

**FREDERICK COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
JANUARY 4, 2017**

The Frederick County Public Libraries Board of Trustees Meeting convened at 7:00 p.m. on January 4, 2017 at the C. Burr Artz Library, Frederick, Maryland.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** C. Greenway, D. Kiser, G. Laugelli, S. Manny, C. Smith and B. Poteat.

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** K. Kane and Council Member Liaison, T. Chmelik.

**STAFF PRESENT:** D. Batson, Director; S. McDuff, Associate Director; S. Lauchner, Coordinator/Library Collections; J. Vogel, Youth Services Coordinator; J. El-Zeftawy, Development Officer; B. Hissong, Community Services Coordinator; N. Levesque, Public Relations Manager; A. Sherwood, Finance/Office Manager; D. Frank-Rice– Library Systems Administrator; S. McCoy, Branch Administrator – C. Burr Artz Library; R. Bowers, Branch Administrator – Middletown/Walkersville Libraries; T. Lebherz, Branch Administrator – Brunswick Library; A. Whitney, Branch Administrator – Urbana Regional Library; E. Dingle, Branch Administrator – Thurmont/Emmitsburg Libraries; D. Buker, Virtual Branch Administrator; R. Clapp, Library Associate – Thurmont; A. Gray, Library Associate – Walkersville; and L. Tibbs, Recording Secretary.

**CITIZEN REMARKS:** None.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** C. Greenway made a motion to approve the Minutes of the November 2, 2016 meeting of the FCPL Board of Trustees Meeting; seconded by D. Kiser. No discussion. VOTE: Unanimous.

**CHAIR'S REPORT:** Mr. Laugelli noted that he attended the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary for the Urbana Regional Library in December and it was a very nice function. Other than that, he added that during the break he spent time enjoying the holidays, planning for his trip to Italy and reading.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

**a. FCPL – Update:** Mr. Batson welcomed everyone back after the holidays and wished

everyone a Happy New Year. Mr. Batson noted that James Kelly, Associate Director, is on vacation and will not be attending tonight's meeting. He then welcomed back Sheila McDuff after the birth of her son.

Thereafter, Mr. Batson reviewed statistics. He noted that although members of the FCPL Board of Trustees received two months of statistics (October and November), Mr. Batson stated that he is going to review the statistics for November and the year-end totals. The statistics from July through the end of November show a decrease in circulation. Staff has traced this decrease to a reduction in usage of certain electronic resources. The school district was using these electronic resources quite a bit and for some reason they are not using them as much. As a result, FCPL has seen a marked reduction in this area. Staff is communicating with the school district to encourage their continued use of FCPL's resources. Mr. Batson added that when looking at the other statistics, they are actually quite heartening. Patron visits are up by 1% over the same time period last year. New patron registrations are up 11%. Mr. Batson noted that he finds it interesting how technology is changing FCPL's computer usage. FCPL's free public computer usage is down by 7%, however, FCPL's wi-fi usage is up by 52%. Apparently, patrons are bringing their own devices to the library and using FCPL's wi-fi service. Children's programs have increased almost 18% and attendance at children's programs is up by 27%. Adult programs have gone up 79% and attendance has gone up 238%. Mr. Batson noted that FCPL did not really have many adult programs last year and that is why these figures are up significantly. He added that FCPL is seeing very positive numbers in most areas.

**b. Budget/CIP – Update:** As far as the CIP is concerned, Mr. Batson noted that everything has been turned in for the CIP. He noted that the bid process for the Walkersville Library is proceeding. Robin Bowers noted that the bid closing date was December 22, 2016 and there was a winning bidder. She noted that the County is doing background checks at this time. The project manager is very happy with the successful bidder and the price. Mr. Batson added that everything should be wrapped up around mid-February, 2017. The groundbreaking should take place around the end of March or first part of April, 2017.

