

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

Also present were Jennifer Ranck, Director; Betsy Gravenor-Stacey, Assistant Director; Amy Parker; Business Manager; and Brittney Herz, Snow Hill Branch Manager.

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

Ms. Herz reported the branch had a great summer and a successful summer reading series that launched in June with the "Baby Rave" and after-hours "Glow Party." The branch also held a 70s Book Bash, celebrating the library's 50th anniversary and raising about \$1,200. The attendance was great, and some people came in costume. The silent auction continued into August which helped raise an additional \$200-\$300. Another summer reading highlight was the Coastal Wilds program held in August. It was the highest attended children's program and was held in the main part of the library for a little more room. Ms. Herz thanked Youth Program Coordinator Savannah Arena for securing a last-minute performer due to a cancellation. Another fun and creative program the branch held was "Anything but a Paintbrush" which brought in 30-40 children creating art in the meeting room and using tools other than a paintbrush – lots of fun and creativity were shared. Ms. Ranck thanked Ms. Herz for her help with the renovation plans. Ms. Herz also provided four art programs at the jail. Free book carts are available outside the library and are drawing more people inside. Ms. Culbertson asked how many kids attended summer reading. Ms. Herz will have to get those numbers. A video of the completed "obliteration room" in the children's area was shown, an idea inspired by artist Yayoi Kusama. Patrons of all ages enjoyed adding polka dots to the wall throughout the summer.

A motion to accept the minutes from the June 10, 2025 meeting was made by Ms. Tomasovic, seconded by Ms. Howard. All present were in favor.

Correspondence – Ms. Ranck said there were several articles over the summer regarding the Snow Hill project, the Ocean Pines book sale, and library programs. Ms. Culbertson appreciated the personal notes from patrons included in the board packet.

Financial Report – Ms. Parker reported on the FY2025 & FY2026 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. Parker passed out the August statistics to the board. Mr. Smith said the Ocean Pines branch had a lot of visits, with the annual book sale driving up July numbers. Ms. Ranck said the pop-up has been seeing more people at the park stops. Lexi Orf, the library's new marketing coordinator, posted on social media yesterday the next stop for the pop-up. Ms. Culbertson noted some branch door counts are down but said that could be attributed to fewer people visiting the area this summer.

Administrative Report – Board members received a copy of the Administrative report to review before the meeting. Ms. Ranck said Maureen Brittingham filled the open part time position in Pocomoke. Dale Rohl retired from the Pocomoke branch. Ms. Ranck will post the full-time position this week. Lorraine Tomlin retired from the Ocean Pines branch. Ms. Orf started in early September. Ms. Ranck said we had all new summer reading performers this year and received good feedback. Ms. Arena set a community reading goal for summer reading of 500,000 minutes, and both children and adults could participate. We came extremely close

to reaching the goal, with 496,341 minutes read. Thank you to the Pop-Up Library for signing up 540 kids. Ms. Howard complimented Alice Paterra for doing an excellent job during the peach festival. Ms. Ranck said the Isle of Wight office is closing for renovations and the finance department will be placing a temporary drop box for payments in the lobby of the Ocean Pines Library. We hope this will help people during the closure and maybe attract new patrons to the library as a result. Ms. Ranck said the parking lot in Ocean Pines looks terrific and we especially appreciate the additional painted stop signs and arrows. The Citizens for Maryland Libraries annual conference for Friends, Trustees, and Library Supporters will be held on Saturday, October 11 at the Michael Busch Library in Annapolis.

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 there were a lot of trainings attended over the summer. Ms. Herz talked about "Thrillerfest," a conference she attended in June in New York. The next LATI early start program will start in September and Tina Kahl from the Ocean City branch is registered. The program covers a variety of topics, including how to do a reference interview. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey said she is excited about staff day in Ocean Pines. Dr. Steve Albrecht will be coming in person to present a library safety and security workshop. Wicomico and Somerset library staff will also be joining us. Four board members attended the United for Libraries Virtual Conference "Trustee Day" on July 29. The strategic plan oversight committee is surveying staff about the display calendar and has received ten responses so far. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey is attending the upcoming ARSL conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey was nominated to be an at-large member of the MAPLA Executive Board. Nominations and an election for new board members will be held at the October MAPLA meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

Pocomoke Project Ms. Ranck said about 20% of the project has been completed. The walls are up; the building is taking shape. Ms. Ranck showed slides of furniture to the board. The colors have not been decided yet. The next progress meeting is September 17.

Snow Hill Project Plans for new plumbing, electrical, and rough in for a future HVAC upgrade are at 95%. A building system report revealed that there is no fresh air getting into the library and we hope that HVAC will be replaced as soon as possible. We anticipate using space at the Bank Street offices for temporary library space to serve the public.

Program Policy After discussion the board agreed to take out "fees and sales". Once the policy is approved it will be posted on the library website. The policy committee will update the draft, and the policy will be included in October's agenda for final review and approval.

NEW BUSINESS:

Board Officers Ms. O'Mara nominated Mr. Smith to continue to serve as President and Ms. Buchanan to continue to serve as Vice President; Ms. Howard seconded. All present were in favor.

Board Recruitment and Nominating Committee Ms. Ranck said the applications for the open board position in Pocomoke and Ocean City (as of January 2026) have been posted on social media and on our website.

Technical Services Department Ms. Ranck met with staff at the Bank Street offices to talk about temporary space for the Snow Hill library during renovations. We are looking to move Tech services department (2 full-time and 1 one part-time) to the Ocean Pines branch, which we believe will be a permanent move. This will allow the director and administrative services coordinator to relocate to Bank Street.

Capital Improvement Plan Ms. Ranck said she updated Snow Hill Library's request to include new HVAC system. The library also requested future funding to renovate Ocean Pines restrooms in the next several years.

HB1222 (Maryland Values Act) Ms. Ranck said Maryland State Library Agency is working with the Attorney General's Office to see if libraries need to change any policies. This Act will go into effect on October 1.

Ms. Howard asked how our Calendar of Events are distributed around the county. Ms. Ranck said library staff take them to strategic places, including restaurants, laundromats, and other community centers to attract new patrons.

Ms. Buchanan motioned to adjourn the meeting at 11:38 a.m.; Ms. Tomasovic seconded. All present were in favor.

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at the Berlin branch at 9:30 a.m.

Amy Parker