

**FREDERICK COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF MEETING
MARCH 6, 2019**

The Frederick County Public Libraries Board of Trustees Meeting convened at 7:00 p.m. on March 6, 2019 at the C. Burr Artz Library, Frederick, Maryland.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: D. Kiser, G. Laugelli, M. O’Leary, C. Smith and Councilman, Jerry Donald.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: C. Greenway, K. Kane, and S. Manny

STAFF PRESENT: J. Kelly, Director; S. McDuff, Associate Director; J. Vogel, Youth Services Coordinator; B. Hissong, Community Services Coordinator; K. Martinez, Communications Manager; S. Lauchner, Coordinator – Library Collections; D. Frank-Rice, Systems Administrator; T. Leberherz, Branch Administrator – Urbana Regional Library; A. Whitney, Branch Administrator – Urbana Regional Library; B. Bradley, Branch Administrator – Middletown Library; J. Diaz, Branch Administrator – Brunswick Library; R. Frecker, Branch Administrator – Walkersville Library; R. Goetz, Children’s Supervisor – Brunswick Library; J. Earp, Administrative Aide – Fiscal; M. Newton, Library Associate – Brunswick Library; B. Roberts, Library Associate – Brunswick Library; and L. Tibbs, Recording Secretary.

CITIZEN REMARKS: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: G. Laugelli made a motion to approve the Minutes from February 6, 2019; seconded by C. Smith. No further discussion. VOTE: Unanimous.

CHAIR’S REPORT: None.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT:

a. FCPL – Update: Mr. Kelly introduced Jenny Diaz. She started on Monday, March 4, 2019, as the new Branch Administrator for Brunswick Library. Jenny is a familiar face having most recently served as the head of the Children’s Department at the C. Burr Artz Library. She has worked in a number of other library systems and brings this experience and valuable perspective to her new role. Mr. Kelly added that he believes that her leadership experience and positivity will make a great fit for the culture we aspire to as a system.

Mr. Kelly announced that the State Library awarded FCPL a \$15,000 grant. This will help FCPL send staff to the Maryland Library Association Conference in May, 2019. In addition to two elected division officers and one Committee Chair, FCPL will also have eight speakers presenting at this year’s MLA Conference. He noted that given his experience in other Maryland library systems and his participation on the Conference Committee in past years, this demonstrates not only the strong commitment of FCPL staff to Maryland libraries, but the fact that in many cases, FCPL is leading the way for Maryland libraries. He stated that he hopes everyone shares his pride in our team.

Mr. Kelly further noted that since the last Board Meeting, he was invited to participate in the County Executive's Community Leadership Goals Day. There were 5 break-out groups that discussed the following priority areas: education, community needs, jobs, seniors and land use. He noted that he was part of the education team along with Superintendent Alban from Frederick Co. Public Schools, staff from FCC, staff from the Center for Research and Education in Science and Technology as well as representatives from businesses and non-profits. The make-up of that team reflected the County Executive's view of education as not only K – 12 but a focus on lifelong learning and that aligns perfectly with the public library's mission. The outcomes of those conversations will help the County Executive fine-tune her priorities for the rest of her term. He added that it was helpful to make connections with representatives from the other groups and, as a result, he and Bryan Hissong met with colleagues this morning from FCC on partnerships for the fall and beyond. He also noted that he recently attended an event sponsored by CREST (Center for Research and Education in Science and Technology).

Mr. Kelly thereafter offered a quick comment about policies. It has always been FCPL's goal to ensure that our policies and models of public service are in alignment with our mission, vision and values. This work is on-going. This was reflected when members of the FCPL Board of Trustees worked with Sheila McDuff to update FCPL's policies in 2017. It was also reflected in the fine amnesty weekend that was approved by the FCPL Board of Trustees in 2018 as well as the Student Success Cards that FCPL is piloting this year. He noted that today he is not coming to the FCPL Board of Trustees with a proposal to update FCPL's Borrowing Policy, or any other policies for that matter, but he wanted to highlight that from time-to-time FCPL receives suggestions from customers. Most recently, FCPL received a comment from a community member who wants FCPL to increase the number of holds that are allowed. Currently, FCPL allows 25 holds. Mr. Kelly advised that later this year, staff will take a look at the places where our values are not in alignment with our policies and where proposals can be weighed in light of budgetary and political realities in the County. Our goal will be to bring you proposals that help make borrowing easier for our customers.