Mr. Batson thereafter reviewed the status for the Myersville Library. Mr. Batson added that the Myersville Library project will not be funded until July 1, 2017. At this time we have to go through the entire budget process but unless something comes up that is unforeseen at this time, this project should go forward. The facility will be a 6,000 – 7,000 square foot facility. He further noted, with deep regret, the passing of Mr. Don Easterday. He was a very strong supporter of the Myersville Library. We are still trying to work the trolley concept into the Myersville Library. Mr. Easterday was very committed to the history of the trolley in that community and we will try to continue that going forward. The Town of Myersville is working very closely with us on this project. Mayor Creadick and all of the Myersville officials have been very helpful.

Mr. Batson noted that the Middletown Library is further out in the CIP. The Town of Middletown and the developer are working wonderfully with us. At this time, everything is proceeding along and moving forward. The relationship between the County and community has

been very positive.

Thereafter, Mr. Batson noted that Mrs. Trudy Fry, who has contributed funds for the Edward F. Fry Memorial Library, has approached FCPL with a proposal to purchase another building in the Point of Rocks area to expand the library. The building she has proposed to purchase is a church. It is just a few houses down from the existing library. It is an old church that has been there for 125 years. This is a most generous offer from Mrs. Fry. At this point there are a lot of things that need to be investigated (appraisals, examinations, budgeting, etc.) but we are hoping that in the next fiscal year, FCPL will have the money for the engineering and analysis and in the following fiscal year FCPL will obtain the money to do the necessary upgrades that are needed. In all honesty, Mr. Batson stated that the church is in wonderful condition. It has been a very well maintained building. There are ADA and parking issues that need to be addressed. As further information is forthcoming, it will be passed along to the FCPL Board of Trustees.

Ms. Greenway inquired about the square footage of the church. Mr. Batson stated that the church has a 1,800 square foot sanctuary and another 1,500 square foot fellowship hall that is connected to the main building. Ms. Greenway thereafter inquired as to the square footage of the current library in Point of Rocks. Mr. Batson stated that the current facility is only about 250 square feet. Mr. Batson stated that we are at the beginning stage on this relocation/expansion but would like to acknowledge Mrs. Fry for her generosity in offering to do this.

Mr. Batson noted that within the next 5 – 6 year period, there will be four new or renovated FCPL facilities. There are a lot of things that need to be considered such as the economy and the County budget but FCPL has some very positive steps going forward.

Thereafter, Mr. Batson stated that the budget is currently being prepared. The budget will be presented to members of the FCPL Board of Trustees at the February 1, 2017 meeting. In the latter part of January, staff will be meeting with members of the Finance Committee of the FCPL Board of Trustees prior to the upcoming February meeting. He noted that FCPL is doing OK and things are better than we had hoped for. We are seeing progress and hope to present some new and different ideas at the budget meeting.

Mr. Batson added that there have been several nice articles in the newspapers recently about FCPL.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**a. Financial Report:** Amanda Sherwood reviewed the financial statements provided to members of the FCPL Board of Trustees. She noted that the statements contain tentative data through November 30, 2016. As can be seen from the reports, FCPL has a significant increase in its revenue. At the present time, FCPL is at about 25% which is about where we want to be right now. The figure is a little bit low because you have to take into account the fact that contributions and donations as well as the ending fund balance are not recorded until the end of the year. Also, she noted that although FCPL was awarded a Federal Grant, staff has just started

submitting reimbursements, so FCPL should start receiving revenue in that area over the next month or two.

As far as expenditures are concerned, FCPL is at approximately 35%. She noted that some expenses occur at the beginning of the year and some occur towards the end. She noted the credit balance for contract services and stated that is because there is one invoice from Fiscal Year 2016 that still needs to be paid once the service is completed. She also added that although the figures for equipment maintenance and repairs seems high, that includes a significant amount of prepaid expenses from Fiscal Year 2016 so this will wash out.

Thereafter, Ms. Sherwood reviewed Fiscal Year 2017 Gifts and Contributions. She noted that this report is accurate as of December 19, 2016. There was an increase of \$10,600 in the amount of grants awarded. At the last meeting there was a question about the grants for Frederick Reads and she pointed out that FCPL has been awarded three grants since the last meeting for Frederick Reads. She also noted that there is a significant increase in individual gifts mostly for individual branches and summer reading but all in all FCPL is up over \$14,000 for individual gifts/donations. She summarized by stating that in total for grants and donations, FCPL is up by about \$25,000 which is approximately a 2% increase from October, 2016.

