

The Worcester County Library Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, April 8 at the Snow Hill Branch. Members present were Jeff Smith, Sandra Buchanan, Nancy Howard, Patricia Tomasovic, Vicki O'Mara, Kathryn Culbertson, and Jocelyn Briddell arrived at 9:40 a.m.

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 9:34 a.m. by Mr. Smith. Recording device was acknowledged.

Ms. Herz shared that the Snow Hill Library was featured on WBOC, after a recent town work session. The Riley Committee has requested funding to replace the 50 year old shelving in the Snow Hill branch. The branch is planning a "1970's Book Bash" fundraiser to help with the renovations. Branch staff are collecting silent auction items and there will be games and activities for people of all ages. Ms. Tomasovic mentioned talking with the Snow Hill Lions Club and Ms. Howard mentioned asking the Optimist Club. There is a library cart now at the Worcester County Recreation and Parks facility stocked with books and promoting our upcoming programs. We hope the afterschool children and their families take advantage. Ms. Herz said that Dragon week went well. She has expanded the jail proxy programs and will offer an art program there in the Fall.

A motion to accept the minutes from the March 11, 2025 meeting was made by Ms. Howard, seconded by Ms. Tomasovic. All present were in favor.

Correspondence – *WMDT 47* featured an article on the Hobby Fair. *Bayside Gazette* reported that copies of the Ocean Pines history book will be donated to the library and another article highlighted Angie DiMarco's "Staff Member of the Year" (Ocean Pines branch) award.

Financial Report – Ms. Parker reported on the branch expenses for March 2025. Ms. Ranck mentioned the ESRL line item is not accurate. We have to get the County to make an adjustment because an invoice was coded to the wrong grant account. Ms. Parker is scheduling annual carpet cleaning in the branches. Ms. Culbertson asked if every branch has a door counter. Ms. Ranck said yes, even the temporary Pocomoke space. Ms. Howard asked if there have been any problems in Pocomoke. Ms. Ranck said they did not have public computers for a week due to connectivity issues. We have been grateful for the community's understanding. Ms. Ranck is impressed and grateful that Pocomoke was able to host AARP tax service every Friday.

Administrative Report – Board members received a copy of the Administrative report to review before the meeting. Ms. Ranck said Allison Blakeman was promoted to Assistant Branch Manager at the Ocean City branch. There was a bad storm in Berlin on March 5. Berlin's story time is picking up, with 50 people attending. The children's programming at all of the branches is going very well, with a good range of programming for families and children of all ages. Despite dealing with insufficient wiring, the Pocomoke branch created a Lord of the Rings escape room program. Ms. Scott learned information about local decoy traditions through a talk hosted by the Eastern Shore Public Library in Parksley, VA, making contact with the library's local history team in the process. The Pop-Up offered 46 programs. Coming up the Pop-Up will be at the Big Truck Day in Ocean Pines and at the "Fairies and Gnomes" event at Furnace Town. The Foundation bowling fundraiser (Bowling for Books) will be held this Thursday and proceeds will benefit the new Pocomoke branch.

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 that 15 people are registered for the MLA conference coming up in May. A survey was distributed to library staff, requesting help identifying learning needs for the next year. The survey is due April 17, and staff responses will inform a Learning Needs Assessment that Ms. Gravenor-Stacey will complete by mid-May. The EDI committee will meet in April. The committee shared the social story template with Kelsey Bettencourt, Employment Specialist at Worcester County Developmental Center, who provided feedback on the social stories template created by the committee. Thirty-nine staff members are planning on attending the April 25 staff day field trip to the State Library Resource Center and Library for the Blind and Print Disabled. The Ocean Pines and Ocean City branches will be open that day. Ms. Gravenor-Stacey said a press release has been sent out. Ms. Ranck mentioned the EDI committee will transition into the strategic plan oversight committee. Ms. Ranck also pointed out there was a lot of outreach in March.

OLD BUSINESS:

Pocomoke Project The project is approximately one month behind the original schedule. Foundation work has begun and the footprint of the new building is developing. Ms. Ranck, Ms. Ingrassia, Ms. Punches, and Mr. Schoellkopf will be visiting the Selbyville Library on April 16 to look at their furniture and shelving. Ms. Tomasovic asked if tariffs will affect the project. We are not certain, but the construction team will notify the County with any issues. Mr. Smith asked about the walnut tree on site; we are not sure if it will be healthy enough to survive the construction. The next team meeting will be on April 16 at 10 am. We are working to see if Mr. Nock can help with the circulation desk project. Mr. Smith asked where the time capsule is and Ms. Ranck said it is in a safe place and will be moved back to the site. It is scheduled to be opened in 2077. The flagpole and current sign will remain on site for the new building.

Snow Hill Project Due to rising cost projects, branch upgrades will be phased. We will start with plumbing, electric, and some space reconfiguration and then address HVAC issues at a later date. The Snow Hill branch has a Riley fund, designated only for Snow Hill. The Town of Snow Hill holds the money in their account after receiving it from the Community Foundation. Ms. Ranck and Ms. Herz will be attending the meeting tonight to request funds for new shelving and answer any questions the Town Council may have.

Hoopla Effective April 1, Eastern Shore Regional Library implemented a daily spending cap in order to keep the service running until the end of the fiscal year. Ms. Ranck hopes the service will remain next fiscal year, as it has name recognition and is easy to use. If Hoopla is discontinued, ESRL will find other products to help maintain a strong digital collection.

NEW BUSINESS:

Nominating Committee Ms. Ranck would like to see a copy of the draft trustee application. The possibility of creating a survey to help formulate the library's mission and vision statements was briefly discussed.

Hobby Fair A very special thank you to Elena Coelho who led the planning of this event. Ms.

Ranck said about 70 people were in attendance. Ms. Ranck is hoping to receive feedback from Ms. Gravenor-Stacey and Ms. Coelho.

Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) An Executive Order issued on March 14 seeks to dismantle IMLS: *“such entities shall reduce the performance of their statutory functions and associated personnel to the minimum presence and function required by law.”* IMLS is the primary source of federal funding for libraries across the nation. This Executive Order has resulted in all IMLS staff being placed on administrative leave effective Tuesday, April 1, 2025. Ms. Ranck received notification from the Maryland State Library Agency that funding for our staff development grant and local history grant is on hold. We will try to use funding from the ESRL grant to see these projects through. We are not certain if or when the federal funding will be available.

Ms. Ranck is presenting the library budget this morning to the County Commissioners.

Ms. Buchanan motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:32 a.m.; Ms. Howard seconded. All present were in favor.

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, May 13, 2025 at the Ocean Pines branch at 9:30 a.m.

Amy Parker