

**FREDERICK COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF MEETING
APRIL 12, 2023**

The Frederick County Public Libraries Board of Trustees Meeting convened at 7:00 p.m. on April 12, 2023 at the C. Burr Artz Library.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT, T. Lancaster, G. Mayfield, M. O’Leary, S. Sheppard, and S. White

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: J. D’Agostino, K. Spertzel and County Liaison, J. Donald

STAFF PRESENT: J. Kelly, Director, B. McDermott, Finance Manager; J. El-Zeftawy, Development Manager; B. Hissong, Community Engagement Manager; M. Currens, Library Collections Manager; J. Marshall, Manager – Systems; E. Gambrill, Youth Services Coordinator; C. Brohawn, Project Coordinator; K. Cambrel, Communications Manager; J. Diaz, Branch Administrator – Brunswick Library; R. Frecker, Branch Administrator – Walkersville Library; B. Heltebridle, Branch Administrator – C. Burr Artz 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; T. Schneider, Librarian – C. Burr Artz Library; C. Fitz, Teen Supervisor – Walkersville Library; R. Gulino, Library Technician – Thurmont Regional Library; K. Jensen, Library Associate – Walkersville Library; E. Kilic, Library Associate – Walkersville Library; S. Tetreau, Library Associate – Walkersville Library; J. Spiegel, Special Project Manager – Frederick County Government; and L. Tibbs, Recording Secretary.

CITIZEN REMARKS: None.

CHAIRS REPORT: Ms. Sheppard noted that she was watching GMA the other day and they were talking about audio books and how they are booming right now. It was mentioned that this is the fastest growing media with an expected value of \$35 billion by 2030. FCPL is moving into the age of technology but she stated that she hopes FCPL will keep physical books.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: M. O’Leary made a motion to approve the Minutes of March 1, 2023; seconded by S. White. No further discussion. VOTE: Unanimous.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT:

FCPL – Update: Mr. Kelly welcomed everyone to the April meeting. Thereafter, Mr. Kelly recognized Shemica Sheppard for her appointment as a Trustee for the Citizens of Maryland

Libraries. CML is a state-level advocacy group for libraries of all kinds. He noted, that to his knowledge, Shemica Sheppard is the first person from Frederick County to serve as a Trustee for the Citizens of Maryland Libraries. He added that his colleagues in Maryland Libraries are lucky to have her for state level advocacy

Mr. Kelly noted that Monday, April 10, 2023 marked the end of the Maryland General Assembly session. He thereafter provided a few legislative updates.

The library funding bill passed, as expected. This bill simply clarified language in a bill passed last year so there was no fiscal impact. While a bill with no fiscal impact always has a better chance of clearing both chambers, we are grateful for the reaffirmation of state support, evident in the vote.

Mr. Kelly noted that he mentioned at last month's board meeting that the Governor included a supplemental request in his proposed budget to help cover escalations on previously approved capital projects. This supplemental allocation would bring more state dollars to our Middletown construction project; however, as of this evening, our legislative liaisons at the state level are trying to parse whether this portion of Governor Moore's supplemental funding request was actually approved. Mr. Kelly advised that he will be meeting with the State Librarian tomorrow and he will provide further information to everyone soon.

Thereafter, Mr. Kelly shared examples of how the FCPL team is working to fulfill the priorities of our Strategic Plan. Here is how they've been Expanding Access, Building Bridges, and Sparking Excitement lately.

Staff at CBA are expanding access through a recent partnership with City Youth Matrix, a group that helps families with limited resources access a diverse spectrum of extra-curricular activities. Our team created a program called "Engagement Night at the library." CYM's commitment to providing youth access to educational and recreational activities aligns perfectly with our core values and mission. Families received a dinner in the community room from CYM and our team provided a library tour, shared resource information, discussed services to help with transportation to the library, and concluded the event with an art project. We look forward to continuing to build this partner relationship.

Meanwhile, members of the Brunswick team attended the Judy Center's Community Night & Dinner which brought out 59 attendees. The school provided a Spanish language interpreter for this event allowing our team to truly connect & communicate with parents and families. Many picked up our current Bookmarks publication which, thanks to our Communications Team, is now fully bilingual in English and Spanish. The team also demonstrated a stack of Wonderbooks which got a big "wow" and excited responses from the crowd. These examples illustrate how our team works to expand access through public programs and partnerships, but a great deal of work happens behind the scenes to expand access as well.

