

Kent County Public Library Board of Trustees

Finance Committee

Minutes of the June 2, 2025 Meeting

Present: John Murphy, Treasurer; Rachel Durso, Trustee; Melissa Walters, Trustee; Robert Bell, Executive Director; Chris Walmsley, Director of Office Administration

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm.

Fiscal Year 2026 County Allocation

Mr. Murphy noted that the budget request contained \$70,000 in one-time funding requests, and asked how much of the allocation from the county was to support these requests? Mr. Bell stated that none of the funding seems to be for one-time funding requests. The committee discussed the requests for one-time funding.

Mr. Murphy noted that the request for fiscal year 2026 appears to be a 26% increase in funding over the previous fiscal year.

Mr. Bell noted that the commissioner allocation did not include any room for a pay increase, while county employees will be receiving around a 4% increase. Mr. Bell continued that it would require \$26,000 to give library employees an equivalent increase. Mr. Bell expressed concern that if the library could not give staff wages an increase this year that it would lead to increased turnover and lower morale. Mr. Bell noted that with \$40,000, the library could give a 4% increase to staff and pay for the cameras.

Mr. Walmsley noted that operations have been funded by the use of unrestricted reserve funds, but that these funds are not infinite, and that the library would need to see a significant increase at some point in the future.

Mr. Bell stated that he was seeking community support and had requested several supporting organizations to attend the next meeting of the county commissioners.

Mr. Bell expressed concerns about the library focusing on the funding for the roof renovation at the cost of additional funding for operations. Mr. Murphy noted that an additional option from the state was to roll the grant over to next year, and potentially put the funds allocated towards matching the grant from the Maryland State Library Agency.

The committee discussed pursuing capital funding compared to operations funding.

Ms. Durso asked how rescinding the capital grant would impact future requests or the relationship with the MSLA. Mr. Bell stated that the state librarian had expressed sympathy for the situation and that the agency is understanding of the situation.

The committee discussed the requirement for matching funds at the county level and the state aid formula. Mr. Bell noted that other grants were becoming more competitive and more narrow in scope making them more difficult to pursue.

Mr. Bell stated that he wanted to find a way to balance between operation funding increase to cover staff wages and security cameras, and a solution for the roof.

The committee discussed future increases and how those may be impacted by this request cycle.

Mr. Murphy asked if the allocation had ever been revised in the past. Mr. Walmsley stated that the allocation from the commissioners had not been changed in his experience. Mr. Bell asked if there was an alternative path to providing an increase for staff. The committee discussed potential ways to provide an increase in wages for staff.

No further business was brought before the trustees.

The meeting was adjourned unanimously at 4:39 pm.