

The Worcester County Library Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, February 8, 2022 at the Pocomoke branch. Members present were Nancy Howard, Vicki O'Mara, Jeff Smith, Jocelyn Briddell, Patricia Tomasovic, Sandra Buchanan and new member Kathryn Culbertson.

Also present were Jennifer Ranck, Director; Betsy Gravenor-Stacey, Assistant Director; Amy Parker, Business Manager; Dawn Ingrassia, Pocomoke Branch Manager; Bethany Hooper, *Coastal Dispatch*, via Zoom Conference.

New board member Kathryn Culbertson was introduced to others present.

Board orientation started at 9:41 a.m. by Ms. Howard and ended at 10:38 a.m.

Regular meeting was called to order at 10:39 a.m. by Ms. Howard. Recording device was acknowledged.

Ms. Ingrassia reported the children's program attendance is rising at the Pocomoke branch. Adult patrons are enjoying the crafty programs. One woman (who attended the *Birds of a Feather* program by accident) called to say how much she enjoyed it and wanted to make sure that youth specialist Lisa Voss knew how much she appreciated her program. Staff have noticed small groups, like people meeting with real estate agents and lawyers, are coming in more frequently to use the library as a free and quiet place to meet.

A motion to accept Minutes from the January 11, 2022 meeting was made by Mr. Smith; seconded by Ms. Tomasovic. All present were in favor.

Correspondence – *Bayside Gazette* and *Ocean City Today* both had an article on the Library-sponsored no-cost expungement clinic. *Bayside Gazette* mentioned the Ocean Pines Library Art for Wellness program slated for February. *Coastal Dispatch* featured an article on Pocomoke City to discuss future branch location.

Financial Report – Ms. Parker reported on the branch expenses for January 2022. Ms. Ranck said we have added an "Admin Expense Misc (PPE)" line to the admin expenses budget so we can track any monies spent on gloves, wipes, hand sanitizer etc. in case additional federal or grant money becomes available for reimbursement. Ms. Ranck reported on the statistics saying despite a few closures due to weather this month, door count and circulation is steady. Meeting room use for some branches was down, perhaps due to spike in Covid-19 positivity rates. Mr. Smith said Ocean Pines has doubled in circulation from January 2021 to January 2022.

Administrative Report – Board members received a copy of the Administrative report to review before the meeting. Ms. Ranck said great things are happening in Pocomoke, as well as the other branches. Ocean City has completed a large weeding project and shifted materials, making the branch look cleaner and brighter. Ms. Tomasovic mentioned Berlin might be getting a skate park soon. Mr. Smith mentioned solar panels might be coming in the Ocean City parking lot. Ms. Ranck said Delmarva Power will be installing a battery energy storage system. Ms. Howard said this was discussed at the Ocean City Town meeting the night before. This could impact library parking for visitors as patrons often use the lot directly behind the library in the busier times of year. If the land swap goes through, the Town of Ocean City will allow us to use the lot on the north side of the building. Ms. Ranck said we have a good relationship with the Worcester County Health Department and continue to distribute test kits and KN95 masks to the public. The next Foundation meeting is March 15, 2022. Ms. Ranck explained the Snow Hill Riley money to the board.

Staff Development 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 Cass Dasher is assisting with a weekly "New Book Spotlight" to feature on the Library's Facebook and Instagram pages on Tuesdays, starting January 25. The goal is to feature new items from a variety of genres and for a variety of ages and reading levels in order to encourage holds and checkouts. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey said they are posting on Tuesdays since new books are released that day. We want to showcase all of the library's services and resources on social media. Ms. Tomasovic asked who handles the library's social media accounts. Ms. Ranck said the Marketing Assistant Michael Carmean does, along with Ms. Gravenor-Stacey and herself. Other staff provide content, like our local history librarian, Nate Godfrey. In February the Worcester County Library installed a new selection at the StoryWalk® located at John Walter Smith Park in Snow Hill: "By and By: Charles Albert

Tindley, the Father of Gospel Music” by Carole Boston Weatherford and illustrated by Bryan Collier. Please check it out as it has a couple of notable local connections. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey said there are three library staff members who are judging the Worcester County Public Schools' Media Expo. They have several categories for entries from students, including digital design, coding, photography, and video.

OLD BUSINESS:

Pocomoke Project Library Trustees Ms. Buchanan, Ms. Howard, and Ms. Tomasovic attended a meeting with Pocomoke officials about the Armory site on January 19. Ms. Ranck, Ms. Gravenor-Stacey and Commissioner Nordstrom were also in attendance. The City of Pocomoke will submit another strategic demolition grant this year. Ms. Ranck said that the Maryland State Library is requesting a notice of intent to apply for a State Capital Grant by February 22. Since the City has not responded from the meeting, Ms. Ranck will reach out to the City Manager for an update. The board discussed the pros and cons of waiting another year. The condition of the building systems continues to be a worry; there was a heating issue at the branch on Saturday causing the library to close early. The board has agreed that if Pocomoke is delayed, Ms. Ranck should pursue a grant to improve the HVAC and lighting at the Snow Hill branch.

Student Cards The Student Library Cards are being used to check out library items; there were 46 checkouts/renewals of physical items between October 1, 2021 and January 26, 2022. Students are also able to access the library databases with their student card number, as advertised, according to the school media specialists. The informational LibGuide with links to these databases has been published on the Library’s website under the Resources tab. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey and Ms. Wheatley are having monthly meetings with the school representatives.

Eastern Shore Regional Library Library Trustee Vicki O’Mara volunteered to serve as the board representative from Worcester for the Eastern Shore Regional Library (ESRL). Ms. Ranck explained the roles of ESRL and how they deliver our materials for us. The Library for the Blind and Print Disabled (LPBD) will soon be providing licenses for Fusion software (Fusion is a single software solution that combines JAWS and ZoomText). ESRL will help install these on all public machines and any staff machine that needs it.

NEW BUSINESS:

Library Board Committees The board has discussed establishing several committees, including a policy committee and advocacy committee. Mr. Smith, Ms. Briddell, and Ms. Culbertson volunteered to serve on the policy committee as there are three polices currently under review. Other committees may be established at a future board meeting.

Farm to Library Initiative The Worcester County Health Department was awarded a grant from CareFirst Blue Cross Blue Shield to launch a robust diabetes prevention program for the community. The Health Department is bringing together organizations from around the County to offer programs relating to nutrition and wellness, financial literacy, cooking demonstrations, and walking groups. Programs will be offered at the branch libraries and other partner locations. The library will also link to a prediabetes screening test. Ms. Ranck said that the Health Department is holding monthly partner meetings and more details are forthcoming.

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, March 8 at the Ocean City branch with a Zoom option 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 11:36 a.m.

Amy Parker