Ms. Sherwood noted that tentatively for calendar year 2016, FCPL's passport revenue was \$62,800.00. This is \$13,000 more than FCPL had budgeted so it is a very successful program and will hopefully continue to be a great revenue stream for FCPL as we move forward.

Ms. Smith inquired as to where the #Giving Tuesday revenues are shown on the financial statements. Ms. Sherwood stated that the revenue is broken down into different categories such as a specific branch or to the summer reading program. She stated that she does not have the breakdown with her this evening but she could provide that data, if it is wanted.

Ms. Smith thereafter inquired about proceeds from the Dip Jar. Ms. Sherwood stated that proceeds from the Dip Jar are included in the financial statement as well. Funds from the Dip Jar are under the category of "Greatest Need" on the financial statement. She further noted that if members of the FCPL Board of Trustees would like a clearer breakdown, she could either send an e-mail to members of the FCPL Board of Trustees or supply the information at the next board meeting. Ms. Smith stated that she thinks it would be interesting to see how these new initiatives are panning out.

Ms. El-Zeftawy stated that the Dip Jar at the C. Burr Artz Library has been very successful. It is getting our patrons in the habit of giving. There have been several patrons that give to FCPL every time they come to the C. Burr Artz Library. She added that FCPL had 94 new donors during the months of November and December, which is pretty astronomical.

Ms. Poteat stated that at a prior meeting it was noted that the Post Office was getting re-involved in passport services and she inquired whether the Post Office had ramped back up. Mr. Batson stated that the Post Office has had some open houses and they have put out more signage and

literature for the public encouraging them to come to the Post Office to get their passports. Mr. Batson added that even with the push by the Post Office regarding passports, other libraries throughout the State, as well FCPL, have still been doing very well with regard to passport processing. Mr. Batson encouraged the public to utilize FCPL to obtain their passports.

**b. Public Relations Introduction:** Mr. Batson introduced Nancy Levesque as FCPL's new Public Relations Manager. Nancy noted that prior to coming to FCPL, she most recently worked at the National Summer Learning Association which focused on the learning loss experienced by students when they are out of school. She added that her prior work somewhat parallels with the summer reading program. Prior to that time, Nancy added that she had worked for non-profits for 10-12 years on various issues. A long time ago she also worked in advertising and public relations agencies. She noted that non-profit/mission work is near and dear to her heart. She thereafter stated that at FCPL she has been charged with creating a marketing communications plan for the library system and shepherding brand management for the new logo to make sure we are using the logo consistently and our messaging is consistent across all different vehicles whether online or in print.

C. Greenway inquired of Ms. Levesque whether she moved to Frederick from somewhere else. Nancy stated that she is a new Frederick County resident. She added that her husband and she moved to Frederick from Baltimore City, Maryland.

**c. Early Literacy Learning Spaces:** Janet Vogel, Youth Services Manager at FCPL and Jess El-Zeftawy, Development Officer at FCPL introduced themselves and noted that they will be making a presentation on Early Literacy Learning Spaces. Ms. Vogel started the presentation with a quote from Mr. Rogers:

“Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning but for children, play is serious learning.”

Ms. Vogel stated that FCPL staff sneaks learning into everything they do but the children may or may not recognize that. There is an element of play that is learning. When children are playing with one another they are learning to take turns, they are learning social skills, they are learning math concepts when counting out toys, they are using imagination skills and English skills. The idea is that even when we see the children play with toys in the library, the children are being given skills that they might not otherwise have. There are many times when people think that all we do in the children's world is read stories and play with puppets when, in fact, what staff is doing is very important for school readiness.

