

**FREDERICK COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF MEETING
JUNE 6, 2018**

The Frederick County Public Libraries Board of Trustees Meeting convened at 7:00 p.m. on June 6, 2018 at the C. Burr Artz Library, Frederick, Maryland.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: B. Poteat, C. Greenway, K. Kane, D. Kiser, G. Laugelli, and C. Smith

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: S. Manny and Council Member Liaison, T. Chmelik.

STAFF PRESENT: J. Kelly, Director; S. McDuff, Associate Director; S. Lauchner, Coordinator/Library Collections; J. Vogel, Youth Services Coordinator; B. Hissong, Community Services Coordinator; B. McDermott, Finance/Office Manager; J. Marshall, Systems Manager; C. Hall, Branch Administrator – C. Burr Artz Library; R. Frecker, Branch Administrator – Walkersville Library; T. Leberz, Branch Administrator – Brunswick Library; A. Whitney, Branch Administrator – Urbana Regional Library; E. Dingle, Branch Administrator – Thurmont/Emmitsburg Libraries; B. Bradley, Branch Administrator – Middletown Library; D. Buker, Virtual Branch Administrator; and L. Tibbs, Recording Secretary.

CITIZEN REMARKS: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: K. Kane made a motion to approve the Minutes of the April 4, 2018 FCPL Board of Trustees Meeting; seconded by D. Kiser. No further discussion.
VOTE: Unanimous.

CHAIR'S REPORT: Mr. Laugelli noted that this was his last meeting as Chair. He stated that it has been an extremely interesting two years. Mr. Laugelli also noted that this is the first meeting since James Kelly was officially appointed as Director. Thereafter, Mr. Laugelli stated that the biggest take-away during his tenure on the Library Board is the staff – its professionalism, impressive accomplishments, etc. are quite striking. Mr. Laugelli further noted that he has seen a lot of changes during his tenure and a lot of changes are still coming. The continued professionalism of staff will have a major impact on the success of whatever the library decides to undertake. He added that it has been very much a pleasure watching the staff and hearing all of the presentations at our meetings.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

a. FCPL – Update: Mr. Kelly thanked Erin Dingle for her service to the library. Ms. Dingle is the Branch Administrator at the Thurmont Regional Library and she will be retiring at the end of June. Thereafter, Mr. Kelly introduced Beau Bradley. Mr. Kelly noted that Mr. Bradley has been with FCPL for a few months but tonight was his first opportunity to attend a Board Meeting. Mr. Bradley is the Branch Administrator at the Middletown Library. Prior to coming to FCPL, he was a Branch Manager at Washington County Free Library.

Mr. Kelly reviewed April, 2018 statistics. For the most part, FCPL is on trend. He noted that since the April statistics reflect the first full month for the new Walkersville Library, we can start to quantify just how well that branch truly is doing. Circulation, door count, and program attendance are way up and Mr. Kelly noted that he is confident that this will hold through the summer. Door counts were up 15% at the Urbana Regional Library. Hits to the website are way up. People are going to the website to search the catalog and utilize our electronic resources. Mr. Kelly noted that he is excited about the year-to-date numbers which, system-wide, continue to trend up. Circulation, new library card registrations, door count, wi-fi usage and program attendance are all up. He noted that it is anticipated that FCPL will finish the year strong.

Ms. Smith inquired about the extreme increase of approximately 50% at Middletown Library for patron registrations. Mr. Kelly stated that he is not sure of what initiative they have going on but that sort of increase is great.

Mr. Kelly noted that just three weeks after the Summer Challenge began and after logging minutes of reading to his daughter at bedtime, he is a program finisher. He added that although he is exempt from winning any prizes, he is throwing down the gauntlet to staff to participate in Summer Challenge and start logging minutes.

