

The Worcester County Library Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, May 12 at the Ocean Pines branch. Members present were Jeffrey Smith, Nancy Howard, Sandra Buchanan, Jennifer Pflaumer, Jocelyn Briddell, and Vicki O'Mara. Kathryn Culbertson arrived at 9:36 a.m.

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

Regular meeting was called to order at 9:31 a.m. by Mr. Smith. Recording device was acknowledged. Mr. Smith noted that Lisa Schoch, FOPL President could not join us today.

Mr. Smith noted that Commissioner Bertino gave high regards to Mr. Burkett and the Ocean Pines staff during the department budget presentation last month.

Mr. Burkett said Jackie Choate was named Volunteer of the Year by the Friends of the Ocean Pines Library (FOPL) at its annual volunteer luncheon. She received a commendation from Commissioner Chip Bertino and a \$50 gift card in recognition of her contributions as FOPL recording secretary, as a volunteer library bookshelver, for assisting with events and fundraising functions, and the Friends' annual book sale. Mr. Burkett said they are having another Delmarva author panel on June 8 after the Friends membership meeting. Mr. Burkett said he was able to talk to the owner of the shade sail company and is expecting the proposal for the outside shade any day now. Included in the proposal is a built-in quote to have the shade taken down every November and put back up in April. The color that was chosen is Brunswick Green. The FOPL is providing funds for this project.

A motion to accept the minutes from April 14, 2026 was made by Ms. Buchanan, seconded by Dr. Briddell. All present were in favor.

Correspondence – Bayside Gazette had articles on Reading challenge aids understanding and Alice Paterra's retirement picture with the County Commissioners. Bayside Gazette and OC Today-Dispatch both featured articles on the Berlin branch to host an art exhibit in May and June. Bayside Gazette and OC Today-Dispatch both had articles on the library to launch summer reading challenge, and County awards Snow Hill library reno project to higher bidder. OC Today-Dispatch mentioned the temporary payment drop box at the Ocean Pines library has been discontinued.

Financial Report – Ms. Parker reported on the April 2026 monies sent to the County Commissioners. Ms. Ranck said we are spending down the ESRL grant funds. Ocean City is getting two new outdoor book returns. We have been catching up on the book budget since the shutdown of Baker & Taylor. Ordering will end in June so we can close out the fiscal year. Ms. Ranck said the consulting line is for our website; fortunately, County IT has agreed to help us with the redesign. Ms. Howard asked about the fuel budget. The bookmobile and youth services van use the County's pumps. Site location budgets are on track, though we are continuing to pay rent for the temporary Pocomoke Library space. Ms. Culbertson asked about unspent funds. A discussion about the encumbrance and transfer request process followed. Ms. Ranck said the circulation and visits are down because of the two temporary branches. Ms. O'Mara asked if the board could see a 5-year trend of stats. Ms. Ranck said we can share a report at the September meeting.

Administrative Report – Board members received a copy of the Administrative report to review before the meeting. Ms. Ranck said that Lee Monick has filled the part-time position in Ocean Pines. Elizabeth Hall will be leaving at the end of June. Kimberly Patrick filled the part time

position in Berlin. The three Youth Services positions have been filled; they will start in June. The Berlin branch experienced some power issues last month, causing issues with the alarms but all has been repaired. Ocean City has a new digital sign. Ms. Ranck mentioned that Lisa Voss provided story times in partnership with the Pocomoke Community Garden for kindergartners and second graders in Pocomoke. Thanks to the Worcester County Health Department's "Cooking Up Health" grant, the library was able to purchase a book for every kindergartner and second grader to take home with them. The Snow Hill branch was awarded a \$10,000 ALA grant to build an accessibility ramp in the garden area. Baby time and story time continue at the temporary Snow Hill space and attendance remains steady. Erin Scott is continuing to digitize local history items, including recently donated Pocomoke High School material. The Pop-Up partnered with Worcester County Recreation and Parks for movie nights and attended the Fairies & Gnomes event at Furnace Town on Saturday. Two adult programs of note include a concert given by the Easton-based group, Ampersand, with 40 people in attendance and yesterday's St. Martin's Church tour that brought in 60 people. The next Foundation meeting is June 16. Ms. Ranck will try and set up a tour of the new Pocomoke branch for the Foundation members.

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 21 staff attended the MLA/DLA conference last week in Cambridge. The sessions were fantastic. We are asking staff to please share what they learned on our Slack channel. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey attended a session on how to spot AI content; this is a popular topic. At the half-day staff in-service day on April 24, presenter Maurice Coleman asked staff to submit questions to him about difficult technology questions they have received. Many of the questions were AI related. May 29 is the deadline for staff to order materials before the end of the fiscal year. ShareIt is a new platform for inter-library loans. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey and other staff members will be trained on this soon. Alice Pattera has returned to the library in a part time position in Tech Services. Ms. Culbertson asked about Snow Hill's summer reading programs. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey said we have several off-site locations at which we are doing the programs this year.

OLD BUSINESS:

Pocomoke Project Ms. Ranck said completion date has been moved to July 15. Drywall and painting are underway. One issue we are working on is figuring out the best way to provide access to the community room after hours. Ms. Buchanan asked what a transition to opening would look like. Ms. Ranck said we would likely close for at least a week to get books back on the shelves and computers installed. County maintenance has provided a lot of support during the project and temporary location, and we are beyond grateful for their help. A ribbon cutting will likely be planned about a month after the opening to officially welcome people to the new building.

Snow Hill Project A kickoff meeting for the project has been scheduled for Thursday, May 14. We will be requesting a variance from the Town regarding flood elevation requirements.

Grievance Policy Dr. Briddell said she has made the changes recommended by the attorney

and will send to Ms. Ranck.

NEW BUSINESS:

New Digital Resources The Eastern Shore Regional Library has announced new services coming to their digital collections beginning June 1. These new offerings are meant to replace Hoopla, which the library will lose access to after May 31.

Annual Plan Update Ms. Ranck said the biggest thing is the website. We surveyed the staff and used their feedback. Ms. Howard noted we are a working board so please give them assignments. Ms. Ranck suggested meeting with their County Commissioner after the election.

Summer Reading This year's theme is "Unearth a Story," and dinosaur-themed programs and prizes are planned for all ages (including adults!) throughout the summer. The program begins June 1.

Marketing Report A copy of the marketing report is included in the board packet. Mr. Smith said he would like to see a comparison of the marketing data, too, in a graph form.

Closed Session – Personnel Matter

Ms. Culbertson motioned to close the meeting at 10:47 a.m.; Ms. Buchanan seconded. All present were in favor. Mr. Smith made a motion to have a closed session at 10:56 a.m. under Maryland Open Meetings Act General Provisions Article § 3-305 (b) (2); Ms. Buchanan seconded. All were in favor. At 11:59 a.m. Ms. O'Mara made a motion to come out of closed session, Dr. Briddell seconded. Ms. O'Mara motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Pflaumer seconded. All present were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, June 9, at Pocomoke City Hall on Clarke Avenue at 9:30 a.m.

Amy Parker