

Kent County Public Library Board of Trustees

Board Meeting Minutes of: December 15th, 2025

Call to Order

Present:

Rachel Durso, President; **John Murphy**, Treasurer; **Erin Counihan**, Secretary; **Clara Rankin**, Trustee; **Bruce Riedel**, Trustee; **Deborah Westerland**, Trustee; **Annie Woodall**, Acting Co-Director; **Natalie Hagan**, Acting Co-Director; **Chris Walmsley**, Director of Office Administration; **Tobi Brown**, Executive Secretary

Ms. Durso called the meeting into order at 4:31pm. Ms. Durso noted that at the start of the meeting there was one trustee absent, but with a quorum present business could move forward. Ms. Rankin joined the meeting at 4:36pm.

Disposition of Minutes of Previous Meeting

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

Review of Agenda

The agenda for the meeting was reviewed. No changes to the agenda were made.

Public Comment

Ms. Durso noted that there were no members of the public present.

Officer Reports

Treasurer

Mr. Murphy reviewed the bank balances and noted there was \$181,747 in the PNC Checking account, (\$9.29) in the PNC Money Market account, and \$116,868 in the Truist Money Market account.

Mr. Murphy noted that the PNC Money Market account saw a \$12 low-balance fee, which led to the balance listed above. Mr. Murphy assured the Trustees that the issue would be sorted in the following days. Mr. Murphy noted that the library received \$525 in interest from the Truist Money Market account.

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Secretary

Ms. Counihan noted that she's been serving as the KCPL representative to ESRL. Ms. Counihan stated that she notified ESRL of her departure from the KCPL Board and that a new representative will be appointed. Mr. Murphy volunteered to be the KCPL representative to ESRL. The Trustees approved this proposition.

Ms. Counihan noted that the Board has received several emails from patrons expressing their concerns about the library. Ms. Durso stated that both Ms. Counihan and herself have been addressing these concerns and inviting these individuals to attend board meetings to discuss them further.

Friends of the Kent County Public Library

Ms. Rankin noted that she was unable to attend the Friends of the Library Christmas gathering. Ms. Durso expressed that she able to attend the gathering and provide Trustee support and gratitude.

Foundation for the Kent County Public Library

Ms. Westerland noted that she's been maintaining communications with the Foundation. Ms. Westerland stated that she will be requesting an update about the Annual Appeal after the start of the new year.

Reports of Committees

The trustees discussed the status of the appointment process of the two new board members.

Librarian's Report

Facilities: Chestertown Library Inc. Building

Ms. Hagan reviewed the recent developments surrounding the Chestertown Library Inc., Building renovation project. Ms. Hagan noted that the final walkthrough with the architect would be on December 19th. Ms. Hagan stated that the Women's Literary Guild would be having a private walkthrough of the space after this date. Ms. Hagan noted that at this time the building is not available to use by the general public but that an event to reintroduce the space will be planned.

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Ms. Hagan stated that due to conflicts in scale and time constraints, the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHA) grant may not be suitable for obtaining additional historical signage for the building. Ms. Hagan stated that she is exploring alternative grants that are smaller, more obtainable, and that have a focus on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

Facilities: Miscellaneous

Ms. Hagan stated that she will be reaching out to the Rock Hall Branch landlord again this month to resolve the ongoing questions regarding the lease.

Ms. Hagan noted that the computer lab at the Community Center in Worton is without internet. Ms. Hagan stated that she was informed the County is performing network upgrades, which is likely causing the delay.

Ms. Hagan noted that the Maryland Department of Information Technology's cyber security assessment for the library was still ongoing.

Facilities: Security

Ms. Hagan shared a quote she received from Atlantic Security to upgrade the Chestertown Library entrances with key card access. Ms. Hagan noted that the cost would be approximately \$3,000 per door. Ms. Hagan noted that if the library were to provide a formal proposal for the key card system and the security cameras to the Foundation in the spring, the requested funding would be approximately \$30,000 in total.

Ms. Rankin expressed concern about the staff's safety without the upgraded doors. Ms. Rankin asked, if the funding had been secured for one door, would Atlantic Security be able to put key card access on the primary staff door first and then upgrade the rest of the entrances once the rest of the funding was secured. Ms. Hagan answered that it was likely and stated she would follow up on this question.

Collection

Ms. Hagan noted that ESRL has shared, reviewed, and revised a proposal regarding the Hoopla digital service. Ms. Hagan stated that information about the service will be provided to the public in the next few months as decisions become finalized.

Ms. Hagan reviewed some of the recent generous monetary donations provided to the library, the Friends, and the Foundation for collection development.