Two of our support services teams – Collections and Systems-- collaborated to remove generic subtitles from approximately 13,000 records. Generic subtitles like “a Novel” or “a Series” are inconsistently applied across vendors and this subtle difference can lead to inconsistent results when searching the online catalog. Systems created a script that will identify and remove the unwanted subtitles and going forward Collections will run the script periodically to catch any new issues. Like the other steps in this ongoing project, these efforts will ensure a better experience for customers and staff when viewing our public catalog.

Another way FCPL is fulfilling the priorities of our Strategic Plan is by facilitating connections to existing community services. In this way, we are building bridges. A great example is the ongoing Sunday afternoon ESL class held weekly at the Walkersville library. These classes, held in partnership with the Literacy Council, continue to grow. Mr. Kelly noted that he met recently with the Director of the Literacy Council who praised the partnership as they are looking for more ways like this to extend their reach in the County beyond their downtown offices. It is a great collaboration.

Finally, FCPL is sparking excitement by producing events that celebrate the diversity of our communities and inspire growth.

Recently, both the Urbana and Middletown branches hosted Amna Malik as she presented “Getting to Know Muslim Americans and Their Faith: A Cultural Program.” Ms. Malik shared insights on basic beliefs and practices as well as shining light on common misconceptions. The sessions concluded with an impactful question and answer session. Our team received many positive comments about the events.

At the Urbana program, an FCPS teacher connected with the author to ask about how she can better reach and teach her students on the topics that were discussed. Ms. Malik was able to guide her in practices that will allow a safe space for her students and encourage meaningful dialogue.

It is always rewarding to see people connect at library programs, for new relationships to be forged, and for the growth and learning to continue after the program has ended.

Thereafter, Mr. Kelly reviewed statistics. He noted that the latest Dashboard reflects February’s numbers. FCPL has seen remarkable circulation this year and a number of factors are at play. Visits and program attendance continue to gain ground on our FY19 numbers and both of those things drive physical circulation, but additionally, our increased circulation is also attributable to things like:

- eContent adoption during the pandemic
- elimination of fines
- instituting our digital card program
- the team’s community outreach work
- the consistent trend of new cardholders
- and, most recently, adoption of auto-renewals late last year

If you look at the ‘month over month’ Dashboard, Mr. Kelly advised that you can see that FCPL is already outpacing FY19 circulation before the introduction of our well-received auto-renewal service, so the post-November trend has only widened that gap. Each of the aforementioned factors played a role in our increased circulation and, looking only at the most recent month, when Courtney compared those numbers to February 2019, we see a 35% increase. Mr. Kelly stated that he is confident we will finish the year strong.

Looking beyond circulation, the trends in the other measures have been consistent. Cardholder registrations and wifi use remain high. In February, FCPL offered our highest number of programs in the last 6 months, so staff are working hard and attendance ticked up in February. The one statistic that continues to trend downward is public computer use – and by this we mean the physical PCs we provide in the branch. Thousands of people continue to use our computers every month, but public computing has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. It is, however, worth noting again that we are seeing record wifi use which tells us that folks are still relying on the public library for broadband connectivity, but many more of them are getting access via personal devices they bring into the library.

Budget/CIP Update: Mr. Kelly thanked everyone who helped advocate for our budget last month via the multitude of channels that were made available -- either in person or by phone at a public hearing, via email to the County Executive, or by completing the Balancing Act budget tool helping voice your support for the library’s budget appeals and those of the other County divisions and component units. The County Executive will release her proposed budget this Friday after which time the County Council will consider it and hold their own hearings. Mr. Kelly advised that he has been invited to speak to the Council on May 5, 2023. This year, for a majority of Councilmembers, this will be their first time working on a County budget. Mr. Kelly stated he always looks forward to this invitation as it affords him the opportunity not only to advocate for our budget, but more importantly, to highlight the great work of our team and the many ways that we support our community.

On the capital side of things, Middletown construction is proceeding. Mr. Kelly noted that construction is slightly behind schedule, but the contractor feels that they can make up time during the spring and summer months. As noted previously, Sheila McDuff will provide a more-complete construction update before we adjourn for the Summer.

As for the West End library, since our last meeting, Mr. Kelly advised that he has been in conversations weekly with the County Executive’s office and members of the Mayor’s staff regarding possible site options, but as of this report, the matter has unfortunately not been settled.

Mr. Kelly concluded by stating that the next meeting of the FCPL Board of Trustees is Wednesday, May 3, 2023.