With regard to last year's amnesty weekend, Mr. Kelly noted the amnesty weekend was based on a similar amnesty day that Calvert County libraries had. He added that he received word this week that Calvert County is now fine-free. He added that, to his knowledge, the only other system that is completely fine-free is the Pratt system in Baltimore. They have 22 branches and are a very busy system. By contrast, other library systems are making certain materials collections or borrower-types fine-free (Example: children's materials or children's cards) even if they are not going completely fine-free.

Mr. O'Leary questioned that when libraries are considering going fine-free, is there a provision for budget adjustments based on the loss of the fine revenue. Mr. Kelly responded that it would depend on what each system's budget picture looks like. There are some library systems that count on fine revenue to a higher degree and it is less likely that they would make a change like that. Certainly, if FCPL staff would propose a change like that, it would be to make borrowing easier for our customers. There are some folks that carry fines and it creates a barrier from them

using FCPL and often it affects the customers that need us the most. Going fine-free would be something that we would have to consider carefully. Mr. Kelly noted that philosophically he would like for FCPL to be completely fine-free but most likely it would be part of a broader discussion. Possibly the middle ground would be what some of the other systems are doing and that would be possibly the kids' cards not carry fines and certain collections not carrying fines. Whether the counties that have gone fine-free have a provision for additional operating revenue from their counties, Mr. Kelly stated that he is unsure of that answer. Mr. Kelly noted that the District of Columbia is fine-free. It doesn't mean that they are giving up trying to collect. Once things are not returned to the District of Columbia libraries, a replacement cost of the value of the item is assessed to the patron after a particular amount of time. Mr. Kelly further advised that FCPL's fine revenue has been trending downward for the past several years due to the rise in digital. Mr. Kelly reiterated that it would have to be a longer conversation, if FCPL wants to make any policy changes regarding fines.

Mr. Kelly thereafter reviewed statistics for January, 2019. Library visits were up 27% and circulation was up 15%. He noted that a majority of the branches saw increases in both circulation and door count in January, 2019. The number of programs was up 15% and program attendance was up 27%. He added that Inter-Library Loans are showing equally strong use. Items borrowed from other systems are up 26% and items loaned to other counties are up 13%. The upward trend we saw in the first part of the fiscal year is clearly continuing.

b. CIP/Budget – Update: Mr. Kelly noted that during March, 2019, the County Budget Office and County Executive review the proposed budgets submitted by all departments and component units. As far as FCPL is concerned at this time, we are in a holding pattern.

As far as CIP updates are concerned, Mr. Kelly provided an update on the proposed Linganore Library. This library is currently in the out-years of the CIP (Fiscal Year 2025 or beyond). FCPL staff, along with the County's Director of Planning, met with the developer a few weeks ago. The developer shared its idea for a parcel of land just north of Oakdale Elementary and Middle Schools that would be designated for the library. The site looks good and staff provided broad feedback on what is envisioned for this library. The next step in the process is the developer will be considering whether the proposed facility (1-floor, 25,000 square foot library with appropriate parking) will fit on the site they are proposing or if they will consider bumping out the yet unbuilt roads in that area to accommodate a larger parcel. This library would be the same size as the current Thurmont Library.

