

Kent County Library Board of Trustees

Minutes of the June 28, 2021 Hybrid Meeting

Present: Elisabeth Tully, President; Jay Silcox, Treasurer; Bronwyn Jones, Secretary; Alan Austen, Trustee; Erin Counihan, Trustee; Judi O'Brien, Trustee; Arnessa Dowell, Executive Director; Chris Walmsley, Staff Member

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm.

Ms. Tully noted that Ms. Overton and Ms. O'Brien were absent at the start of the meeting.

Ms. Tully noted that the agenda for the meeting needed to be revised to remove the closed session from the agenda. Ms. Tully continued that the closed session would be incorporated into the July meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Dr. Austen noted that he would need to leave the meeting at 5:30 pm. Ms. Tully asked if there were particular topics he would like to weigh in on, and Dr. Austen noted the reopening plan review.

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed. Dr. Austen moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Mr. Silcox seconded the motion, which was approved with Ms. Tully abstaining from the vote.

Finance Committee & Treasurer's Report

Mr. Silcox reviewed the bank balances and noted that there was \$232,133 in the PNC Checking account, \$31,233 in the PNC Money Market account, and \$218,592 in the Peoples Bank Savings account.

Mr. Silcox reviewed the proposed North County Branch location, and noted that the Finance Committee could not recommend moving forward with the proposal for a new location. Mr. Silcox cited the cost of increased staffing, collection expansion and development, and that the library did not want to become overextended with the potential need for a Rock Hall facility.

The trustees discussed the proposal from Mr. Stoltzfus, how funds are utilized, and the current and future roles of funding partners related to the library.

Ms. Tully noted that negotiations would need to occur with Mr. Haggerty to extend the lease for the current North County facility.

Dr. Austen moved to renegotiation with Mr. Haggerty for a lease of the North County Library space. Mr. Silcox seconded the motion. Ms. Tully opened the floor for discussion, and noted that she was surprised that a portion of the tax comes to the library itself.

Ms. O'Brien joined the meeting at 4:44 pm.

The trustees discussed the history of the lease and the role of the county commissioners in property rentals and ownership.

Ms. Dowell noted that the current space limited program attendance and the way the facility is utilized. The trustees discussed the future of the library and the needs of the facility, along with the current funding of the library.

Ms. Tully called the motion to a vote. The motion was approved unanimously.

Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Adjustments

Mr. Silcox moved to approve the transfer of \$63,900 from fiscal year 2021 to fiscal year 2022 for the purpose of renovations. Ms. Jones seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Credit Card Limit

Mr. Silcox reviewed the previous action by the trustees to approve two credit cards with a \$10,000 limit each. Mr. Silcox noted that the way it had been implemented by the bank created a shared credit limit of \$10,000 instead of the individual limits. Mr. Silcox continued that he was meeting with the bank to discuss this limit.

The trustees discussed how the credit card was being utilized.

Director's Report

Reopening Plan Review

Ms. Dowell presented a proposal for a Phase 5A due to the current staffing level of the library, and summer programming needs, noting that the intention was to build the foundation of services among library staff. Ms. Dowell reviewed the service hours under the new proposal, which included opening on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10 am to 6 pm, and on Saturday from 10am until 4 pm in the Chestertown location, with expanded branch hours at the North County facility. Ms. Dowell noted that capacity limits would be lifted, and additional seating available, and the in-building book return opened.

Mr. Silcox noted that the phase 6 trigger was the end of the state of emergency in Maryland, which would end on July 1. Mr. Silcox questioned how long Ms. Dowell expected the staff

shortage to continue. Ms. Dowell replied that she anticipated being able to return to a full service model in September.

Ms. Dowell noted that the foundational needs of the organization were being developed and reviewed.

Ms. Tully reiterated that the triggers for phase 6 would be met on July 1, 2021, and that orientation and training should happen in the context of full services. Ms. Tully continued that services could progressively be expanded between July 1 and September.

The trustees discussed training opportunities and issues that need to be addressed within the organization.

Dr. Austen reiterated that as of July 1, the triggers for entering phase 6 had been met, and requested that a vote be called.

Ms. Tully noted that there was currently no motion, and reviewed the discussion which included the expectation that the library would move into Phase 6 on July 1, but that Ms. Dowell had made a case for why the library should move into a Phase 5A instead of Phase 6.