Discussion followed regarding library sites and funding for the West End Library and the Northwest Frederick City Library. Mr. Kelly noted that the Northwest Frederick City Library will require enough land to accommodate a 40,000 square foot building to house the library as well as operational staff.

Additional discussion followed regarding the fact that some states are proposing legislation that book bans would be codified for that not to happen in public libraries. Mr. Kelly noted that one of the topics that will be discussed at the quarterly administrator meeting will be whether or not the State of Maryland would work on similar right-to-read legislation with our delegates to insulate libraries in some way from book bans. He added that many items are discussed at the quarterly meetings such as legislation, successful partnerships, programs and many other topics.

NEW BUSINESS:

a. LATI Recognition: Mr. Kelly stated that the Library Associate Training Institute is a 90-hour program that all Library Associates in the State of Maryland must complete. Through this program, staff gain a greater understanding of the principles and values of public libraries and about the profession in general. They learn about print and online resources, the reference interview and excellent customer service. The program involves online learning sessions, independent work, and coaching sessions. It is an intense program and they balance 90-hours of coursework with their day-to-day responsibilities. Library Associates are critical to our operation, providing so much of our reference assistance to the community. They, along with our Circulation staff, are the backbone of public service. The LATI program ensures that our Library Associates are trained to high standards statewide and completing this program is a huge achievement. Thereafter, Mr. Kelly recognized and congratulated FCPL's latest LATI graduates. They are: Renee Gulino, Kathleen Jensen, Skyler Tetreau, and Erin Kilic. Completion certificates were distributed to all graduates.

Mr. O'Leary congratulated the LATI students for their completion of this program.

b. Financial Report: Ms. McDermott reviewed the FY23 Financial Report for April, 2023. She noted that the data is tentative as of February 28, 2023. Revenues are at 52%, a 1% increase from the previous board meeting. There was a transfer to County in-kind revenue of \$121,000. Passport revenue increased by \$10,150. There were 290 passports processed in February. She added that 1,300 passport applications have been processed year-to-date. Miscellaneous Operating Revenue increased by \$6,000, of which \$4,000 was for miscellaneous kiosk services. The Federal Grants were reimbursed \$9,250 for expenses related to the Staff Development Grant. Next month's Financial Report will reflect the end of the 3rd quarter. As long as everything is posted timely, the financial report will include the remaining quarterly transfers from the County, which will place our revenue around 73% as we move into the final quarter of the fiscal year.

FCPL's expenditures are at 59%. There was a slight increase in each budget line for expenditures. The most significant percentage change was a 7% increase in personnel and 6% in telephones. There was a 7% increase in library material purchases for materials, periodicals, and e-content. She noted that when comparing FY23 and FY22, the total percentage collected and spent was the same for both years in February. This is mostly due to the timing of when transactions are recorded and posted to the general ledger throughout the fiscal year.

Grants Awarded are at \$1,064,095. Grants Submitted are at \$273,489. Ms. McDermott noted that since the last board meeting, there has been no change to the grants awarded or grants submitted. Staff continues to make progress with each FY23 grant as FCPL moves towards the final reporting period of each grant. Donations are at \$114,567, an increase of \$6,829 from the previous board meeting update.

Other endowment revenues are at \$137,553, an increase of \$16,556 from the previous month. The Glassman Trust increased by \$3,374, and those funds are restricted to purchasing of materials in specific fields of study. There was an increase of \$13,179 from the C Burr Artz Trust to support the sole benefit of the CBA Library Branch. This brings the total to \$1.3 million.

c. Myersville Library Update: R. Cox-Steib, Branch Administrator, provided an update on the Myersville Library. She started by displaying photos of the staff at the library. She noted that the Myersville Library is made up of 3 full time, 5 part time and 3 shelving staff members. This small but mighty team makes the library what it is.

She noted that the other key element to a successful library is, of course, the community. The Myersville Library is situated in a thriving community (approximately 1,700 residents). Myersville's make-up is unique and she shared a few statistics that will help to illustrate some of its key features. The data reflects that Myersville is a small, young community with lots of kids and families. It is also a competitive housing market. This means that we have a great opportunity to provide programs and other services for the entire family. She added that the community loves and uses their library. This is evident by the number of card holders (1,190 active card holders). She noted that she hopes one day we can get the number of card holders to match the number of residents.

The Myersville Library opened in the Fall of 2019 and thereafter promptly closed in the Spring of 2020. Despite the disruption in the opening and establishment of the library, the community rose up to meet and embrace the branch.