Regarding the proposed Middletown Library, which is slated for design in Fiscal Year 2021, Mr. Kelly noted that he had a meeting with the Burgess of Middletown, the Town Administrator and the Directors of the Department of Public Works and Senior Services last week. The Burgess wanted to float an idea that the town had to co-locate a Senior Center on the library site. Mr. Kelly noted that FCPL has this situation at the Urbana Regional Library which has a Senior Center in their building. Staff shared some of the successes and challenges of that endeavor. The biggest challenge that was noted by the Director of Senior Services and Mr. Kelly was the need for appropriately sized programming space for the Senior Center. We discussed the fact

that the senior population is growing in Frederick County and soon there will be more seniors than school-aged children in Frederick County. This is particularly important as the developer in this area plans to build senior housing on a parcel that is adjacent to the library site on Green Street. Currently, the seniors in Middletown conduct programming in a 4,000 square foot Am Vets Building in Middletown. Mr. Kelly noted that this was just the first discussion and, if the parcel can accommodate a 15,000 square foot library and a right-sized senior center, then this would be a conversation that would be worth continuing. All of this will depend on what Senior Services and the Town of Middletown determine is the “right size”.

Mr. Kelly noted that we received word today that the contract has been signed with the architectural firm who will be working on FCPL’s grant-funded Facilities Master Plan. The first meeting with the firm is on Wednesday, March 13, 2019.

Ms. Smith inquired whether the proposed Linganore Library would be considered a regional library like Thurmont. Mr. Kelly stated that it would be considered a regional with 25,000 square feet. Mr. Kelly further noted that the shape of the proposed Linganore Library will be different than the Thurmont Library due to land issues in Thurmont.

Ms. Smith also inquired about the topics that FCPL staff will be presenting at the upcoming MLA Conference. Mr. Kelly advised that he will send a link to members of the FCPL Board of Trustees of the conference catalog and all of our staff are listed there.

Mr. O’Leary noted that there have been comments about the continuing growth of digital content but, in addition, the year-to-date data reflects not only growth of the digital content but also in the use of printed materials. He added that the percentages are different but the absolute numbers have increased so this suggests to him that books are not dead. Both digital and print have expanded in their own way and this is a very good thing.

Mr. Laugelli stated that he noticed that computer usage is down and inquired what the reasoning might be for this downward trend. Mr. Kelly stated that more people are utilizing Wi-Fi and bringing their own devices and this is what, we think, may be contributing to the reduction in computer usage. The numbers are still strong but are trending downward but Wi-Fi usage is increasing.

NEW BUSINESS:

a. Staff Recognition: Mr. Kelly noted that the Library Associate Training Institute is unique to Maryland Libraries. It is a semester-length program. This training provides base training for Library Associates. Once the graduates have completed their training, we present them with certificates for completion of the LATI course.

Ms. Kiser presented Molly Newton and Benita Roberts with LATI completion certificates.

b. Financial Report: Julie Earp reviewed the Fiscal Year 2019 Financial Statement containing

data tentative through January, 2019. She noted that as we approach the fourth quarter, the revenues for the library are at 56% and expenses are at 53%. The grants awarded are at \$776,308. Grants submitted are at \$53,495. Sponsors and donations are at \$182,584 and endowment revenue is at \$111,486. The total is \$1,070,378.

Jerry Donald, County Liaison, inquired about the Myersville Branch Library Capital Grant. Mr. Kelly stated that FCPL received a grant from the State Library in the amount of \$750,000 towards the construction of the Myersville Library. The State has a pot of \$5,000,000 that they oversee and library systems are encouraged to apply for grant money.

Mr. Laugelli inquired about Equipment Maintenance being at 119%. Ms. Earp noted that this covers the SIRSI system. FCPL has a contract with SIRSI. Some of the money is from FY18 and that is brought over because of the way the term is of the contract and the way the County posts things. The SIRSI contract is not on a Fiscal Year basis and the cost crosses fiscal years. The figure usually shows as a short-fall but it balances out year to year.