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Ms. Hagan noted that the state Marina ILL system will be replaced by ShareIT in the 2026 calendar year. Ms. Hagan noted that this change will be a statewide launch and may cause disruption in the ILL service.

Programming

Ms. Hagan provided an overview of the recent developments around the LSTA Grant funded program: Connecting with Incarcerated Loved Ones.

Ms. Hagan noted that the Friends of the Library's 2025 Fall Book sale generated approximately \$6,500 in revenue. Ms. Hagan stated that this amount was offset by about \$1,200 in moving costs. Ms. Hagan stated that the Friends were exploring methods to decrease this cost in the future. The Trustees discussed possible solutions to this issue.

Staff

Ms. Hagan provided an overview of upcoming staff development and training.

Ms. Hagan noted that the staff was informed of her appointment as the Executive Director. Ms. Hagan stated that the library was currently planning events to allow the public to meet the new Executive Director. The Trustees discussed what type of events to host and how to best engage the public.

Old Business

The Trustees did not discuss any old business.

New Business

KCPL Board of Trustees Secretary Position

Ms. Durso nominated Ms. Westerland to take over the Board Secretary position at the start of 2026. Ms. Westerland accepted. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Ms. Durso provided an overview of the responsibilities of the Board Secretary previously being performed by Ms. Counihan. The Trustees thanked Ms. Counihan for her service on the Board.

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Closed Session

Ms. Durso moved to close the meeting. Mr. Reidel seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. The meeting went into closed session at 5:22pm.

Adjournment

Ms. Durso moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:47pm.

**PRESIDING OFFICER'S WRITTEN STATEMENT FOR CLOSING A MEETING ("CLOSING STATEMENT")
UNDER THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT (General Provisions Article § 3-305)**

This form has two sides. Complete items 1 – 4 before closing the meeting.

1. Recorded vote to close the meeting: Date: 12/15/2025; Time: 5:22-5:47; Location: Chestertown Branch, KCPL (with Zoom option); Motion to close meeting made by: Ms. Durso Seconded by Mr. Reidel; Members in favor: all; Opposed: none; Abstaining: none; Absent: none.

2. Statutory authority to close session (check all provisions that apply).

This meeting will be closed under General Provisions Art. § 3-305(b) only:

(1) "To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals"; (2) "To protect the privacy or reputation of individuals concerning a matter not related to public business"; (3) "To consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto"; (4) "To consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State"; (5) "To consider the investment of public funds"; (6) "To consider the marketing of public securities"; (7) "To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice"; (8) "To consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation"; (9) "To conduct collective bargaining negotiations or consider matters that relate to the negotiations"; (10) "To discuss public security, if the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to the public or to public security, including: (i) the deployment of fire and police services and staff; and (ii) the development and implementation of emergency plans"; (11) "To prepare, administer, or grade a scholastic, licensing, or qualifying examination"; (12) "To conduct or discuss an investigative proceeding on actual or possible criminal conduct"; (13) "To comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter"; (14) "Before a contract is awarded or bids are opened, to discuss a matter directly related to a negotiating strategy or the contents of a bid or proposal, if public discussion or disclosure would adversely impact the ability of the public body to participate in the competitive bidding or proposal process." (15) "To discuss cybersecurity, if the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to: (i) security assessments or deployments relating to information resources technology; (ii) network security information . . . or (iii) deployments or implementation of security personnel, critical infrastructure, or security devices."

Continued →

3. For each provision checked above, disclosure of the topic to be discussed and the public body's reason for discussing that topic in closed session.

Citation (insert # from above)	Topic	Reason for closed-session discussion of topic
§3-305(b) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	personnel	discussion of staff positions (status change) & salaries
§3-305(b) <input type="checkbox"/>		

4. This statement is made by Rachel Durso, Presiding Officer.

WORKSHEET FOR OPTIONAL USE IN CLOSED SESSION: INFORMATION FOR SUMMARY TO BE DISCLOSED IN THE MINUTES OF THE NEXT OPEN MEETING. (See also template for summary.)

➤ For a meeting closed under the statutory authority cited above:

Time of closed session: _____

Place: _____

Purpose(s): _____

Members who voted to meet in closed session: all

Persons attending closed session: Clara Rankin, John Murphy, Bruce Reidel, Erin Counihan, Rachel Durso, Debbie Westerland, Natalie Hagan, Chris Walmsley, Annie Woodall

Authority under § 3-305 for the closed session: _____

Topics actually discussed: _____

Actions taken: _____

Each recorded vote: _____

➤ For a meeting recessed to perform an administrative function (§ 3-104): Time: _____

Place: _____

Persons present: _____

Subjects discussed: _____