. There is a full-time Library Services Assistant opening in Pocomoke; interviews will be in early November. Harry Burkett and Frank DeLucco delivered a program on Bob Dylan at the Ocean Pines community center, The Parke. Pocomoke is partnering with the Department of Social Services (DSS) to provide space for clients to meet with DSS on a weekly basis. The Snow Hill branch hosted a great Library Fun Fest event planned by Youth Services Coordinator Savannah Arena. The Snow Hill branch has partnered with the Julia A. Purnell Museum and is displaying items from the museum collection in the library. The Library uses a program called CatalogIt to share items from our local history collection online. Materials from the Pocomoke

High School Class of 1963 were recently added to CatalogIt. The pop-up is winding down their park stops but have a busy October with several community events planned. Over 400 people visited the pop-up at the Harbor Days event on Saturday. The Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore is moving away from the Shore Gives More annual fundraiser for Giving Tuesday and is launching the Shore Gives 365 platform. This will allow nonprofits to use the program to tailor fundraisers and campaigns at any time of the year. Ms. Ranck said the Foundation will likely continue to promote Giving Tuesday. Thank you to Adult Services Coordinator Elena Coelho for helping set up this new system.

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 reported that fall staff day was a success, with more than 80 people in attendance, including Worcester staff and Wicomico staff. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey was grateful that Dr. Steve Albrecht made the trip despite the storm. The training focused on empowering staff to handle safety and security issues in the library. Staff answered ice-breaker questions on giant post it notes during the lunch break, and they had chances to mingle with other staff, as well. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey attended the Association of Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL) conference in Albuquerque, NM in September and had an amazing experience, stating she felt well taken care of as a conference attendee. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey mentioned some of the ideas she learned at the conference. Ms. Ranck and Ms. Gravenor-Stacey attended the Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators meeting last week in Ocean City.

OLD BUSINESS:

Pocomoke Project Ms. Ranck said walls are up; the building is taking shape. Mr. Smith said the roof went on last week. The air barrier and interior items will start next week. Furniture selection is still taking place and library staff had an initial meeting with Douron. Ms. Ranck hopes to submit the package to the County Commissioners by December. We are still trying to raise funds for the children's porch. It will be a lot cheaper to build now while all the trades people are on site. Ms. Ranck will ask County Administration on Thursday if they can help.

Snow Hill Project Plans are nearing 100%. The State of Maryland is giving grants to replace certain HVAC systems. County Administration is evaluating what County buildings may qualify for the grant; we are not sure if the Snow Hill library is a good match. Ms. Ranck will inquire about this on Thursday as well.

Program Policy A cleaner copy was passed out to the board to read and review. There are a couple of changes. Dr. Briddell motioned to approve the new library policy with changes as noted; Ms. Buchanan seconded. All present were in favor. Dr. Briddell will add the changes and send final version to Ms. Ranck.

Board Recruitment and Nominating Committee Ms. Ranck said the library has received two applications. A sub-committee consisting of Dr. Briddell, Ms. O'Mara, and Ms. Howard was established to review applications.

NEW BUSINESS:

Baker & Taylor Baker & Taylor is the library's main book wholesaler; unfortunately they will be closing entirely by January 2026. The library does have relationships with other vendors but this may impact our acquisitions process over the next several months. Tech Services Manager Nick Barnes is looking into options and helping the branches navigate these changes. Ms. Kahl said a few patrons have mentioned items being "on order" for a long time in Ocean City. We will mention these changes to patrons to keep them informed.

Marketing Report Ms. Orf provided a marketing report, included in your packet, highlighting some social media metrics. Ms. Culbertson noted it is easier to share social media posts now. Ms. Orf will be invited to the December meeting.

Library Policy Review Dr. Briddell reformatted the library's policies to add headers and number sections; no content has changed. Ms. Culbertson said the intent is to have the policies in a manual format. Policies are also shared on the library website. Mr. Smith suggested the Board review the updated policies and the Board can reaffirm at the November meeting. Dr. Briddell will update the mission/vision statements where they appear in the policy manual. The reaffirmation date will be added to each policy for recordkeeping.

Discussion about the implementation of HB1222, the Maryland Values Act, followed as the Board may want to add information to the current Privacy Policy and/or library card application.

Dr. Briddell requested an update on the strategic plan in December.

Ms. Buchanan motioned to adjourn the meeting at 11:28 a.m.; Ms. Culbertson seconded. All present were in favor.

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, November 11, 2025 at the Ocean City branch at 9:30 a.m.

Amy Parker