Thereafter, Mr. Kelly advised that the joint Annual MLA/DLA Conference was held last month in Cambridge Maryland. He noted that, thanks to a generous staff development grant from the Maryland State Library, FCPL was able to send a delegation of staff to the conference. Some of FCPL's staff serve as Division Officers for MLA and others served as presenters sharing the best practices from FCPL. Michele Biver and Rebecca Reeves presented on the successful Memory Lab project that everyone has heard about. Bryan Hissong coordinated a pre-conference on strategic leadership and served with Janet Vogel on a panel where they shared FCPL's programming and partnership practices. Naomi Keppler and Hannah Wilkes were on a panel for LGBTQ resources for teens. Sheila McDuff served on a resume-building workshop and co-presented with Mr. Kelly on the topic of organizational change. He noted that although every month you hear about the innovative work that FCPL is doing and it can start to feel like it is "business as usual", he noted that it is worth highlighting that many of our state-wide colleagues look to the work being done at FCPL as a model to aspire to and that staff deserve to have that highlighted to everyone.

b. CIP/Budget – Update: Mr. Kelly noted that since the last meeting in April, 2018, the County

passed the Fiscal Year 2019 budget. Members of the FCPL Board of Trustees approved the FCPL budget earlier this year and that budget remained in-tact as it moved through the County and we are excited about that. Divisions are permitted to submit amendments to the Budget. He thereafter noted that he and Sheila McDuff asked the County to consider funding a new position, Human Resources Analyst, since the number of FCPL employees has grown considerably. The infrastructure has not risen commensurate with employee growth. Sadly, that request was not funded but we are thankful for the support that the County Executive and County Council were able to provide to FCPL. Mr. Kelly noted that he and Ms. McDuff are working on ways to find that position internally.

Mr. Kelly also advised that the Fiscal Year 2019 budget included a 3.5% salary increase for County staff which is very generous and we are very thankful for that.

Thereafter, Mr. Kelly noted that in addition to the Fiscal Year 2019 budget being adopted, the CIP was also adopted by the County Council. The CIP attempts to chart the County's construction plan for the next six fiscal years and the out-years. While normally everyone can count on the allocations proposed in year one of any given CIP, there is also the possibility that politics and priorities will shift the projects beyond the first year. With that being said, in the recently approved CIP, Myersville construction money was allocated for Fiscal Year 2019 and it is anticipated that ground-breaking will take place in the Fall, 2018. The design for the Middletown Library is scheduled for Fiscal Year 2021 with construction in Fiscal Year 2023. The Linganore Town Center Library, which we call the East County Regional Library, is listed in the out-years. Things may shift between now and then but for now we can count on the Myersville construction and we are very excited about that.

Mr. Kelly stated that at the last FCPL Board of Trustees Meeting, we were waiting for the official word on the \$750,000 grant for the Myersville Library and he noted that FCPL has now received that grant from the State of Maryland for the construction of the Myersville Library.

As far as the Middletown Library is concerned, Mr. Kelly noted that the proposed site for the Middletown Library is on Green Street. The appeal of that site is that it is located in a new development, there will be ample room for parking, and that it is close to downtown and the educational complex. For all of those reasons, the County Executive, the Middletown Burgess and FCPL staff feel that it is an ideal site. He noted that he brings this up to just say that he and Burgess Miller had an opportunity to share that with the County Council directly. There has been some questions about an alternative site but we wanted to share our opinions that the Green Street site is ideal for a new library. To provide some further insight, Mr. Kelly advised that the developer has given the land to the Town of Middletown and the Town of Middletown will provide the parcel of land to the County when the Department of Public Works is ready to receive it.

Mr. Laugelli inquired whether anything has changed regarding the Point of Rocks Library in terms of the renovation. Mr. Kelly replied that nothing has changed since the last meeting that we attended together at Point of Rocks.

NEW BUSINESS:

a. Financial Report: Ms. McDermott reviewed financial information that is tentative through April 30, 2018. As we enter into the fourth quarter, FCPL's revenue is at 71% and expenditures are at 74%.

Thereafter, Ms. McDermott reviewed grants and contributions. She noted that as of April 30, 2018, FCPL has received \$28,500 in grants that have been awarded. At this time, the total of grants submitted is \$762,000. FCPL has received approximately \$181,000 from sponsors/contributors. In other endowment account revenue, FCPL has received approximately \$162,000. To date, she noted that FCPL has received approximately \$372,000 as of April 30, 2018.

b. Election of Officers/Committee Assignments: Ms. Smith noted that she is the current Chair of the Evaluation/Nomination Committee. Members of the Nominating Committee propose the following slate of Officers for the next year: Kyle Kane – Chair, Debbie Kiser – Vice Chair and Cheryl Smith – Secretary/Treasurer.

