

## Kent County Public Library Board of Trustees

### Minutes of the November 27, 2023 Meeting

Present: Jay Silcox, President; Judi O'Brien, Vice President; Amy Sine, Treasurer; Erin Counihan, Secretary; John Murphy, Trustee; Alex Baker, Trustee; Arnessa Dowell, Executive Director; Chris Walmsley, Staff Member; Olivia Coleman, Executive Secretary; one member of the public.

Mr. Silcox called the meeting to order at 4:31 pm.

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed. Mr. Murphy moved to approve the minutes. Ms. Counihan seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Ms. Dowell reviewed the meeting agenda. She said that the Librarian's Report and Old Business would be combined, and that Meeting for Election of Officers in January was added to New Business.

#### Public Comment

Mr. Silcox opened for public comment, and there was none.

#### Officer's Reports

##### Treasurer

Ms. Sine reviewed the account balances, which were \$218,933 in People's Bank, \$169,165 in PNC Checking, and \$31,241 in PNC Savings. She then discussed the Finance Committee Reserve Policy. This says that two months of operating costs need to be kept as restricted reserved funds. This totals out to \$148,246. The library is also required to hold \$5000 in restricted funds for unemployment, and \$28,000 for health insurance emergencies. This means that there are about \$181,000 in restricted reserve funds. Mr. Walmsley estimated that the board would need to transfer \$37,000 from the People's Bank account to cover the operating cost of the library this fiscal year. That leaves \$100 in unrestricted funds. The Finance Committee has recommended the board dip into the restricted reserve funds for \$15,000 to cover the cost of sound boards for the library building. Thus, the new People's Bank balance will become strictly restricted reserve funds, and there will be no unrestricted funds unless the library underspends this fiscal year. Ms. Sine reiterated the recommendation for the Finance Committee, which was an unforeseen expense based on the increasing volume level at the library. Mr. Murphy asked if this was the only solution to that concern, and Ms. Dowell explained that behavior correction is

also a part of the solution. Ms. Sine motioned to transfer the funds and Mr. Murphy seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. Mr. Murphy asked to clarify if the People's Bank account would become only for restricted funds. Ms. Sine explained that it would be used that way as much as possible, though interest could be spent.

#### Secretary

Ms. Counihan had nothing to report.

#### Foundation Representative

Mr. Murphy reported that the Foundation for the Kent County Public Library had a meeting, where they confirmed their support for the book dropbox project, and have mailed out their fund requests. They should close out this collection in January. Ms. Dowell said she had been contacted by a Foundation member, who asked what the progress on the dropbox project had been. The trustees discussed what exactly the member may have meant by this. Ms. Dowell decided she would call the member back to clarify.

#### Friends Representative

The Friends of the Kent County Public Library had their 50th anniversary celebration and meeting, which Mr. Silcox and Ms. Dowell were invited to and attended. The Friends celebrated with cake and prosecco. They also presented Ms. Dowell with a surprise \$10,000 check. Ms. O'Brien missed the next meeting, which covered the recent book sale and the annual Friends meeting. Ms. O'Brien requested the trustees pitch in to reimburse the Friends for the prosecco. The trustees agreed to send money to Ms. O'Brien for this.

#### Committee Reports

##### Rock Hall Facility Update

Mr. Silcox reported that the November 6, 2023 meeting at St. John's chapel to discuss the future of the Rock Hall branch was successful. The architect for the project presented their renderings, and attendees gave feedback on things they would like to see in a new library building including services and library offerings. There will be a meeting the day following the Board of Trustees meeting at 6 PM to discuss next steps on funding the project. There is a grant writer offering her services pro-bono for this initiative, and she will be attending this meeting as well. Another topic that came up in the November 6th meeting was the days of operation of the Rock Hall branch. The community asked for an additional day of operation on Saturday. Many services that were suggested at the meeting are already in place. The trustees discussed further on their takeaways

from the meeting. It was also mentioned that The Chestertown Spy had an interview with the mayor of Rock Hall regarding this project. It was asked if the size of the proposed building, which is about 5,000 square feet, would dictate a certain staffing level. Ms. O'Brien also mentioned that at some point the county would have to be brought into the conversation regarding funding for the project, though Mr. Silcox said he did not anticipate their funds being needed until 2025. Ms. Dowell added that another staff member is likely to be needed. Mr. Silcox asked if the American Library Association had any guidelines related to this. Ms. Dowell also added that she is hoping for more ownership regarding the project from the town, as it will be their building.

### Librarian's Report and Old Business

#### Hearse House Memorandum of Understanding

Mr. Silcox began by informing the trustees that there had been progress on this matter. It was decided that a separate Memorandum of Understanding that excludes the Women's Literary Club could be written, allowing them to continue to use the current document. Mr. Silcox will be working on meeting with County Administrator Shelley Heller and Mike Moulds to determine the specifics of the new MOU. Then he will be able to confirm whether or not the existing MOU with the Literary Club can remain unchanged.