c. Construction Update: Ms. McDuff noted that everything is still on track for opening the Myersville Library in late summer of 2019. Hopefully, by the next meeting, we will have a date for the Grand Opening. The concern that the contractor is having right now is none of the site work has happened because the ground is wet and/or frozen. There is a lot of site work to be done around the Myersville Library such as a shared parking lot with the library/park, the plaza outside of the trolley area, walking paths, etc. At this time, however, everything is still on track for a late summer opening. Ms. McDuff displayed some drone photos from the contractor as well as some photos from a member of the Town Council. The glass has been installed and the building is under roof. Drywall and insulation will be starting soon. The weather will not impact what is going on inside the building. She pointed out that the trolley will be installed where the sloping roof is shown on the photos. Currently, the trolley is being housed in an out-building adjacent to the property while it is being renovated. The Town of Myersville has hired Digging and Rigging who will move the trolley in April. Things are coming together pretty fast. Ms. McDuff then displayed some photos of the trolley. The windows and woodworking in the trolley have been completed as well as the painting. The only thing left to do is to install a new canvas roof on the top of the trolley. Thereafter, the sprinklers and new electric will be installed in order to bring the trolley up to code. She noted that the pictures do not do justice to the trolley; it is pretty amazing and impressive.

Mr. Laugelli noted that he noticed that there is a display in the front of the library about the trolley system.

Ms. Smith added that she just received an e-mail about the one year anniversary of the Walkersville Library.

d. Strategic Plan Update: Kim Martinez, Communications Manager, provided an update on the Strategic Plan. She added that in addition to her day-job, she has the opportunity of representing a great group of individuals tasked with developing FCPL's next Strategic Plan.

Ms. Martinez noted that the group convened in November, 2018 and dedicated the month of December, 2018 to the research phase of this process. January, 2019 was spent wrapping up the research and diving into what the findings are of the research and how the findings drive where we go next. In February, 2019 the analysis was wrapped up and we started to develop some initial research themes. And, now in March, 2019, the key findings will be presented this evening. The next step will be putting pen to paper and writing the Strategic Plan. We will spend April finalizing the Strategic Plan. Ms. Martinez noted that she will bring the Strategic Plan back to members of the FCPL Board of Trustees in May with more insight on what we are recommending. In June, 2019, we will communicate the Strategic Plan to staff and the community so that everything is in place and ready to begin July 1, 2019.

Ms. Martinez noted that the research consisted of hosting seven focus groups including members of the community and staff. Community and staff surveys were launched. We received input from more than 500 participants. There was also a team dedicated to doing secondary research. The team reviewed a plethora of strategic plans (30 in total) to see what other libraries were doing and what other organizations besides libraries were doing in their strategic plans. The team also reviewed key community reports to obtain a really strong foundation as FCPL moves forward with its recommendations.

She thereafter reviewed some key findings as a result of the research. She noted that anything in quotes on the displayed PowerPoint presentation are real quotes from the surveys and focus groups. In both the surveys and focus groups we started with questions that dealt with Frederick County in general and not just the library. It is important to understand the larger picture so that we can identify the opportunities where the library can play a role.

One of the questions was “What do you like best about Frederick County?” Staff heard a lot of comments in the spirit of this first quote – “Strong sense of community and history plus feeling of prosperity and growth.” There is a great acknowledgement of the local history in Frederick County as well as the promising future of prosperity and growth. There was a lot of feedback regarding recreational activities and non-profit services. Parks and Recreation received a lot of shout-outs. There was also a great acknowledgement of the robust and strong non-profit services offered in Frederick County.

Another question was regarding the biggest challenges facing Frederick County. The two most common points of feedback were affordable housing (or the lack thereof) and public transportation.

The next two slides reflect the key findings specifically related to the role of the library. She noted that it is extremely important to note that through the surveys and focus groups, the overwhelmingly strong response was FCPL’s role to provide information and resources. Many other things came up such as events and entertainment and a gathering space. She added that there were a fair amount of comments in the focus groups and in the surveys wherein folks acknowledged that the library should play a lot of different roles and one quote was “All! It should bring the community together.” One of the challenges that we often face is to be all of

those things. She noted that it was interesting that the research validated that there is an expectation that the library provide a really broad range of resources.

In response to the question regarding the top reasons one would use the library, the top answers were: borrow items, attend programs, use the space and access digital content.