C. Greenway made a motion to accept the proposal of officers; seconded by K. Kane. No further discussion. VOTE: Unanimous

Thereafter, Ms. Smith stated that there are two committees:

Evaluation/Nomination Committee members select candidates to fill vacancies. She noted that the Board will have a vacancy as of July 1st. It was proposed that Susan Manny be Chair of the Evaluation/Nomination Committee with George Laugelli and Debbie Kiser also serving on that committee. The Chair, Kyle Kane, and the Director, James Kelly will serve as ex officio members.

Finance Committee members are proposed as follows: Candy Greenway – Chair, Cheryl Smith and another board member (to be assigned) with the Chair, Kyle Kane and Director, James Kelly serving as ex officio members.

Discussion followed and Ms. Smith noted that at the September Board Meeting, everything will be confirmed.

c. Fine Free Weekend Proposal: Mr. Kelly stated that he sent a proposal to members of the FCPL Board of Trustees prior to the meeting to give everyone an idea of what we are asking for. Staff at one of FCPL branches requested a 1-day fine amnesty program. Since it affects fines, Mr. Kelly noted that he wanted to bring this matter to the FCPL Board of Trustees. Also, Mr. Kelly noted that having an amnesty program at one branch would be problematic because patrons from another branch may object. Staff sat down and discussed a possible amnesty program. What is being proposed is an amnesty weekend. Mr. Kelly noted that there was a recent article in

The Baltimore Sun that Enoch Pratt Library is going fine-free. They are no longer going to have any fines whatsoever. FCPL is not ready for that yet. FCPL relies heavily on the \$230,000 projected in fine revenue for our budget. The proposal is for a Friday, Saturday and Sunday amnesty program in late-August. By having an amnesty weekend in late-August, this would allow enough time to get publicity out about the amnesty weekend.

Mr. Kelly reviewed the outcomes that are hoped for as a result of an amnesty weekend:

- Goodwill and relationship building with community
- Bring student accounts into good standing before the school year starts so they can use accounts for school research.
- Welcome back customers who have not visited in a while and share collections/services.
- Obtain materials that are sitting in people's homes and not circulating
- Obtain increased circulation on those returned items.
- Obtain increased circulation and door count from customers that had been blocked.

Mr. Kelly noted that Calvert County did an amnesty week in June, 2016. During that week, they had over 2,000 customer accounts that had a fine/fee waived during that week. He also noted that within a year of Calvert County's amnesty week, 57% of the accounts had been used and 40% had been active in the last month. He noted that it is our thought that FCPL could get a lot out of this. Mr. Kelly stated that if you read through some of the literature regarding fines, it disproportionately affects low income folks and children who may not have the ability to return items on time. He added that an amnesty weekend would bring some of our patrons back in and bring back some of our materials.

Ms. Greenway inquired how FCPL will go about advertising for the amnesty weekend. Mr. Kelly stated that today he is asking whether members of the FCPL Board of Trustees agree with this proposal philosophically and then the details will be worked out. Mr. Kelly added that he can see posting this information on social media and possibly posting an article in The Frederick News-Post. Mr. Kelly further added that he thinks FCPL will get a lot of political goodwill out of an amnesty weekend and not lose a lot of money.

Mr. Laugelli noted that the amnesty weekend would not be a blanket wiping out of all fines and that a patron would have to come into the library and actively seek to have their fines waived. Mr. Kelly noted that in addition to that there will be some people who have already returned materials and only have fines on their account so the patron would be absolved of those fines. He noted that ideally the amnesty weekend would encourage those that are sitting on books and have maximum fines on their accounts to return the items to the library. In addition to getting materials back, we would waive the fines on their account. Mr. Laugelli reiterated that the amnesty would be for those patrons that actively come into the library and request amnesty. Mr. Kelly added that the other piece of having an amnesty weekend is that some of the patrons that may request amnesty have not been in the library for five years. Having those patrons come into the library and have them speak to staff and be told about all of the great things FCPL has

(electronic resources, programming, etc.), it is an opportunity to relationship-build. Mr. Kelly stated that he would not be in favor of going into the computer system and bringing everyone's accounts to zero. He added that he thinks an amnesty weekend would provide an opportunity to have a conversation with people.