Thereafter, Ms. Vogel displayed photos of Farm City. She noted that the tractor is the most popular aspect of Farm City. Farm City has been open for 2-1/2 years and is very popular at the library. Farm City was designed by the Burgeon Group which provides museum-quality installations to libraries. They are the only company in the country that does that. They are very intentional about what they do. FCPL is very excited to work with them. She noted that there is a smaller installation at the Brunswick Library which incorporates a canal boat due to the fact

that the C&O Canal runs through Brunswick. Ms. Vogel stated that these types of installations help children develop those skills that are necessary both for getting ready for school and for life itself. In 2015, the President's Council of Economic Advisors researched the economic returns of early childhood spending and they found that for every dollar that is put into high quality early childhood education, we get \$7.00 back in return. This could be through a reduced number of teen pregnancies, increased performance in school, reduced incarcerations, etc., and all of this leads us back to a better society. She noted that although staff work with children from birth all the way through the age of 18, staff knows that what they do for early childhood literacy is very important. FCPL provides something that is not accessible throughout any other areas of the County. FCPL provides free access to all of our programs and services.

Thereafter, Ms. Vogel spoke about Read, Play, Talk, Write, Sing – the five skills necessary for school readiness and literacy. The Read, Play, Talk, Write, Sing campaign came from the American Library Association. If anyone goes into any library in the State of Maryland, there will be posters that talk about this campaign. FCPL tries to encourage caregivers to work with children – read to them, sing to them, and play with them. Even scribbling is very important to develop early literacy skills.

Ms. Vogel stated that FCPL surveyed families in relationship to Farm City during the first seven or eight months that it was open. We wanted to report back to our funders and it was very interesting to see if the money we put into it was worthwhile. It was determined that it increases personal and social skills, scientific skills, math skills, physical skills, and language skills. More than 90% of the people that were surveyed said that they felt that the installation improved those skills in their children. Parents were also asked if Farm City made them more likely to interact with their children and 94% of them said that it did. Another question on the survey asked parents if Farm City would make them more likely to visit the library and 87% of the parents said it would make them more likely to visit the library. Picture book check-outs also increased. We compared check-outs of picture books for the first four months after the installation of Farm City and check-outs increased by 31% for the first year. There was another 15% increase in the second year over the first year and another 14% increase so far in the third year. She noted that while circulation statistics may be going down, picture book check-outs are increasing. She also added that word-of-mouth is also helping to spread the word about Farm City.

Ms. El-Zeftawy noted that Ms. Vogel gave a very good synopsis of how Farm City has been a resounding success. She thereafter displayed photos of her child playing in Farm City and relayed her experiences with Farm City before she even began working at FCPL. She noted that when her son was an infant, he could sit down and play with everything on the wall. Now he will play on the tractor and play with all the other interactive parts of Farm City. She noted that not only has Farm City been important to her son but it is very important to her. Ms. El-Zeftawy stated that social interaction is important for her son and there are not a lot of places one can go that would be accommodating to all of the unexpected challenges and things that go along with having an infant. She added that she brought her son to Babies with Books and thereafter discovered Farm City. Her son will grow up in the library and will appreciate this particular space because she and her son visit often.

Ms. El-Zeftawy displayed another photo of a child who was overwhelmed with excitement about Farm City when it was unveiled in 2014. His mother is a huge library supporter and a former library staff member and you can see from the picture how excited he is about the unveiling. If anyone has ever visited the children's room around story time, you will know that it is hectic. There are two designated stroller parking areas and there is a lot of noise and excitement in that area from all of the children playing in Farm City and parents interacting with their children.

Thereafter, Ms. El-Zeftawy stated that last year nearly one-half of the children in Frederick County were not ready for school. 46% of the children could not demonstrate the skills needed to be ready for kindergarten in 2015. This is alarming. And even more alarming is that 65% of children who are coming from low income households are not ready for school. There is definitely an achievement gap there and this is an area where public libraries can make a tremendous difference.

She noted that it is FCPL's mission to reduce that achievement gap to assure that our children are as ready as possible when they enter kindergarten and make them more successful in life. FCPL staff is currently looking at the Urbana Regional Library to expand installations and she displayed some rough renderings of what FCPL would like to do. What is unique about Farm City at the C. Burr Artz Library is that it is reflective of the community. Frederick County is a very agricultural county and that is reflected in the silo and the downtown Frederick mural on the wall. Those community-specific elements will be brought into the Urbana Regional Library as well. The renderings show a market truck and if you have ever visited the Urbana Regional Library, you know that there is a farmer's market right outside of the library. There is also a rendering of a market stall. FCPL wants to be sure that we are reflective of our culturally diverse community. We want to have international foods and details that speak to the folks of that community. She further noted that what is great about the Burgeon Group is that they will actually survey the community prior to finishing their design and installation to determine what things are important to the community and what elements members of the community want to see in the installation.

