

The Worcester County Library Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at the Ocean Pines Branch. Members present were Jeff Smith, Sandra Buchanan, Nancy Howard, Patricia Tomasovic, Jocelyn Briddell, Kathryn Culbertson, and Vicki O'Mara.

Also present were Jennifer Ranck, Director; Betsy Gravenor-Stacey, Assistant Director; Harry Burkett, Ocean Pines Branch Manager; and Amy Parker, Business Manager.

Regular meeting was called to order at 9:31 a.m. by Mr. Smith. Recording device was acknowledged.

Mr. Burkett said Tony Russo (*Dragged into the Light*), Syl Sobel (*Boxed Out of the NBA: Remembering the Eastern Professional Basketball League*), Sara Lewis (*Purposeful People Pleasing*), and Al "Hondo" Handy (*Defying Expectations*) were the featured panelists of the OP Branch's Nonfiction Author Panel on the evening of November 8. The authors discussed their books and the writing process with 25 people in attendance. The Fiber Friends raised \$1,055 for the Friends of the Ocean Pines Library, breaking last year's record. With Jake Nail's upcoming departure from the Library, the branch will be having a "Goodbye Mr. Jake" program that coincides with a children's program. WMDT interviewed him and will air a piece about his impact later in December.

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

Correspondence – *Bayside Gazette* had articles on Buck Mann's discussion at the Ocean Pines library and Worcester Arts exhibit at the Berlin library. *Ocean City Today*, *Coastal Dispatch*, and *The County Seat* ran articles on the Ocean City library holiday train garden now on display.

Financial Report – Ms. Parker reported on the branch expenses for November 2023. No comments were made on the statistics.

Administrative Report – Board members received a copy of the Administrative report to review before the meeting. Ms. Ranck shared that new patron and staff machines have been installed at the Berlin branch. ESRL just migrated to Microsoft 365 and there has been some difficulty for staff members who share computers. Pocomoke had some issues with the boiler. County Maintenance has ordered a part and Ms. Ranck believes things are okay now. The Snow Hill Branch had a great display for Dickens weekend. Ms. Ranck and Ms. Parker have noticed more people visiting the Snow Hill branch. Erin Scott published a LibGuide about the Indigenous people of Worcester County and the surrounding areas. Ms. Scott has also continued to work on uploading records to CatalogIt, making it easier to share items in our local history collection. The Pop-Up participated in all four Christmas parades this season. They won best non-commercial vehicle in the Snow Hill parade. Ms. Ranck said the Youth & Adult programs are going well. The Library Foundation's trip to Longwood Gardens trip was a big success. All seats were sold. Amy Parker has planned a donation-based yoga fundraiser on January 7, 2024: "Nidra for New Beginnings" with Jared Rowan.

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 two staff will start the LATI (Library Associate Training Institute) Early Start program in January, for which they will earn 30 hours of credits. Erin Scott and Michael Hayes will be starting the Advanced LATI program virtually in January. The EDI committee met yesterday and reviewed what had been accomplished over the last year. The

Committee helped with the Northstar rollout and the circulation of memory kits. The committee brainstormed for the next year. Ideas for expanding the collection, ex. Braille books, and marketing our services were discussed. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey also mentioned accessibility in all ages arts programs. Ms. Ranck suggested talking to Amanda Laick as well. The Youth Services vehicle has arrived and we are investigating options for the interior.

OLD BUSINESS:

Pocomoke The design process continues with a lot of focus on HVAC and lighting plans. We are trying to meet the same performance goals as Berlin, or as close as possible without geothermal. Project meetings are scheduled for every other week. The architect, Jeff Schoellkopf, is meeting with library staff on Wednesday, December 14 to review furniture layout, including the circulation desk. Ms. Ranck shared the latest renderings with the board.

Capital Improvement Plan FY 2025-2029 The Worcester County Commissioners approved the Capital Improvement plan on Tuesday, December 5. This included the Pocomoke Library Replacement Project (approximately \$6.8 million in FY 25 and \$1 million in FY 26) and Snow Hill Library Building Improvements (approximately \$2.5 million in FY 25). The Snow Hill branch needs plumbing and lighting replacement, space reallocation, and HVAC improvements.

NEW BUSINESS:

FY 25 Budget Next year's budget request is due on January 23. Each department has been asked to keep their expenses at or below a 3% overall increase from the previous year's adopted budget. Library needs include funding for computer replacement and an increase to the materials budget.

Mr. Smith asked if the Library applied for the Rutgers Externship program. Ms. Ranck said that she submitted a project to help market the library's digital content. Ms. Howard asked about the two board members who are scheduled for reappointment. Ms. Culbertson was reappointed by Commissioner Elder. We are waiting to hear back about Ms. O'Mara's approval.

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, January 9, 2024 at the Pocomoke branch at 9:30 a.m. Ms. O'Mara motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Tomasovic seconded. All present were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 10:27 a.m.

Amy Parker