Ms. Greenway inquired as to what point is a patron no longer allowed to check out materials. T. Leberherz replied that a patron's card is blocked once their account reaches \$20.00 in fines. Mr. Kelly added that many times a child has not come to the library for many years and then returns as a teen and wants to check out materials and the teen is told that he/she cannot check out materials because their card has been blocked due to outstanding fines. Mr. Laugelli stated that he finds the student aspect of the amnesty weekend most attractive.

Ms. Greenway inquired whether FCPL has statistics on how many people have fines on their accounts but have returned the materials versus how many people are still holding onto the materials and owe fines. Mr. Kelly replied that he does not have those statistics at-hand but we should be able to find that out for you.

Mr. Laugelli inquired as to what happens if a person asks for the fines to be removed but cannot find the book. Mr. Kelly stated that the patron would still be responsible for the replacement cost of the item. Mr. Kelly added that he thinks there is a percentage of people that have overdue items but are afraid to bring them back so what we are trying to do is reach out to those folks. Ms. Smith stated that she knows a lot of people that drive around with lots of overdue books in their cars and are afraid to return them. They are waiting for an amnesty day.

Ms. Kiser inquired whether there is any idea how much money FCPL may lose as a result of the amnesty weekend. Mr. Kelly noted that FCPL has projected \$230,000 in fine revenue and that is a fraction of what is actually owed by patrons. The people that usually pay fines are those that are able to pay fines. There are many people who accrue fines but are unable to pay their fines. There is some money that FCPL will never see but we need to take that into account when making projections about revenue. He further noted that fine revenue is trending downward as a result of the rise of electronic formats. There will be a time when FCPL starts to rely on fine money less and less. He again noted that he thinks there is a tremendous amount of goodwill to be had from an amnesty weekend as a one-time thing. Mr. Kelly added that he does not want to say this is our annual August amnesty weekend because then you will have patrons holding onto the materials for a year. He further noted that there will be questions from patrons whether FCPL plans to do this every year and staff will advise that we do not plan to do that.

Mr. Laugelli inquired whether FCPL has a collections process. Mr. Kelly noted that after a certain threshold, accounts are sent to Unique Management. As soon as an account is sent to Unique Management, FCPL pays Unique Management a fee to track people down in an attempt to get money owed to FCPL.

Ms. Poteat inquired whether there are more fines on children's or adult books. Mr. Kelly stated that he does not have that information available. If that is something we can determine, Mr.

Kelly stated that we will provide that information.

Ms. Greenway stated that although this policy has been proposed, there are no actual numbers provided. Mr. Kelly noted that FCPL projects \$230,000 in fine revenue, however, there is approximately close to \$1,000,000 in outstanding fines. Ms. Greenway stated that it is difficult to make a decision when we don't have a lot of information. Mr. Kelly advised that he is happy to provide more numbers if that will help everyone in their decision regarding an amnesty weekend.

Mr. Laugelli inquired as to what would happen next if the amnesty weekend would be approved. Mr. Kelly stated that staff would work through the logistical and marketing issues. He further noted that he would be happy to provide the additional information requested by members of the FCPL Board of Trustees. Mr. Kelly further noted that this is the last meeting before the proposed event in August.

Ms. Greenway inquired whether it is known how much money Calvert County gave up by doing an amnesty week. Mr. Kelly noted that Calvert County Library had 2,109 customers who had fines waived during that week and they waived a total of \$59,617 in fines. Ms. Smith noted that fines that are waived would be offset by recovered materials. K. Kane also stated that you have to take into account how many patrons would return to the library after having fines waived to utilize other programs/services. Mr. Kelly also noted that in the month following Calvert County's amnesty week, Overdrive/e-book check-outs were up 9%, Hoopla usage was up 12% and they registered an additional 104 new patrons. Ms. Greenway noted that Calvert County lost a total of over \$59,000 in fine revenue and wanted to know if Mr. Kelly had an estimate as to how much FCPL will lose or give up as a result of the amnesty weekend. Ms. Kiser stated that she disagrees with the word "lost" because there is no way of knowing if a patron would ever pay those fines. She further noted that if you are balancing that with getting materials back that would never have been returned, it is hard to quantify what FCPL would lose. Ms. Greenway inquired as to how many materials Calvert County recovered during their amnesty weekend. Mr. Kelly said he does not have any information as to how much material was recovered during the amnesty weekend.