Thereafter, Ms. Cox-Steib shared a few ways the Myersville Library continues to spark excitement, build bridges and expand access. First, she noted that the total program attendance since last April is 5,491 and the door count for FY23 has increased nearly 70% since last summer. We spark excitement through large scale programs such as Touch a Truck or the ever-popular Bluey Party. We offer unique, all ages programming such as the origami basics program. In addition, staff offer self-guided programs such as monthly scavenger hunts or imaginative play. The puppet theater at the library has been a grocery store, an animal hospital, and a teacher's desk.

The Myersville Library practices building bridges with our community by partnering for annual large scale events such as the Trolley Festival, Walk to School Day and the Myersville Christmas Parade. In addition, we partner with our local schools by doing regular visits and visiting local

preschools. The Myersville Library hosted the local choirs this past holiday season and it was such a special occasion. Staff also works to build bridges between generations by hosting programs for the whole family.

The Myersville Library expands access through thoughtful programming and partnerships. The Myersville Library has a special partnership with the Scott Key Organization. We have begun to offer monthly developmentally appropriate and engaging programming for several local Scott Key groups. In addition, we also offer regular STEM/STEAM programming providing kids and families the opportunity to interact with technology they might not normally have a chance to interact with such as the sphyros, a 3D printer, etc.

Ms. Cox-Steib noted that the Myersville Library has begun hosting a quarterly drop-in fiber arts program. This has been artists of all ages learning about knitting, embroidery, quilting and more. Staff are regulars at some unusual locations as well such as the Myersville Farmers Market and the Bog Shack (a snow cone spot).

As far as what is next for the Myersville Library it will be more of the same but in new and creative ways. A few of the upcoming programs include Mead and Read, paths being built, pickleball intro, teen poetry and, of course, Summer Challenge.

d. Summer Reading Challenge: E. Gambrill, Youth Services Coordinator, introduced herself as well as T. Schneider, Children's Librarian at the C. Burr Artz Library and lead for the Summer Reading Challenge and C. Fitz, Teen Services Supervisor at Walkersville Library as co-lead for the Summer Reading Challenge.

It was noted that, to be consistent, it was decided to use the same start date of June 1, 2023, and end date, August 15, 2023, as last year. Staff will be drawing for prizes throughout the summer to keep up the momentum of the Challenge.

Staff pointed out all of the amazing Summer Challenge kick-off events that will be happening. The first week of June is really important in jump-starting the season-long excitement for summer as well as celebrating and transitioning the end of the school year for students.

The goals of the Summer Reading Challenge are: 1) to engage thousands every summer; 2) to reconnect customers to the library; 3) to build relationships with partners and 4) to ensure children's reading skills do not decline. It was noted that FCPL staff created a great foundation last year and are mindful of building onto that while maintaining the simplicity and easy access for both the public and staff.

In addition, it was noted that last year staff focused on reaching out to destination partners to encourage people to explore community businesses and organizations. This year staff built on that by creating a more robust relationship with existing partners by inviting them to offer experiences at our library branches through programming and, in turn, we are also going out to

their locations to engage the community. The team recognizes that things like transportation and access may be a barrier for some so we are cross-promoting partner programs with FCPL in Beanstack so that if someone can't make it to a business but can go to the library when that business is partnering with FCPL, they can check off that they visited that partner. As always, they can also digitally access these partners to count towards their virtual tickets.

One of the big partners this year has been Woodsboro Bank, who generously donated \$5,000 to FCPL for the Summer Reading Challenge. All of this money will go to things like performers. Not only are they investing in us financially, but they are also passionate about sharing their love of reading and the library with their customers by creating a staff book recommendation list, offering to do financial literacy seminars at various library branches and create a window display centered around Summer Reading at their Woodsboro branch location.

Thereafter, it was noted that FCPL will be utilizing the same game play this year to be consistent. For every day one reads, 1 virtual ticket will be issued. If a patron visits 5 destinations then 5 virtual tickets will be issued. It was noted that destinations will be grouped by region to make things easier for our patrons. After reading for 20 days, the patron has "finished" the Summer Challenge and will receive a free book. Raffle prize drawings will be held on June 16th, July 16th and August 16th. The Grand Prize will be drawn on August 16th.

FCPL will be utilizing the same software used in the past, Beanstack. FCPS students are already using this software at school. The mobile app provides better access for all users and increases participation overall. In addition, this year staff will be creating staff and patron training for Beanstack and their app.

