

The Worcester County Library Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, April 9, 2024 at the Snow Hill Branch. Members present were Sandra Buchanan, Nancy Howard, Patricia Tomasovic, Vicki O'Mara, Jocelyn Briddell, and Kathryn Culbertson. Jeff Smith was absent.

Also present were Jennifer Ranck, Director; Betsy Gravenor-Stacey, Assistant Director; Brittney Herz, Snow Hill Branch Manager; Amy Parker, Business Manager; Lorissa McAllister, Town of Snow Hill; Bob Hendricks, President, Downtown Main Street Snow Hill; and Kathy Decker, University of Maryland Extension Administrative Assistant. Michael Hutchinson, County Maintenance Superintendent and Zach Parker, Maintenance Supervisor entered the meeting at 10:10 a.m.

Regular meeting was called to order at 9:37 a.m. by Ms. Buchanan. Recording device was acknowledged.

Ms. McAllister presented updated plans for the Bank Street improvement project in Snow Hill. The configuration has removed one of the circles and the performance stage was removed. The plan shared has a net loss of five parking spaces. Ms. Decker asked several questions about parking for staff and the community. Ms. McAllister mentioned the Council prefers the curvature design to mimic the flow of the Pocomoke River. Discussion continued. Ms. Decker asked who would be maintaining the street. Ms. McAllister said the Town has a MOU with Downtown Main Street group. It is a town road so it will be maintained by the Town. This plan will be presented to the County Commissioners. Ms. Buchanan is concerned with taking away parking spaces from other buildings. Several expressed concerns about the proximity of parking space near buildings and the curbless street and sidewalk. Ms. McAllister said studies have shown this type of design helps to slow down traffic. The hope is that this project will encourage a better walking flow from the river to the businesses and a place for community gatherings. Mr. Hendricks and asked the board for a letter indicating their support of the project and not necessarily this specific plan. Meeting attendees went outside the branch to look at the space. Meeting continued back inside at 10:38 a.m.

Ms. Herz said branch programming for homeschoolers continues to be popular and attendance is growing. The Nursery School visited last month for Dr. Suess Day. We are re-arranging the stacks to create more work and study space. This week is Cryptid's Week and special programs are offered for all ages. Seven people attended a paint night on Monday.

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Briddell; seconded by Ms. Tomasovic. All present were in favor.

Correspondence – A copy of the proclamation from the County Commissioners was included. A letter from Sherriff Crisafulli thanking the Ocean Pines staff was also included. *Coastal Dispatch* had an article about the approval of Delmarva Power's battery substation which will be constructed next to the Ocean City library. *Bayside Gazette* showed a picture of President Lincoln, portrayed by Chris Hill, visiting the Pocomoke library for program on February 12.

Financial Report – Ms. Parker reported on the branch expenses for March 2024. Ms. Ranck said carpet cleanings have been scheduled for all branches. Some of the branches general maintenance is over. Ms. Ranck commented things are more expensive. We are right where we need to be. Ms. Ranck asked for some staff reallocations and cameras for the Ocean Pines branch. Ms. Ranck noted she is not asking for a lot. No comments were made on the statistics.

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Administrative Report – Board members received a copy of the Administrative report to review before the meeting. Ms. Ranck said Barbara Weiss joined the Berlin branch. Ms. Weiss previously helped the Snow Hill branch several years ago by digitizing some of the library’s local history collection and helping us prioritize projects. The Ocean City meeting room refresh is almost complete, thank you to Alec Staley for his help with the project. Ocean Pines Library Services Assistant Alison Martin was named Employee of the Year by her co-workers in Ocean Pines. In mid-April, the Pocomoke library will hold a community resource fair. On behalf of the Worcester County Library Foundation, Elena Coelho applied for a Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore grant to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month this fall and was awarded \$2,500. Summer reading planning is going well. Ms. Wheatley has planned several offsite programs, including two story times at the Ocean City Airport.

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 Mr. Staley just attended the PLA Conference and she is looking forward to hearing what he learned. Mr. Staley presented a genrefication workshop at the conference. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey said we are looking forward to the MLA conference in May. Sixteen staff members will be attending. Ms. Howard asked how many eclipse glasses we gave out. Ms. Ranck said the library received 2,000 glasses from Star Net Library Network and a representative from Wallops Island brought several hundred pairs to the Ocean Pines and Berlin branches. Ms. Culbertson said word spread quickly about the glasses. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey mentioned the upcoming staff day on April 26. Branches will be open from 1 – 5 p.m. that day. The branches will be showcasing a program they thought was successful. The board liked this idea.

OLD BUSINESS:

Pocomoke Cost estimates provided by Whiting Turner and Keller are currently being evaluated and value engineering efforts continue. Ms. Tomasovic asked if the Commissioners were aware of the cost estimate differences at the time of the construction manager selection, we don’t want to lose any additional space. Some ideas include shingling the roof and taking away the treehouse platform in the children’s area. An update will be presented to the Commissioners on April 16; we hope to share news about state funding for the project as well. Jeff Schoellkopf will also be able to attend. Ms. Ranck invited the board to the meeting.

Strategic Plan Ms. Ranck said we should have a planning process in place by June to give the board enough time to develop a strategic plan by the end of the calendar year. A sub-committee consisting of Ms. Buchanan, Ms. Culbertson, and Ms. Briddell will get together and come back with information for the next meeting.

National Library Week Proclamation A copy of the proclamation given by the County Commissioners was included in the board packet. Ms. Howard commented that she would like the branch managers to be invited to events like this. Mr. Smith accepted the proclamation on behalf of the library on April 2.

Rutgers Externship Ms. Ranck said the project is ending this month and the final presentations will be on April 16.

NEW BUSINESS:

Citizens Researchers Project The Maryland Women’s Heritage Center reached out to the library to partner on a citizen research initiative to promote local women’s history. A similar program was offered in Western Maryland last year. We are hoping to launch the program in October to coincide with Worcester’s History Week and plan a culminating event during Women’s History month next March. This will be a good way for the library to promote our collections and databases and develop a training session to help anyone interested get started on their research. Thank you to Ms. Herz and Ms. Scott for helping with this project. Ms. Howard suggested contacting the Worcester Women’s Committee.

Ms. Briddell commented that she was not clear on the Bank Street project discussion at the start of the meeting and would like to make sure the board is following the right protocols, including introducing everyone at the meeting. Ms. Briddell agreed to draft a support letter for the Bank Street beautification. Ms. Howard asked if the County Commissioners know about the proposed parking spaces being taken away. County Administration is aware and any decisions about property lines will need to be approved by the County Commissioners. Ms. Culbertson shared that Downtown Snow Hill has an MOU with the Town Council regarding upkeep of the plantings.

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, May 14, 2024 at the Pocomoke branch at 9:30 a.m. Ms. Briddell motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Howard seconded. All present were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Amy Parker