Mr. Laugelli reiterated that in order to get the fine(s) waived on their account, the patron must return the materials. Mr. Kelly stated that a patron may have returned an item late and only have fine(s) on their card.

Mr. Kane requested Mr. Kelly to review again the outcome of the Calvert County amnesty week. Mr. Kelly stated the following:

- Over 2,000 customer accounts had a fine/fee waived during that week
- One year after the amnesty week –
 - o 57% of accounts had been used that year
 - o 51% had been active in the last 3 months
 - o 40% had been active in the last month

Ms. Greenway further inquired as to the number of customers that FCPL has that have fines on their accounts. Mr. Kelly stated that he can provide that information and he added that he is confident that it is a giant number. Ms. Greenway stated that she does not know anything as far as how many people have outstanding fines, how many students owe fines, or any other demographics. Mr. Kelly did note that FCPL has 61,000 patrons that have amounts owed on their accounts. He further noted that the amount owed on those accounts could be any amount.

Mr. Laugelli reiterated that the fines would be waived for those patrons that would actually visit a library and claim amnesty.

Ms. Kiser inquired if members of the FCPL Board of Trustees would decide to do this, would the Board be provided with the outcome numbers of the event. Mr. Kelly stated that staff is interested in those statistics as well and the information would be provided to members of the FCPL Board of Trustees as well.

Ms. Greenway stated that at this point we have no way of knowing how many of those patrons that owe fines are under the age of 21 or are students. Mr. Kane noted that he thinks an amnesty program would be a good thing to get people back into the library. Mr. Laugelli stated that this could be an accounting nightmare because they have to figure out the assets that were returned to the library.

Ms. Greenway also stated that there is no way we will know what kind of shape the materials will be in when they are returned. Mr. Kelly noted that there is a possibility that some items that are returned we won't want to add back into FCPL's collection. Mr. Laugelli reiterated that this is not where the library is going to wipe the slates clean of all fines. A patron must come into the library and request amnesty.

Ms. Greenway stated that she wants to clarify that if someone does not have materials checked out on their card but they have fines on their account, that person has to come into the library and ask for amnesty. Mr. Kelly stated that this is correct.

Ms. Kiser inquired if someone comes into the library on the amnesty weekend and has a tattered book, will FCPL make the patron replace the item. Mr. Kelly stated that we will just take the item, delete the fine from the patron's account, and chances are we would just delete the item from FCPL's catalog. Mr. Kelly noted that there will be a percentage of items returned that are perfectly fine and returned to the collection.

Ms. Greenway inquired why a patron has to come into the library and request amnesty. She inquired why someone can't just call the library and have their fines waived. Mr. Laugelli stated that the purpose of this whole thing is to bring people into the library. Mr. Kelly added that a patron calling the library to request amnesty is not the way we envisioned it happening but the Board has the power to change that. If the Board would like for staff to go in and bring everyone's account to zero, we can do that but FCPL will lose a lot more money. Ms. Greenway stated that there could be 61,000 people coming to the C. Burr Artz Library and parking in the

garage.

Mr. Laugelli noted that maybe it would be possible to wipe the slate clean for those under a certain age. Mr. Kelly reiterated that this is just a proposal. Mr. Laugelli noted that it is a good thing to get people back into the library. Ms. Smith inquired whether the Board would approve this proposal tonight, could the additional information that has been requested be sent to members of the FCPL Board of Trustees since we don't have another meeting before this would take place. She also inquired how much time would FCPL staff need to start advertising. Mr. Kelly stated that we would like to start advertising about a month prior. Ms. Greenway inquired whether there is money in the budget to purchase advertising. Mr. Kelly confirmed that there is money in the budget to cover advertising costs.