Ms. El-Zeftawy stated that FCPL has a new opportunity with the new Walkersville Library Branch. At this time, we are in the initial planning stages as to deciding what will go into the space at the Walkersville Library. Some of the things that are being looked at initially is a bookmobile truck (that perhaps will be a milk truck) and be reflective of Frederick County's dairy industry. There is a kitchen that is featured in the renderings but it may end up being a farmhouse. There are a number of different things that are available and are being looked at. She thereafter noted that FCPL has set a very ambitious fundraising goal and we need everyone's help. Before talking numbers, Ms. El-Zeftawy relayed why it is what it is. What is so great about the space and this particular vendor is while we realize it is expensive, it is unique, intentional and effective. These are museum-quality elements and while normal toys are designed to be played with by one or two children for a couple of years, these features are designed to be played with by hundreds of children for many years. Farm City was installed in 2014 and it still looks brand new. The installations are also very unique and reflective of the

community. No space is just left arbitrarily. Everywhere you look there are details that are designed to intrigue and entice children to play with them and encourage caregivers to play with the children. These installations are very effective as Janet Vogel mentioned earlier in the survey results.

Ms. El-Zeftawy stated that the approximate cost for an early literacy learning space in the Urbana Regional Library would be \$80,000 and, the cost for an installation at the Walkersville Library would be approximately \$60,000. She noted that FCPL is in the process of designing a fundraising campaign for both of these installations which will include grants, opportunities for corporate partnerships, special fundraising events and individual donors. We all know that libraries are supported by public funds but we rely on the generosity of our library patrons, community members and our partners to make a good library great and one of the best in the State. She noted that when we are looking at doing spaces like these, this is when we rely on the generosity of our donors to make things like this happen. There will be a number of things coming out over the next year and opportunities for patrons to get involved and learn more about these spaces. Ms. El-Zeftawy noted that what she is asking is that if there are opportunities to make introductions, please do so. Staff would love to do a presentation to a group or organization that any one may be involved with to let them know what FCPL is doing. She encouraged sharing FCPL's message on networks and talk about your love for the libraries and these spaces and the difference that it makes in the community.

Ms. El-Zeftawy further noted that she and Ms. Vogel will be posting more about these installations throughout the year on FCPL's web page, support page and social media.

C. Greenway stated that when you walk into the children's department at the C. Burr Artz Library there is a bank of computers. She inquired whether FCPL has a policy regarding technology and small children. She noted that she keeps her grandson a couple of days a week and reads a lot about this sort of thing. She added that she wants to bring him to the library as soon as he doesn't put everything in his mouth. She inquired as to what age it is safe to introduce a very young child to all of this. Ms. Vogel stated that is a very good question. For many years the American Academy of Pediatrics said no screen time for children under age 2. Just recently that was revised. Ms. Vogel stated that if you were to get an e-book and put it on your iPad and read with your grandchild, it was found that this is no worse for them than reading a physical book. It is different and the children interact differently because they are not physically touching a book and turning the pages but noted that it is not as damaging as they were originally saying. Ms. Vogel stated that the key for little kids is that caregivers interact with them just as they would interact with them when playing with blocks. Ms. Greenway inquired whether there is any technological component to anything within Farm City. Ms. Vogel stated that within Farm City, FCPL did add some big touchscreen televisions. Since the initial installation of Farm City, technology has changed and we may add some of those elements. The Burgeon Group has just recently added some light-up features to some of their installations so this may be something that we look into for the future. Ms. Vogel stated that one of the difficult things with integrating technology into an installation like that is that it doesn't last forever. If we were to stick an iPad in one of those panels, it would need to be easily accessible to be changed out as technology



changes.

