

The Worcester County Library Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, October 8 at the Berlin Branch. Members present were Jeff Smith, Sandra Buchanan, Nancy Howard, Patricia Tomasovic, Jocelyn Briddell, and Vicki O'Mara. Kathryn Culbertson was absent.

Also present were Jennifer Ranck, Director; Betsy Gravenor-Stacey, Assistant Director; Alice Paterra, Berlin Branch Manager; Amy Parker, Business Manager; and Angie DiMarco, Youth Services Specialist, Ocean Pines Branch.

Regular meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m. by Mr. Smith. Recording device was acknowledged.

Ms. Paterra said Julie Johnson left over the summer; Laura Bartels took Julie's place and she is amazing. Laura has lots of energy, has taken on Julie's programs, and the numbers are growing. Laura has also redone Boothy twice now. We are weeding large print and the children's area. We have a new section of bridge books (chapter books). Dave is getting ready for Dr. Maddockter's Haunted Laboratory for Halloween. His goal this year is 2,000 people. Please help us advertise. Ms. O'Mara suggested DelmarvaLife. Dr. Ralph Lutz will be coming out to do a program on December 5 at 2 pm regarding the American Chestnut Trade. Please help us get the word out on this program as well. We also experienced some elevator issues. It was finally fixed. The Plein Air event was a success.

A motion to approve the September minutes was made by Ms. Howard, seconded by Ms. Buchanan. All present were in favor.

Correspondence – September *County Seat* welcomed Julie Presley and Mary Cathell. *Ocean City Today-Dispatch* and *Bayside Gazette* had articles on the Plein Air contest winner displays held at the Berlin branch. *The Daily Times* had an article on how the libraries were affected by network outage in wake of a fire. A thank you card was sent to the Ocean Pines branch from the OC-Berlin Rotary Club thanking them for the use of the meeting room.

Financial Report – Ms. Parker reported on the branch expenses for September 2024. A copy of the statistics was passed out to the board members. Mr. Smith mentioned the door count dropped in September. Ms. O'Mara asked about the Pocomoke expenses. Ms. Ranck said we received \$63,276.00 from a Capital grant which will help offset the leased space expenses. Ms. Tomasovic asked who the lease is through; Ms. Ranck said Davis Brothers.

Administrative Report – Board members received a copy of the Administrative report to review before the meeting. Ms. Ranck said there is a Youth Services Specialist position open in Ocean City since Savannah Arena was promoted to Youth Services Coordinator. The new Ocean City branch manager Julie Presley and Ms. Arena will cover children's programs until a replacement is found. In Ocean Pines, Angie DiMarco's baby time has been bringing in an average of 25 people. Also the Ocean Pines branch is trying something different by using the study room after 3 pm as a teen space. In Pocomoke they are still doing offsite story times at the Delmarva Discovery Museum and at Cypress Park. Ms. Tomasovic mentioned the Judy Center is now in the Pocomoke High School. In Snow Hill they had a homeschool portrait program for families. Snow Hill also held their Storytellers theater program for children 8-14 years. Local History Librarian Erin Scott provided an excellent presentation yesterday for the Maryland Women's Heritage Center about the Citizen Researcher initiative. Three meet-ups have been planned to help people with their research. Ms. Howard brought up the semiquincentennial 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ocean City, which will be in 2025. The Pop-Up also joined the Snow Hill Judy Center at Snow Hill Elementary for their

Community Resource Fair. The Pop-Up also joined Eastern Shore Early Learning for their Touch-a-Truck program. Ms. Ranck said the Smokey Bear Reading Challenge was introduced at the beginning of September and ended on the 30th with 10 patrons registered, 49 badges earned, and 68 books logged. Ms. Ranck also said the One Maryland One Book copies have been going fast. The grant from Maryland Humanities was utilized for two teen programs who learned about emergency preparedness and made their own first aid kits. The leftover supplies were used for a passive program in Pocomoke and sent to North Carolina for hurricane relief. The Foundation had their quarterly meeting last week. A candle making fundraiser has been planned for Thursday, December 5, 5:30 pm, at the Berlin branch to raise funds for the annual scholarship. Also we will be selling a special tea blend that Michaela Eggers is creating for the library; proceeds will go towards the Pocomoke project. Ms. Briddell asked if the Pocomoke trees can be used as trinkets. Ms. Ranck said local woodworker Chip Nock is working on getting us a quote for building a table in the Maryland Room and entry way. Ms. Buchanan mentioned the students at Worcester Technical High School can make ornaments. Ms. Ranck said she needs someone from the Board to take on this project. Ms. Briddell we can give gifts, giveaways, and make possible cutting boards from the trees. Ms. Ranck said the trees should be coming down in November.

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 wants to give a shout out to Alice Paterra for her successful recertification as a Library Associate, completing more than the 90 continuing education hours required over a five year period. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey also welcomed Angie DiMarco to the meeting. Ms. DiMarco is part of the LATI Early Start program which requires you to attend a board meeting. We are expecting 36 people for Staff Day on Monday, October 14. Topics on the agenda include a brainstorming session related to the strategic plan survey responses, a showcase of items owned by the library that can be used during youth programs, and opportunities for social interactions between branch teams. Savannah Arena has hit the ground running in her new position and is already planning for Summer Reading next year.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Pocomoke** The GMP will be presented to the County Commissioners at the first meeting in November. Bids are currently being reviewed. Ms. Ranck noted that the branch will need several days to move out and set up new service at the temporary location.

**Strategic Plan** Two public input sessions have been planned; October 23 at 2 pm in Ocean Pines and November 6 at 2 pm in Snow Hill. Representatives from community organizations have been invited to attend including the Health Department, the Friends of the Library group, Worcester County School Board and the Commission on Aging. The general public is also invited to attend.

**2024 Annual Conference for Friends, Trustees and Library Supporters** This conference is scheduled for Saturday, November 2 from 9:30 am – 4 pm at the Bowie Branch of the Prince George's County Memorial Library System. Please let Ms. Ranck know if you can attend.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Internet Outage September 29 – October 1** There was a catastrophic fire in a manhole right outside of the Verizon Central Office in the 300 block of N. Charles St. in Baltimore on Sunday, September 29. Internet service was unavailable for patrons and staff used Wi-Fi hotspots for circulation. Service was restored just after 1 pm on Tuesday, October 1.

**Romanians of DC Book Donation** Romanians of DC is donating roughly 150 books to the Ocean City and Berlin library branches. Materials will be available to share with other counties in our consortium. The children’s materials will be cataloged, and the adult books will be split with some cataloged and some available via honor system. Thank you to former employee Julie Johnson, Laura Bartels, and especially to Cathy Moore for planning this new addition to our collection.

Ms. Tomasovic mentioned high school students need service learning hours and maybe they could help Pocomoke move.

Ms. O'Mara motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Briddell seconded. All present were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 10:37 a.m.

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, November 12, 2024 at the Ocean City branch at 9:30 a.m.

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Amy Parker