#### Reference Policy

The library is looking to sunset this policy, as what it details is covered in the employee handbook and library procedures. Mr. Silcox moved to sunset this policy and Ms. Counihan seconded. Ms. Baker clarified that the language was addressed elsewhere, which Ms. Dowell confirmed. Ms. Counihan asked if this was no longer information patrons needed to know, and Ms. Dowell explained that the policy had been more of an internal document anyway. The motion to sunset was passed unanimously.

#### Friends of the Kent County Public Library Policy

There is now a Memorandum of Understanding between the library and the Friends of the Library which covers what is detailed in this policy. Thus, the library is looking to sunset this policy. Mr. Silcox moved to sunset, Ms. O'Brien seconded, and the decision was passed unanimously.

#### Meeting Room and Material and Service Fees Policy

This addressed an update to both the Meeting Room Policy and the Material and Service Fees Policy. This allowed the library to open the meeting room for community use for a fee, beginning in February. This will not affect partnerships with the library that line up with the organization's mission, vision, and values. Ms. Baker asked how this would be done. Ms. Dowell explained that it was done before, so there is something in place that handles reservations already. She added that the fee is \$25 for the first four hours of use, and \$10 for each additional hour. Mr. Silcox moved to adopt the updated policies, and Mr. Murphy seconded the motion. Ms. O'Brien asked about the approval time for meeting room use requests, which was stated to be seven days. Ms. Dowell explained that the Public Services department needed the time to review and approve requests, and make sure the room was not double booked. There was discussion among the trustees about whether this amount of time made sense to them, and it was decided that it was best to keep this time frame. Mr. Murphy asked Ms. Dowell if the reservation system would be over the phone or online. Ms. Dowell explained that there should be a system online. Ms. O'Brien asked if reservations for the Hearse House, when it can be used, will fall under this policy, which Ms. Dowell confirmed. Ms. Sine asked if equipment and table set up will be available, and Ms. Dowell explained that it would be on the form. Ms. Counihan asked to confirm that non-profits will now have to pay to use the space as they did not have to previously, and Ms. Dowell confirmed that unless they are partnering with the library there will be a fee for their use. The updated policies were adopted unanimously.

### Bulletin Board Policy

The library determined that they needed to remove the procedures from this policy and just leave the policy itself. This way, if the procedures need to be updated, the trustees would not have to vote on it. Mr. Milcox moved to approve the updates policy and Ms. Baker seconded the motion. Mr. Murphy asked for clarification, and Ms. Dowell explained that now the policy and procedures would be separate. The updated document was accepted unanimously.

### Employee Handbook

Ms. Dowell opened by saying that the Employee Handbook with the proposed updates had been sent out to the trustees. She said that she had received some feedback on the formatting of the document, and asked for additional comments and a vote. She added that the proposed Employee Performance Incentive was to be voted on as well. This was a reward of one additional personal day the fiscal year following the reward year for employees who did above standard work. This personal time would not carry over to the next fiscal year if unused, and would not be paid out to an employee if they ended their employment with the library. This is now being brought to the trustees based on the recommendation of the finance committee. Mr. Murphy asked if this would affect staffing, and Ms. Dowell said it would not affect it much, as it is only one day's worth of time, and it would not be taken by all employees all at once. Mr. Silcox moved to approve the

performance incentive, Ms. Counihan seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously. Mr. Silcox then moved to pass the updated handbook which Mr. Murphy seconded. Ms. O'Brien asked if this was with the comments left, and Ms. Dowell agreed that it was, as there had only been comments on the document's formatting. Ms. O'Brien explained that she had left a comment about something other than the formatting, but it turned out that these comments had been lost. She explained that it was about how annual leave can only be taken in half day increments. There was discussion on the reasoning behind this, and whether employees should be allowed to take annual leave in smaller increments. Ms. Dowell explained that sick and personal time allowed for employees to take time in smaller increments. The trustees decided to keep annual leave to be taken in half day increments. The updated Employee Handbook was passed unanimously.

### New Business

#### Meeting for Election of Officers in January

Mr. Silcox explained that a brief meeting needed to be scheduled to induct new members of the Board. He suggested that this be done January 8, 2024 at 4:30 pm. During this meeting, the new member will be inducted, officer elections will be done, and the meeting schedule for the year will be decided upon. Ms. Sine added that the Kent County Commissioners are meeting on December 19, 2023 to approve the trustee's recommendation for the new member.

#### Student Board Representative

Ms. Baker began by saying that this was born out of a conversation with the librarians at Washington College. In order to make sure everyone is best served, a suggestion from another library was to include the youth in the discussion of what happens at the library, so Ms. Baker decided to bring this to the trustees. The trustees discussed what this might look like, including a student coming to a board meeting quarterly, students being brought in at 3:30 before the board meeting to discuss their thoughts before the board meeting, and a student advisory board. Mr. Silcox suggested this discussion be brought back up in the January meeting. Ms. Counihan said that the staff should be asked their thoughts on this as well. Ms. Dowell added that this could be similar to a program, but the Teen Services Clerk was transitioning to a different position, so there would be no one to head it up at this time. Mr. Silcox said that this could be added to the Teen Services Clerk job description.

Mr. Silcox asked if there was anything else for the trustees to review. Ms. Dowell confirmed that there was not. Ms. Sine moved to adjourn, Mr. Silcox seconded the motion, which was agreed upon unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:43 PM.