

BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES FOR BALTIMORE COUNTY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING
June 9, 2020

A meeting of the Board of Library Trustees was held via Zoom Webinar on Tuesday, June 9, 2020. The meeting was called to order at 8:03 am by Board President Aaron Slater, and a notification of recording was given. Other Board members present were: Yara Cheikh, Maureen Walsh David, Jane Eickhoff, Michael Netzer, Paul Schwab, and Anne West.

Staff in attendance: Paula Miller, Director; James Cooke, Assistant Director; Natalie Edington, Assistant Director; Jen Evans, Administrative Assistant; Linda Frederick, Marketing and Development Manager; Emily Gamertsfelder, Planning, Projects and Data, Coordinator; Ann McElroy, Staff Association President; Helen Rowe, Fiscal Services Manager; Julie Saxenmeyer, Marketing and Development Supervisor; Conni Strittmatter, Youth and Family Engagement Coordinator; Liz Sundermann, Virtual Services and Media Creation Manager; and Mary Wilson, Human Resources Manager.

COMMUNICATION

Minutes

The minutes for May 19, 2020 meeting were approved (**Eickhoff/Walsh David**).

Correspondence

None.

Public Comments

Sign up for public comment was taken in the Q & A section of Zoom. Reading the comments was deferred until later in the meeting.

REPORTS

Director's Report (Miller)

In early March, the Director and members of the Board attended the Towson Chamber of Commerce Event *Toast of the Town*. At the event BCPL was presented with an award for work in the community. Also honored was John Holman, past Trustee.

The Media Services Department won three Communicator awards, for library video productions. The Director complimented them on their phenomenal work.

Director Miller spoke briefly about the anti-racism movement and her communications to the staff and public in support of racial equality.

Staff Reports

Finance Report (Rowe)

Ms. Rowe reviewed the Financial Report. Reduced revenue over the past three months has been offset by cost savings in supplies and some other operating expenditures, due to closing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic from mid-March to date.

Staff Association (McElroy)

Ms. McElroy shared recent contest winners and encouraged participation in the Wellness Challenge.

Board Reports (Slater)

Mr. Slater reported that a Search Committee had been identified.

OLD BUSINESS

BCPL FY 21 Budget (Rowe, Miller)

Ms. Rowe reported that the FY 21 Budget for BCPL was approved by the Council with only one change: The Cost of Living Adjustment requested for January by the County Executive has been deferred for all Baltimore County government employees (including BCPL). The Board will be presented with the Council-approved final budget at the July meeting, for acceptance.

Pandemic Impact on BCPL (Miller, Cooke, Edington, Gamertsfelder)

Assistant Director Cooke updated the Board on where BCPL was in the 4-phase reopening plan. While BCPL is still in Phase 1, Branch Managers and Department Heads are preparing onsite work spaces for staff to return, in limited-sized teams, to their branch or department beginning on June 17 as the start of Phase 2. Processes for handling materials have been developed in anticipation of reopening some book drops on June 17. On June 22 curbside pickup of holds will be available at select branches, and on June 29 that service will expand to all locations except Loch Raven and Reisterstown, as those locations are closed for renovations. Phase 3 planning, which encompasses reopening the branches to the public, continues.

Director Miller thanked Mr. Cooke and his team for their hard work. She also reported that the County Executive's office has requested that BCPL begin curbside service as soon as possible rather than on June 29, and the process is under review to see if service can begin earlier. Ms. Cheikh asked if BCPL is following State guidelines on reopening. Director Miller and Mr. Cooke assured her that all State and County best practices are being taken into consideration. Mr. Cooke also shared that his team is also following what is happening in libraries in Maryland and around the country as jurisdictions reopen.

Mr. Cooke reported that the Loch Raven branch continues to be closed for HVAC replacement. Reisterstown will remain closed in anticipation of the start of renovations: Staff are currently working to move furniture and the collection out of the Branch. The Catonsville renovation planning process is moving forward.