In summary, the team took all of the findings to determine themes. She noted that in full disclosure, we don't know how these themes will manifest themselves into the Strategic Plan and that is what we are currently working through. The team came up with three categories: access, connection and awareness. As a result of all of the feedback from the focus group discussions, the team feels like "access" rises to the top as one of the research themes. We, as a library, want to make access to the library as easy as possible and for customers to be able to take advantage of everything that the library offers. The next category is "connection". Ms. Martinez stated that connection is in our current Strategic Plan. Connection came up a lot again in our research this time around and it validates that our Strategic Plan from a few years ago was completely on the mark. As a result of the discussions with the focus groups, it came up as to how the library can serve as a connection point whether it is connecting customers to other services in the community, whether it is bringing customers together, whether it is connecting directly with our staff, etc. Again, the theme of connection came up in a lot of the research. The third category is "awareness". This again came up in the focus groups as well as through the surveys. There is a lot that the library does that the community is not always aware of. We hear this from our staff as well. How we will do this through the Strategic Plan we don't know, but we are working through that. However, it was a very common theme and we want to address it.

Ms. Martinez advised that she will bring the draft of the Strategic Plan to the FCPL Board of Trustees in May, 2019.

Ms. Smith inquired whether the Board will need to approve the Strategic Plan at the May meeting. Mr. Kelly stated that it is not a policy but we want to make sure our thinking is in alignment and members of the FCPL Board of Trustees feel that it is the correct direction. Thereafter, Ms. Smith inquired whether members of the FCPL Board of Trustees will have an opportunity to receive the Strategic Plan in advance prior to the May meeting. Mr. Kelly advised that the Strategic Plan will be sent to members of the FCPL Board of Trustees as part of the agenda package which you will receive approximately two weeks before the meeting.

Mr. Laugelli added that he thinks the whole thing reinforces something he has said many times which is the library is the single, most democratic point of access for citizens to their government. It is the one building physically that anyone can come into and there is nothing else like the library in the county.

BOARD QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS: G. Laugelli noted that as of the June, 2019 meeting, the FCPL Board of Trustees will be losing three members, one of which is the Chair and Vice-Chair. The Chair had another year on his term. This situation is not covered in the By-Laws and he would like to discuss options at the next meeting and add this as an agenda item on

the April agenda. Ms. Smith stated that she has been actively recruiting.

Ms. Smith noted that her 25 year old son recently moved to downtown Frederick and he has discovered the C. Burr Artz Library. When he was visiting with her a few weeks ago, he stated that he discovered the ocean. She stated that he had no idea about the electronic resources that were available to him. She noted that members of the FCPL Board of Trustees had just been presented with the budget presentation last month so she pulled it out and showed him how much money is being spent and encouraged him to use everything that is available to him.

Ms. Kiser stated that this brings us back to awareness. She said she has so many people tell her that they were unaware of what the library offers. After the last meeting, she obtained a bookmark that provides everything that is available digitally. Ms. Kiser inquired whether the bookmark is given to everyone who gets a new library card. She was advised that they are available at the front desk.

Mr. O'Leary requested a quick summary of what is covered in the Library Associate Training. T. Leberherz advised that it is a semester-long training course. The content goes from basic customer service skills to digital literacy skills to sessions on historical resources/genealogy/medical resources, etc. It pretty much teaches those that are taking the session how to do library reference. In summary, it is an overview of what it means to answer questions from the public. The course consists of five full-day sessions and there are some once a week sessions as well as webinars. Participants get 90 continuing education credits. Mr. O'Leary added that he is impressed by the training opportunities for all staff. Mr. Kelly added that training never ends. FCPL is part of the State Teachers Retirement Fund and, as part of that, staff need to maintain certifications with a certain number of training hours every five years. All staff are actively training and it is an important part of what we do.

OTHER CITIZEN REMARKS: None.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 3, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at the C. Burr Artz Library – 110 E. Patrick Street, Frederick, MD.

G. Laugelli made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by C. Smith. No further discussion.
VOTE: Unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.



Debbie Kiser, Vice-Chair
Frederick County Public Libraries Board of Trustees