

**FREDERICK COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF MEETING
FEBRUARY 07, 2024**

The Frederick County Public Libraries Board of Trustees Meeting convened at 7:00 p.m. on February 07, 2024 at the C. Burr Artz Library – Community Room.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: J. D’Agostino, T. Lancaster, M. O’Leary, K. Spertzel, S. White, and County Liaison, J. Donald.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: G. Mayfield, S. Sheppard.

STAFF PRESENT: J. Kelly, Director; C. Hall, Associate Director; S. McDuff, Associate Director; B. McDermott, Finance Manager; B. Hissong, Community Engagement Manager; J. El-Zeftawy, Development Officer; M. Currens, Library Collections Manager; J. Marshall, Manager – Systems; K. Cambrel, Communications Manager; C. Brohawn, Project Coordinator; R. Frecker, Branch Administrator, Walkersville Library; A. Knight, Branch Administrator – Middletown Library; R. Cox-Steib, Branch Administrator – Myersville Library; A. Whitney, Branch Administrator – Thurmont Regional Library and Emmitsburg Library; S. Yates, Branch Administrator – Urbana Regional Library and Point of Rocks Library; C. Krogh, Facilities Coordinator; B. Watts, Staff Development Coordinator – Admin Coordinator; J. Sedgley – Library Associate; M. Goree – Library Specialist, Teen; A. Parker – Library Associate; J. Spiegel, Special Project Manager – Frederick County Government; and M. Fowle – Technical Services Coordinator, acting as Recording Secretary.

CITIZEN REMARKS: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: M. O’Leary made a motion to approve the Minutes of January 03, 2024; seconded by K. Spertzel. No further discussion. VOTE: Unanimous.

CHAIR’S REPORT:

The Chair announced that there will be two upcoming vacancies on the Board. One position will be elected for two years, with eligibility for two five-year terms after. The other will be open for a five-year term. The announcement will be made public in the weekend following this meeting.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT:

Mr. Kelly opened by recognizing several LATI participants who are observing the meeting tonight as part of the program.

At the request of the Board, Mr. Kelly introduced the current Freedom to Read bill. This bill will establish Maryland's commitment to accessible collections, tie state funding to adherence to professional standards, and protect library staff acting in compliance with those standards. Mr. Kelly is watching the bill, as well as other bills, and will report on any movement.

Mr. Kelly then reviewed ways in which staff exemplified the three areas of our strategic plan in the month of December.

Finally, Mr. Kelly reported on the statistics for December and the Q2 numbers.

BUDGET/CIP UPDATE:

The FY25 Budget will be presented tonight. This budget has already been presented to the Board Finance Committee.

First, Mr. Kelly noted that he met with County Executive Fitzwater to present the library's two budget appeals: a funding formula increase, and a new position in Administration, a Branch Services Manager. Mr. Kelly noted that the Board will be kept informed of opportunities for advocacy, which may come in the form of public hearings, or participating in the Budget Balancing Act tool released by the County.

Mr. Kelly met with the CIP committee to discuss upcoming projects. Mr. Kelly provided an update on the status of the West Frederick branch project. Mr. Kelly noted that Ms. McDuff attends frequent progress meetings about the new Middletown branch. Earlier construction delays are resolving, and an announcement about an opening day will be coming soon. Finally, Mr. Kelly noted that he met with the Department of Public Works two weeks ago to discuss planning for an East County branch.

In closing, Mr. Kelly reminded the Board that the next meeting will be March 6th. He provided advanced notice that at the end of this meeting, he plans to request to move the April Board meeting from April 3rd to April 10th, due to the Public Library Association's Annual Conference.

The Board requested clarification about the process for new building projects once the feasibility study is complete. Mr. Kelly confirmed that once the feasibility study is complete and reviewed by Public Works, there will be a public announcement, and then the project will move into design. He provided further information about the County procurement process.

The Board acknowledged the good work that FCPL staff do, sharing stories they have heard from family and friends about attending programs.

The Board asked for clarification regarding the Freedom to Read bill. They questioned if standards exist at the state level, or if new ones will be created. Mr. Kelly confirmed that standards already exist. Finally, the Board asked what types of libraries will be covered. Mr. Kelly confirmed that this bill will cover all libraries, including academic, public and school libraries.

NEW BUSINESS:

Financial Report:

Ms. McDermott presented the current FY24 budget, with numbers tentative as of December 31, 2023. This represents the first and second quarters of the fiscal year.

Revenues are at 43%, a 19% increase from the previous board meeting. There was an increase in County in-kind revenue of \$545K and a Transfer from the County General Fund of \$3.5M. Passport revenue and Miscellaneous Operating revenue both increased by \$5K.

FCPL's expenditures are at 42%, a 10% increase from the previous board meeting.

Since the last board meeting, there has been no change to the grants awarded or new grants submitted.

Donations are at \$103K, which is an increase of \$20K from the previous board meeting update. This includes several generous donations for the Greatest Need, Spelling Bee, Youth Services, Maryland Room, and the Branches.

The Board requested clarification regarding where the donations came from this month. Ms. McDermott confirmed the majority was from the Spelling Bee, but much is also based on when donations are posted.

Budget Presentation:

Mr. Kelly presented the proposed draft of the FY25 operating budget. He reviewed each type of revenue, as well as the types of expenditures. He acknowledged that in the Finance committee, each line of expenditure is reviewed, but for this meeting, he will highlight only the three that posed the most questions: an increase in spending on interpreting services, contracted services, and non-capital equipment.

Mr. Kelly closed by highlighting upcoming projects in the new FY, including design of the West Frederick branch, expanding outreach to Spanish speaking communities, funding increase for materials, new meeting room technology, and DEIB projects.

The Chair asked for a member from the Finance Committee to recommend the budget for motion. T. Lancaster recommended the Board approve the budget as it has been presented.

J. D'Agostino made a motion to approve the proposed FY24 budget; seconded by K. Spertzel. No further discussion. VOTE: Unanimous

Mr. Kelly requested a vote to move the April Board meeting from April 3rd to April 10th. J. D'Agostino called for a vote to move the date. No further discussion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Board Questions and Comments:

The Board discussed the merits of utilizing existing staff, or hiring new staff, who could provide interpretation services, as opposed to increasing the budget for contracted services.

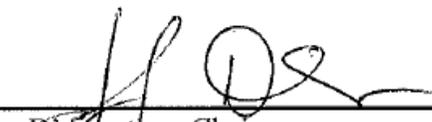
The Board further discussed book banning challenges and the rise of groups that are counter to book banning.

Other Citizen Remarks: None

The next FCPL Board of Trustees meeting will be held at the C. Burr Artz Library – Community Room at 7:00 p.m. on March 6, 2024.

J. D'Agostino made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by S. White. No further discussion. VOTE: Unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40pm.



Jenny D'Agostino, Chair
Frederick County Public Libraries
Board of Trustees