

The Worcester County Library Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, January 9, 2024 at the Pocomoke Branch. Members present were Jeff Smith, Sandra Buchanan, Nancy Howard, Patricia Tomasovic, and Kathryn Culbertson. Jocelyn Briddell, Vicki O'Mara, and Betsy Gravenor-Stacey were absent.

Also present were Jennifer Ranck, Director; Dawn Ingrassia, Pocomoke Branch Manager; and Amy Parker, Business Manager.

Regular meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m. by Mr. Smith. Recording device was acknowledged.

Ms. Ingrassia said they are noticing more patrons using the Pocomoke branch from Virginia. Branch staff are preparing for Spring programs. The branch has also been busy weeding the collection to make room for new materials.

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

Correspondence – *Ocean City Today* had an article titled “Book Policy Debate” featuring an photo from the Ocean Pines Library. The January edition of the *County Seat* highlighted Udemy, a new library resource.

Financial Report – Ms. Parker reported on the branch expenses for December 2023. The statistics were not included in the board packet; Ms. Ranck passed them out to the board. No comments were made on the statistics. Ms. Ranck noted there were three payrolls in December. Ms. Howard asked about the fuel charges. The County inputs those charges for us. Ms. Ranck said Ms. Parker is making notes for the upcoming budget.

Administrative Report – Board members received a copy of the Administrative report to review before the meeting. The Berlin branch has blue material coming out of the breakroom faucet; maintenance is aware. The train garden brought in many patrons at the Ocean City branch. Ms. Howard commented that she shared a copy of the guestbook with the Ocean City Mayor. Ms. Ranck said she attended the Noon Year's Eve party in Ocean City and it was standing room only. We said goodbye to Jake Nail from the Ocean Pines branch. Ms. Ranck said WMDT is airing a piece on Mr. Nail's contributions to the library this week. Pocomoke has had some issues with their HVAC, everything seems good now. Snow Hill decorated for the Dickens Weekend in December. Their Dungeons and Dragons program continues to grow, bringing in a lot of tweens and families. Local History Librarian, Erin Scott, is planning Spring outreach programs including a Maryland Trivia program and a how-to class on preserving your family photos. The Pop Up has trimmed a few of their outdoor stops but did participate in four Christmas parades. The next Foundation meeting is January 23 at 2 pm.

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. Ranck said Sara Wheatley attended the “Growing Up Wild” facilitator training. Ms. Ranck also reported two staff will start the LATI (Library Associate Training Institute).

OLD BUSINESS:

Pocomoke The Children’s porch will be an add alternate to the project as we are working hard to stay on budget. Ms. Ranck said the Library could fundraise for this space if it exceeds the budget. The porch would possibly be more free standing. Ms. Ranck will send an updated plan or rendering for the board to review. The County received 5 bids for the construction manager at risk. County staff reviewed the bids and Whiting Turner received the highest scores. The County Commissioners will approve the CMAR on January 16. The Procurement Officer informed the design team that the top three companies will provide presentations to the County. Ms. Ranck is unsure if anyone from the design team has been invited to the presentations. Mr. Smith will reach out to the County Administrator to see if he can attend. The Governor will release his FY 25 budget proposal on January 17, and will include recommended funding for the Pocomoke project; funding will be confirmed once the General Assembly approves the budget. Discussion regarding a temporary location followed.

Strategic Plan Ms. Ranck said she received good feedback from library staff about the patron survey. We could possibly launch this in March. Ms. Culbertson and Ms. Buchanan volunteered to be part of a strategic plan committee. Ms. Culbertson suggested putting this on February’s board meeting agenda.

NEW BUSINESS:

Accessibility and Accommodations The EDI committee wanted to make sure this was updated on our website under “policies”. The board also suggested adding it to our “resources” section on the website.

Teacher Cards The Library Media Specialist from Worcester Preparatory School has requested library cards for teachers. Ms. Ranck said she can make a presentation to the teachers to show what online resources are available and can help staff sign up for library cards.

Upcoming Projects The Library received additional capital funds to replace the circulation desk at the Ocean Pines branch and complete meeting room upgrades in Ocean City (new flooring and furnishings). The Snow Hill building improvements will be a longer process and will require direction and assistance from the County to complete.

Closed Session – Personnel Matter

Ms. Buchanan made a motion to have a closed session as noted on the meeting agenda at 10:36 a.m. under Maryland Open Meetings Act General Provisions Article § 3-305 (b) (2); Ms. Culbertson seconded. All were in favor. At 10:54 a.m., Ms. Culbertson made a motion to come out of closed session; Ms. Tomasovic seconded. Mr. Smith noted the meeting reconvened in open session at 10:54 a.m., and stated the board discussed a Personnel matter during the closed session.

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, February 20, 2024 at the Berlin branch at 9:30 a.m. Ms. Tomasovic motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Culbertson seconded. All present were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

Amy Parker