Assistant Director Edington updated the Board on staff efforts around programming. Numerous virtual programs have been made available to BCPL's customers including programming for school age children as well as adults. BCPL's staff have also been helping provide SNAP benefit assistance. A Help Wanted section of the library's SharePoint page has been matching available staff with work that needs to be completed or with opportunities to provide programming assistance.

Ms. Gamertsfelder, Planning and Projects Coordinator, reported on efforts to track usage of current resources like YouTube as well as other access points for customers. She shared an infographic created by the Marketing Department showing use of library virtual services.

NEW BUSINESS

Election of Officers for FY 21

The following slate of officers was presented for consideration:

President, Maureen Walsh David; Vice President, Paul Schwab; Treasurer, Jane Eickhoff; and Secretary, Anne West. The Board approved the list of candidates **(Cheikh/Schwab)**.

Policies

Rules of Conduct (Cooke)

The Board approved the following additions to the Rules of Conduct for the public in response to COVID-19 **(Eickhoff/Walsh David)**.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and related social distancing requirements, new rules have been added to protect the safety and wellbeing of staff and customers alike. We appreciate your understanding of and adherence to these additional and necessary rules during this unprecedented time. Failure to abide by these rules may result in your being asked to leave.

New Rule 1: Wear a mask anytime you are inside the library or attending an event on library property. Masks must be properly worn so that it covers your nose and mouth.

New Rule 2: Maintain an appropriate social distance of at least six feet from other customers and staff when inside the library or on library property.

New Rule 3: Follow all written and verbal instructions from staff regarding entry into and use of library facilities and equipment.

Additionally, item two of the list of behavior prohibited by BCPL now includes “or that might impact the health and safety of others.”

Maryland Strong Back to Business Pledge (Miller)

The Board voted to sign the Maryland Strong Back to Business Pledge to assure customers that BCPL is following state guidelines on COVID-19 including making changes to policies and appropriate social distancing **(Eickhoff/Cheikh)**.

Circulation Policies (Edington)

Fines and Fees

The Board approved a temporary suspension of fees charged and collected **(Walsh David/Cheikh)**. Through August 2020 BCPL will suspend fees for extended loans, and for hold materials not picked up. Customer accounts that have been sent to the collection agency would still require payment in full in order to borrow materials. There will be borrowing limits set for customers with fees owed.

E-Cards

The Board voted to temporarily expand borrowing privileges for E-cards through Phase 2 of BCPL’s Reopening Plan as follows **(Schwab/Cheikh)**:

- E-cards are granted full borrowing privileges, including all borrowing limits and fees, with the following exceptions:
 - E-cards may not be used to borrow Chromebooks or any items in the Library of Things or other special collections.

- E-cards may not be used to borrow Marina or OCLC World Cat (Interlibrary Loan) materials.

Personnel Policy – Staff Dress Code

Ms. Wilson requested that the Board approve changes to the staff Dress Code policy. These changes include:

- Full name should be visible on name badge during scheduled work hours.
- Language added to provide further guidance on no offensive or intimidating images/languages to be depicted on clothing or accessories.
- Language added to provide guidance on limitation of fragrance and body order. Personal fragrant products (fragrances, colognes, lotions, powders and other similar products) should be worn in moderation. Good hygiene practices are encouraged, as is the prevention of significant body odor.
- In an effort to meet safety precautions related to COVID19, face masks will become necessary for staff. Hats or face coverings except those worn for medical or religious reasons, or worn for health/safety reasons, such as to address widespread health issues, when assigned to work outside or in areas under construction or when instructed by the Director.

The Board approved the changes **(Eickhoff/Cheikh)**.

Public Comments

Ms. Evans read the Public Comments received via the Q & A function of Zoom from an attendee identified as Alice. Mr. Slater accepted the comments and they have been appended to the end of the minutes. *[Per the Board's stated process, comments were to be no longer than 3 minutes, and no discussion occurs at the meeting on them].*

Grant Applications

Baltimore Community Foundation/County COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund (Saxenmeyer)

The Board was asked to approve an application for \$15,000 from the Baltimore Community Fund's COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund. This fund promotes public health and supports residents. If funds were awarded, BCPL would use them in support of legal aid provided free to vulnerable communities by applying the funds toward partial funding for the Mobile Library Law Center. The Board approved BCPL's application **(West/Cheikh)**.