Ms. Smith inquired whether members of the FCPL Board of Trustees could approve the proposal with a request that includes more detailed information being sent to members of the Board by July 15, 2018. Mr. Laugelli noted that the Board needs to approve the proposal in principal and the details would be worked out later. Mr. Kelly stated that he would be happy to do that.

Ms. Smith made a motion to approve the concept of the amnesty-free weekend subject to further detailed information being provided to members of the FCPL Board of Trustees for comments; seconded by D. Kiser. Mr. Laugelli noted that members of the FCPL Board of Trustees are giving the go ahead to work out the details for the amnesty-free weekend. VOTE: Unanimous.

Mr. Kelly noted that in addition to Enoch Pratt Library no longer collecting fines, the other big library systems that do not collect fines are: Salt Lake City, Columbus, Ohio and Nashville, Tennessee. Mr. Kelly advised that he will have all of the requested, additional information to members of the FCPL Board of Trustees by July 15, 2018.

BOARD QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS: In recognition of Blanca Poteat's service and her last meeting, Mr. Kelly presented Blanca Poteat with a certificate signed by County Executive Gardner as well as a personal letter to Ms. Poteat from County Executive Gardner. In addition, Mr. Kelly presented Ms. Poteat with a gardening tool basket from FCPL that has gardening tools hand-forged by a blacksmith in Montana. Mr. Kelly thanked Ms. Poteat for her 10 years of service to the library.

Ms. Poteat thanked everyone and she noted that she is very appreciative. Ms. Poteat noted that the gift basket will go nicely with the gift that her husband gave her today which was a four-wheeled wagon for the garden.

Ms. Poteat noted this is her last meeting as a member of the FCPL Board of Trustees. She thanked the library staff, James Kelly, and Linda Tibbs as well as her fellow board members for the privilege of serving with them for the past ten years. She noted a special thanks to George Laugelli, the Chair of the FCPL Board of Trustees for the past two years, for keeping everything steady and moving forward.

She noted that she has seen a lot of changes in staff, facilities, materials, formats and patron interests and needs. She added that she joined the FCPL Board of Trustees at the dedication of the new Thurmont Regional Library and witnessed the construction and openings of the Brunswick and Walkersville Libraries, improvements at Middletown Library, the Point of Rocks Library and Urbana Regional Library as well as the planning for Myersville Library. All of this change and progress has been accomplished despite some significant budget and political issues. Materials, formats and patron interests and needs have changed too.

In response to those changes, she stated that she observed some important principles:

1. Building lifelong support for libraries begins with kids. Building lifelong reading skills and enjoyment of learning begins with kids, too. She noted her thanks for FCPL's hugely successful summer and year-round reading programs and energetic commitment.
2. FCPL's community partnerships are growing and are essential to leverage and expanding library benefits to people of all ages and interests.
3. Serendipity – random encounters and unexpected discoveries – is a unique experience offered by libraries. Access to a wide array of print, digital, audio and other resources is essential to serendipity.

She further noted that FCPL's mission statement notes that a “free and accessible public library is fundamental to a democratic society.” She added that our libraries are more important than ever for help in finding reliable, verifiable information; for help in distinguishing facts and opinion and for offering resources and forums to air diverse ideas and perspectives.

She thereafter reviewed a recent New York Times book review of *The Library, A Catalogue of Wonders* by Stuart Kells which suggested that we “...think of libraries as arrangements of knowledge ...” and “...the bindings and buildings are ultimately just delivery mechanisms for the actual stuff, the content that diverts, subverts, stimulates and enlightens.”

Ms. Poteat thereafter thanked everyone for providing these “arrangements of knowledge” and “actual stuff”, and thanked everyone for the opportunity to help support Frederick County's libraries.

Ms. Smith thanked Ms. Poteat for being her mentor because Ms. Poteat explained the ropes to her when she was a new member of the FCPL Board of Trustees.

Mr. Laugelli noted that Ms. Poteat was Chair during an interesting period of time that was going on in the County and she handled it very well.

OTHER CITIZEN REMARKS: None.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 5, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at the C. Burr Artz Library – 110 E. Patrick Street, Frederick, MD.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.



Kyle Kane, Chair
Frederick County Public Libraries Board of Trustees