Ms. Tully moved to alter the reopening plan to add a Phase 5A as described within the packet to begin on July 12. Mr. Silcox seconded the motion. Ms. Tully called for discussion. Ms. Counihan questioned if the eight week timeframe was reasonable. Mr. Silcox suggested revisiting the reopening at the July meeting to determine if goals had been met and if further reopening was warranted. Mr. Silcox continued that he would like for the library to be fully reopened on July 1, but that he could appreciate the opportunity to rebuild the organization, and that he would like to hear about the deferred training and staff development.

Ms. O'Brien questioned if the Phase 5A timeline could be moved to align with the end of the state of emergency in Maryland. Ms. Tully revised the motion to have an effective date of July 1. No further discussion was had. Ms. Tully called for a vote. The motion passed with Ms. Counihan, Ms. Jones, Ms. O'Brien, Mr. Silcox and Ms. Tully voting in favor of the motion, and Dr. Austen voting against the motion.

Dr. Austen left the meeting at 5:33 pm.

Staff Handbook

Ms. Tully noted that she did not think that the circulated staff handbook was finished, and that she had several questions and notes related to the revised staff guidelines. Ms. Dowell noted that there were significant changes to the document including taking out some things which frequently changed and the standardization of some practices.

Ms. Jones asked if the changes to the document could be more directly displayed or noted. Ms. Dowell noted that a significant portion of the document had been revised, which made consolidating a list of changes difficult.

Ms. Tully called for a trustee volunteer to be a part of the handbook revision process. The trustees discussed their involvement in the handbook revisions. Ms. Tully decided that she would meet with Ms. Dowell for clarification of the revised handbook and a review of the potential changes.

Ms. Dowell noted that the guidelines had been reviewed by staff and their comments had been incorporated into the document or addressed as necessary.

Ms. Tully tabled the discussion of the revised staff guidelines.

Fiscal Year 2022 Holidays

Ms. Dowell reviewed the list of holidays and observances for Fiscal Year 2022. Ms. Dowell noted that this was needed by the Eastern Shore Regional Library.

Ms. Jones questioned if the holidays aligned with the Kent County Government holidays. Ms. Dowell said that they did not and had not previously aligned. Ms. Tully noted it would be nice to be open occasionally when the schools are not. Ms. Jones noted that it would simplify the calendar to align with either the schools or the government.

Ms. Tully moved to approve the holidays as proposed, and further state that these are perpetual holidays unless there is a material change. Mr. Silcox seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Fiscal Year 2022 Strategic Goals

Ms. Dowell reviewed the fiscal year 2021 strategic goals of the library, noting that these had been used to inform the new strategic goals. Ms. Dowell presented a list of strategic goals for fiscal year 2022. The trustees discussed the goals.

Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Review

Ms. Dowell noted that the budget had been adopted and approved by the county commissioners, and a letter of funding for fiscal year 2022 was received.

Hiring Update

Ms. Dowell informed the trustees that three part time employees had been hired and would be beginning on July 1, 2021. Ms. Dowell noted that there was difficulty in hiring, largely tied to

wages, with some competing library systems being able to offer significantly higher wages than the library.

Staff Room Remodel

Ms. Dowell noted that the design process was progressing, but slower due to the inclusion of staff input in the process.

The trustees and Ms. Dowell discussed some of the challenges which had been encountered in the design process, and the potential for furniture reuse or recycling.

Staff Book Club

Ms. Dowell informed the trustees that she had distributed copies of the book, *How to be Happy at Work* to staff members, and that the staff would be discussing the book at the end of the quarter.

Funding Partner Reports

Friends of the Kent County Public Library

Ms. Dowell reviewed the Friends of the Library meeting, noting that the Friends were planning to have a book sale at the end of September, with a member night proposed for the end of October.

Foundation for the Kent County Public Library

Ms. Tully noted that a discussion was due related to the purpose of the Foundation, and if their historical role was still necessary.

Old Business

No old business was brought before the trustees.

New Business

Mr. Silcox informed the trustees that he would not be able to attend the meeting scheduled for July 26. The trustees discussed the meeting and rescheduled the meeting for July 19.

No further business was brought before the trustees.

Ms. Tully moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Jones seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:33 pm.