Social Worker in the Library Project (Miller, Frederick)

An opportunity to fund a Social Worker in the Library program has been made available. Over the past two months, Director Miller and Ms. Frederick have been working with a private donor on funding this need at BCPL for up to three years. With Board approval, Ms. Frederick will work through the Foundation to submit BCPL's application. The Board approved the application **(West/Cheikh)**.

IMLS CARES Funds for Maryland Libraries (Sundermann)

Ms. Sundermann asked the Board to consider accepting grant funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services for \$30,146. These funds are being allocated and contributed by the Maryland State Library and would be used to investigate the

purchase of a phone based app that would allow customers to check out materials without going to a desk or self-check machine. If it is determined that the app is not a viable choice, recent technology purchases that were part of BCPL's COVID-19 response will be reimbursed from these funds. The Board accepted the grant funds. (Eickhoff/Netzer).

TechEd Grant (Sundermann)

This application to the Maryland State Library for \$100,000 would allow BCPL to continue to provide technology education support for public libraries, and the lending of technology in Maryland for a third year. Also included in this request are funds to continue the SummAR program. The Board approved the grant application **(Walsh David/Schwab)**.

Junior Achievement Grant (Strittmatter)

Ms. Strittmatter requested that the Board approve an application for grant funding to continue BCPL's partnership with Junior Achievement. If awarded, this grant for \$42,160 would be used in FY 21 to build, design, and sponsor the library space in the new Junior Achievement Biztown location in Lansdowne for the year, send staff to volunteer at the Biztown Day of Business, and participate in the Junior Achievement Inspire event, a career fair event for every BCPS 8th grader. When asked about delays due to COVID-19, Ms. Strittmatter explained that Junior Achievement would be working with BCPS to make sure the event took place under safe conditions. The Board approved the applications (Walsh David/Schwab).

Mr. Schwab was very complimentary of the Junior Achievement partnership and of the number of grants staff are applying for.

Statewide Training (Miller)

Recent communications to the Director on this grant have been updates to FY 20 funding. The Board will most likely receive the approval request for FY 21 in July.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:37 am **(Schwab/Cheikh)**.

Submitted by

Jane Eickhoff

Secretary of the Board of Library Trustees

Q & A Log of public comments from the June 9, 2020 Board meeting.

Alice 08:38 AM

I just saw the response. That's interesting because there IS a Q&A on the agenda and the board prescheduled in about questions earlier.

Alice 08:58 AM

That document would be a lie to be posted in libraries. The libraries are extremely dirty. Me and my friends aren't coming back in until this is all over because it is always dusty and dirty. There's no air at the branches we go to either. No one wants to breathe all that in.

Alice 09:10 AM

Wait. What?! You don't want the library to wear BLACK LIVES MATTER? What is wrong with you? This further negates your comments on racism. ALM is NOT an opinion so you can ban that

Alice 08:31 AM

I think it's very irresponsible to reopen now, even to staff and even more so to move up because the CE

Alice 08:37 AM

The community, we don't need performative action from our library, we need to see you keep people safe and alive. I'm disappointed in the other counties I have cards with too. We also don't need reactionary acts from the library, like the weak and obviously forced statements on racism. We need our library to be a leader in caring about community lives, whether they are black poc or staff who should be kept safe and alive for when this REALLY over and the library needs to remember they are a part of the community.

Alice 08:32 AM

Your branches are small. I can't imagine there's enough space for your staff to socially distance.

You 08:33 AM

Thank you for your concern. If you would like to share your thoughts with the director please email directormiller@bcpl.net. We cannot interact with comments during the board meeting according to the guidelines of the meetings.