Mr. Laugelli stated that he was constantly irritated by the ads prior to the holidays about all of the electronic gadgets. He noted that he thinks kids need to play and that is why he likes the idea of Farm City.

**d. A Walk In The (Frederick County) Woods/Bill Bryson:** Bryan Hissong, Community Services Manager provided an overview of Frederick Reads. Frederick Reads is an annual author event that takes place over two day days. He noted that this is FCPL's 11<sup>th</sup> year for Frederick Reads. This year's event will take place on March 5, 2017 at 7:30 p.m. at The Weinberg Center and on March 6, 2017 at 11:00 a.m. at Frederick Community College. The keynote speaker for this year's author event will be Bill Bryson, a New York Times bestselling author who has over 20 books to his name. Mr. Bryson is known for his humorous travel logs, his dry wit and his clever observations of humanity and habitat. He has written on a number of subjects from the time he was growing up in Des Moines, Iowa until his young adulthood in England. He has also written about his time as a young man in college travelling around Europe and trying to make that same trip as a middle-aged man. Many of you may be most familiar with A Walk In The Woods where he attempted to some degree of success to walk the Appalachian Trail. In the past year his book was made into a major motion picture starring Robert Redford as Mr. Bryson and Nick Nolte as his friend. He noted that FCPL is very excited about this event and thanked our partners and major sponsors, The C. Burr Artz Trust, Frederick Community College and The Weinberg Center. Mr. Hissong pointed out that this event is free and open to everyone for their enjoyment.

Ms. Smith inquired whether tickets are needed in advance for this event. Mr. Hissong stated that this event is a non-ticketed, free event to everyone. He further added that there will be an opportunity after each event for book signings.

**e. New Workstations:** Donny Frank-Rice introduced himself and noted that he is a member of the Systems Department at FCPL. He noted that he will be speaking about some new assistive technology workstations that FCPL will be offering in several of our branches.

Near the end of this past summer, the Maryland Division for Library Development and Services began providing assistive technology systems to library systems throughout the State of Maryland. This was made possible by a federal grant that was put in place to mark the 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American Disabilities Act. Since that time there have been more than 100 libraries in the State of Maryland that have participated. FCPL has received three sets of this equipment which will be installed at the C. Burr Artz Library, the Thurmont Regional Library and the Urbana Regional Library in the coming months. Staff from the State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped will be onsite at the C. Burr Artz Library on February 6, 2017 to provide some hands-on training for staff and review how everything works. Shortly thereafter members of the Systems Department will be working with each of these branches in order to get these workstations into place.

These pieces of technology include several pieces of equipment: 1) electronically height adjusted table, 2) desktop PC with a 27" display, 3) screen magnification software, 4) screen reading software and 5) a stand alone document magnifier with its own display. Thereafter, Mr. Frank-Rice displayed a few photographs of the various equipment and reviewed the purpose of each piece of equipment shown in the photograph. He noted that this equipment is very similar to the equipment that was donated by the Lion's Club to the Thurmont Regional Library when that library first opened. The only difference is that the current equipment is more modernized. As of right now, the equipment is set up at the C. Burr Artz Library in the Staff Training Lab and we will be using this equipment for training of staff in a few short weeks.

Ms. Poteat inquired as to where the equipment will be located. Mr. Frank-Rice stated that it will be up to each branch as to where they want the equipment located. At the C. Burr Artz Library the equipment will be located on the second floor replacing one or two of the current work stations. He noted that if an individual is not used to using the software, staff will be able to lend assistance as needed.

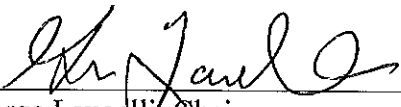
**BOARD QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:** Mr. Laugelli noted that FCPL has a terrific staff and they do a terrific job. He further stated that Frederick County residents are very lucky to have the library system that we have.

**OTHER CITIZEN REMARKS:** None.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 1, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. at the C. Burr Artz Library – 110 E. Patrick Street, Frederick, MD.

C. Greenway made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by B. Poteat. No discussion.  
VOTE: Unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

  
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George Laugelli, Chair  
Frederick County Public Libraries Board of Trustees