Grand prizes last year were a hit and once again FCPL will be giving away a kayak, an American Girl doll and telescopes. All of these items are very popular. But, by far, the most popular prize last year was the Chromebook provided by Clark Computer Services. It is hoped that we will be able to purchase additional Chromebooks this year. This year we are including a gender-neutral bike from Wheel Base Bikes and a skateboard from Embark Skate Shop. The prizes chosen were selected by the work group to provide positive experiences which carry weight outside of the tangible item. Most items will be purchased locally. E Gambrill thanked Jess El-Zeftawy and Derek Buker for setting up the wish list page for donors. She thereafter displayed the wish list page and noted that it will be "live" until the end of April.

A few programs that we are very excited about are Peter Wood, Collector of the Impossible and Talewise, (formerly known as Science Tellers); both of which will be returning this year. Ms. Schneider noted that FCPL staff create many of their own programs at all of the libraries.

Now that we have been back to in-person programming for a year, librarians have seen the effects of the COVID-slide on the children in our community. It has really driven home the importance of what we do in our programs, our outreach and our day-to-day interactions with families. Last year FCPL laid some great groundwork and we would like to build on that with

tried and true engaging ways we interact with our patrons. Staff are meeting folks where they are and are sparking excitement by what the patrons find when they visit FCPL.

In conclusion, there are only 50 more days until the Summer Challenge.

e. By-Laws Update: G. Mayfield advised that members of the Nomination Committee reviewed the By-Laws and are proposing three changes.

The first recommended change is to Article III – Composition of the Board of Trustees #2. The current wording is “Board vacancies refilled according to the Boards and Commissions provisions of Frederick County Government. The proposed new wording would be: “Board vacancies, including appointments and reappointments, are filled according to the Boards & Commissions provisions of Frederick County government, and to the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland §23-403(a)(1), which calls for members to be appointed from “...nominees submitted by the board of library trustees.” For members seeking reappointment, the board will vote on the member’s reappointment request (a tie will stand as disapproval). The member seeking reappointment shall not vote. The board will submit the outcome of the vote to the Office of the County Executive. Mr. Mayfield noted that the rationale for this change is to distinguish between different processes for new appointments and reappointments.

G. Mayfield made a motion to approve the recommended change; seconded by S. White Mr. O’Leary noted that this proposed change is a lot more sensible and fair to anyone that might be interested in a position only to find out that the open position is for a reappointment.
VOTE: Unanimous.

The second recommended change is to Article III – Composition of the Board of Trustees #7. The current wording is “A Trustee may be removed from the Board for cause at any time by a majority vote of the other Trustees.” The proposed new wording would be “Trustee may be removed from the Board for cause at any time by a majority vote of the other Trustees (except for non-attendance, which is covered by the Maryland Code §23-404). Mr. Mayfield noted that this recommendation is basically to bring the by-laws into accordance with Maryland Statute, which states that a “library trustee who fails to attend at least half of the scheduled meetings of the board during any calendar year shall be considered to have resigned from the board”.

G. Mayfield made a motion to approve the recommended change; seconded by S. Sheppard. No further discussion. VOTE: Unanimous.

The third recommended change is also to Article III – Composition of the Board of Trustees #7. Mr. Mayfield noted that this proposal, although mentioned to other members of the Nominating Committee, was not fully discussed. The current wording is “A Trustee may be removed from the Board for cause at any time by a majority vote of the other Trustees.” The proposed new wording would be “Trustee may be removed from the Board for cause at any time by a majority vote of the Trustees. He stated that the rationale behind this change is to strike the word “other”

to make clear that the Trustee in question is still functioning as a Trustee and should be allowed to participate in the vote. The mere accusation of a reason for removing a Trustee should not reduce that Trustee's role on the board until and unless that Trustee is removed. He further noted that although this is mere speculation since we all get along at this time but we are trying to think ahead.

G. Mayfield made a motion to approve the third recommended change. Discussion followed. It was decided that this matter be tabled until the May FCPL Board of Trustees Meeting.

f. Board Member Reappointment: Mr. Mayfield made a motion to reappoint M. O'Leary to the FCPL Board of Trustees; seconded by S. White. No further discussion.

VOTE: Yes – T. Lancaster, G. Mayfield, S. Sheppard, and S. White

Abstain: M. O'Leary


BOARD QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS: Mr. O'Leary noted that he is happy to continue with such a wonderful organization.

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 May 3, 2023.

T. Lancaster made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by G. Mayfield. No further discussion. VOTE: Unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.



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

