

The Worcester County Library Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, January 11, 2022 via Zoom Conference. Members present were Nancy Howard, Vicki O'Mara, Jeff Smith, Jocelyn Briddell, Patricia Tomasovic, and Sandra Buchanan.

Also present were Jennifer Ranck, Director; Betsy Gravenor-Stacey, Assistant Director; Nicole Punches, Pocomoke Assistant Branch Manager; Bethany Hooper, *Coastal Dispatch*, and Ray Jenkins, Ocean Pines.

Regular meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Ms. Howard. Recording device was acknowledged.

Ms. Punches reported for the Pocomoke branch and that the children's programs are picking up. The branch partnered with NASA for a story time and had about 10 people in attendance. Weeded fiction books were given to Peak Healthcare at Hartley Hall.

A motion to accept Minutes from the December 14, 2021 meeting was made by Mr. Smith; seconded by Ms. Tomasovic. All present were in favor.

Correspondence – County Human Resources News featured Library Happenings. *Ocean City Today* mentioned the Ocean City winter train garden and the County Commissioners approved a request to waive the formal bid process and accept a quote for a mobile library from TechOps. 47 ABC news publicized an article that rapid tests are available at libraries. *Bayside Gazette* and *Ocean City Today* featured an article on Worcester County Library hosting Art for Wellness in January. *Coastal Dispatch* featured an article on the Pocomoke Library plans, which are unclear. Letters from the Ocean Pines Anglers Club asking for a meeting room policy change and the Library's response to the Ocean Pines Anglers Club were also included.

Financial Report – Ms. Parker reported on the branch expenses for December 2021. No questions/comments on the branch expenses and statistics.

Administrative Report – Board members received a copy of the Administrative report to review before the meeting. No comments were made.

Staff Development 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 that she and Sara Wheatley attended the Collaborative Summer Reading Symposium on December 2. Several summer reading promotion ideas were shared including giving presentations to schools, Rotary clubs, Chambers of Commerce, and Lions Clubs. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey mentioned a need to provide staff with summer reading talking points. An example is to use button makers and make a button that says "Ask me about the SRP". Ms. Howard suggested a "coffee hour" where people can come to the branches to learn about the Summer Reading Program. The Library's Storywalk® is still up until the end of January; a new story will be added for February. All of the branches are working on a "New Americans Corner" project. A LibGuide will also be completed, making it easier to locate online forms.

OLD BUSINESS:

Library Board Vacancy The candidate nominated by the Board will be discussed at today's County Commissioner meeting (previous Commissioner meeting was postponed due to inclement weather).

Pocomoke Project The City of Pocomoke did not receive the Strategic Demolition grant to remove the downtown Armory for the new library site. Ms. Ranck explained that this impacts the library's ability to apply for an FY 24 Public Library Capital Grant through the Maryland State Library. Site selection needs to be completed before a strong grant application can be submitted. Ms. Ranck reviewed previous schematics developed early in 2021, before the Armory site was an option. The Pocomoke branch is over 50 years old, with equipment well past its useful life. The possibility of a shared building with the Senior Center was also discussed; at the present time this remains an option. The City of Pocomoke is planning to reapply for the Strategic Demolition grant later this spring. Mr. Smith suggested a meeting with the town. Ms. Briddell mentioned partnering with the senior center is great, not to rush, and to meet with the City. Ms.

Ranck will contact City of Pocomoke officials to schedule a meeting.

County Budget Ms. Ranck and Ms. Gravenor-Stacey met with the Human Resources Director to discuss personnel budget. Ms. Ranck will request additional furniture funds to replace computer tables and chairs in Ocean Pines and will request an increase in the general maintenance account due to rising material costs.

NEW BUSINESS:

COVID Rapid Test Kits Distribution The Library has been assisting the Worcester County Health Department distribute rapid test kits to the community. Unfortunately, supply is not meeting demand. To protect public health, this service is available via contactless pick up.

Meeting Room Update and Policy Ms. Ranck reported that masks are now required to attend library programs due to rising Covid positivity rates. This reflects the County's recent change to require masks at Commissioner meetings. The Ocean Pines Anglers Club has requested changes to the library's meeting room policy to allow nonprofits to raise funds and collect dues. Ms. Howard would like the board to establish working subcommittees – such as a policy review subcommittee to address requests like this and the board agreed.

Tuition Reimbursement Policy A draft tuition reimbursement policy was included in the board packet for review. The library is fortunate to receive grant funds from the Maryland State Library specifically for staff development, part of which can be used for tuition reimbursement. The library can also request training funds from the County. We appreciate these opportunities to invest in our staff. The policy will help the library disburse funds fairly and define expectations between the Library and staff members. The draft policy was also reviewed by the Director of Human Resources for Worcester County. Ms. Buchanan motioned to table this and give to a subcommittee; Ms. Tomasovic seconded. All present were in favor.

Ms. Howard suggested an orientation session next meeting for 1 hour. Ms. Buchanan suggested inviting a guest with knowledge of the State Library to answer questions from Board members. Mr. Smith suggested a separate meeting in the next three weeks to be held at the Snow Hill branch. The board agreed to have training/orientation for the first half of the meeting and then establish subcommittees for the second half. Mr. Smith said this meeting would be administrative and would not need to be open to the public. Ms. Ranck suggested the board review the trustee manual and library policies on the website.

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, February 8 at the Pocomoke branch instead of Berlin, with a Zoom option at 9:30 a.m. Mr. Smith motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Briddell seconded. All present were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 11:08 a.m.

Amy Parker