

The Worcester County Library Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, December 8, 2020 via Zoom Conference. Members present via Zoom Conference were Leslie Mulligan, Nancy Howard, Vicki O'Mara, and Jeff Smith. Holly Anderson, Patricia Tomasovic, and Jaime Bailey were absent.

Also present via Zoom Conference were Jennifer Ranck, Director; Rachael Stein, Assistant Director; Amy Parker, Business Manager; Harry Burkett, Ocean Pines Branch Manager; and Bethany Hooper, Reporter for the *Coastal Dispatch*.

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

A motion to accept Minutes from the November 10, 2020 meeting was made by Ms. Howard; seconded by Mr. Smith. All present were in favor.

Correspondence – *Coastal Dispatch* and *Ocean City Today* reported that the Library would allow patrons to browse by appointment only. Channel 47abc – WMDT featured an article about the Library launching a mobile hotspot borrowing program.

Financial Report – Ms. Parker reviewed branch expenses for November 2020. Ms. Parker mentioned grant money reimbursements have been coming in. Ms. Ranck said the Cares Act grant money is being used for cleaning supplies and mobile hotspots for all branches. Ms. Ranck also said Ocean Pines need sensors for the fire alarm and would be installed January/February. Mr. Burkett said they were there now installing the new sensors at the Ocean Pines branch. Ms. Ranck reported on the statistics. Overall circulation is currently about 50% of where we were last year (pre-Covid) and we hope to increase those numbers. Materials are picked up through library to go (curbside) service & grab-n-go service.

Administrative Report – Board members received a copy of the Administrative report to review before the meeting. Ms. Ranck had nothing new to report.

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 program with Dr. Kendi, through the Eastern Shore Regional Library, and Dungeons and Dragons, part of the 2020 Maryland Library Association conference, were both successful. Alicia Blake from the Ocean City branch completed the online Library Associate Training Institute. Ms. Ranck talked about the LATI program. We would like all new staff to go through the online portion of LATI as part of our onboarding process. LATI is an eight-week program required for certain staff to complete and is included in the Maryland Code. Ms. Howard mentioned she was interested and Ms. Stein will ask the coordinator.

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

**EDI Grant / Committee** As part of this grant; the library received \$13,000 to purchase diverse books for children and young adults. The committee has begun to create selection lists for the youth services specialists to use in purchasing these books. They are also developing an EDI statement for the library board to consider.

**Strategic Plan** A revised draft is included in the board packet for discussion and approval. Ms. O'Mara motioned to approve the Strategic Plan; Ms. Howard seconded. All present were in favor.

**Mobile Hot Spots** The hotspots have been distributed to the branches and are ready for checkout. Twenty-five hotspots are available and can be checked out for 30 days. Ms. Stein was interviewed by WMDT about the new service. Ms. Ranck said we would be adding laptops next. The County has ordered 15 Dell laptops for us through grant funding they received. The laptops will also have a checkout period of thirty day and will require borrowers to sign an agreement form first.

**New Business –**

**Reopening** Ms. Ranck recommends holding steady at current levels of service: library use by appointment for browsing (Grab and Go), computer use, copier use, and library card registration. Curbside pick-up service of materials, program kits, and print jobs will also continue. Several library systems on the shore have returned to only curbside service, with no patrons in the buildings (Caroline, Queen Anne’s, and Talbot Counties). We will continue to monitor positivity and case rates. The 48-hour quarantine is working well. Ms. Ranck will keep the Board up to date on any changes. We want to keep our staff safe. Mr. Burkett said staff has been proactive and curbside service is busy.

**County Budget** FY21/22 budget packets will be available for pick up on December 10. Draft budgets are due to the County Administration at the end of January.

**Upcoming Partnerships** Several collaborations are currently in the works: artist-in-residence program with the Worcester County Arts Council, Storywalk with County Recreation and Parks department, and virtual apprenticeship fair with the Lower Shore Workforce Alliance. Ms. Ranck said the Storywalk would be a more permanent structure at John Walter Smith Park in Snow Hill. The 10,000-flower project is up at the Berlin branch. Ms. Ranck shared a picture with the Board.

Mr. Burkett said there is power wall with new releases in Ocean Pines. He got the idea for this from a visual merchandising workshop. In addition, staff are working on a social justice display. The Ocean Pines Friends group purchased two new book returns for them. Mr. Burkett also said they are in the process of interviewing for the Youth Services Specialist position.

Ms. Howard asked about the Pocomoke project. Ms. Ranck said the County Commissioners approved the Capital Improvement Plan, but this is not a guarantee of funding. Ms. Ranck said she is not sure if the State will fund the Pocomoke project. The Governor will release his budget in January and if Pocomoke is listed in his budget then we will be in a better position to move ahead. Ms. Ranck will send the board a link to two libraries that have collaborated with Senior Centers.

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, January 12 at via Zoom at 9:30 a.m. Mr. Smith motioned to adjourn the meeting, Ms. O’Mara seconded. All present were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 10:17 a.m.

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Amy Parker