

Kent County Public Library Board of Trustees

Board Meeting Minutes of: January 26th, 2026

Call to Order

Present:

Rachel Durso, President; **Clara Rankin**, Vice President; **John Murphy**, Treasurer; **Deborah Westerland**, Secretary; **Miles Campbell**, Trustee; **Andrea Boothby Rice**, Trustee; **Natalie Hagan**, Executive Director; **Annie Woodall**, Chief Public Officer; **Chris Walmsley**, Chief Operations Officer; **Tobi Brown**, Executive Secretary

Ms. Durso called the meeting into order at 4:30pm. Ms. Durso noted that there were two trustees absent at the start of the meeting. However, with a quorum present business could move forward. Ms. Rankin joined the meeting at 4:38pm.

Disposition of Minutes of Previous Meeting

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

Review of Agenda

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

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 \$101,956 in the PNC Checking account and \$167,089 in the Truist Money Market account.

Mr. Murphy noted that there was a drop in the interest rate on the Truist Money Market account. Mr. Murphy stated he would be exploring alternative account options with a higher interest rate if the current rate remains unchanged.

Mr. Murphy noted that the final payment for the Chestertown Library Inc, Building project was sent out. Mr. Murphy stated that all but one of the grant reimbursements for this project have been received.

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Secretary

There were no updates from the Secretary.

Committee Appointments

Finance Committee

Ms. Durso stated that she felt the Finance Committee should remain comprised of the Board President, Vice President, and the Treasurer. Ms. Durso stated that she would like to search for a citizen representative to also serve on the committee.

Trustee Recruitment Committee

Ms. Durso proposed establishing a standing Trustee Recruitment Committee to meet on a rolling basis. Ms. Durso stated that this committee would track the expiration of Trustee terms and start the following recruitment process smoothly and efficiently. Ms. Durso also stated that the committee would be responsible for connecting with the local community to ensure that KCPL's Board representation mimics that of the community it serves.

Mr. Murphy noted that though this committee would be standing, the workload for the participating Trustees would fluctuate based on the needs of the Board. The Trustees further discussed the details surrounding the new committee. Mr. Murphy, Ms. Rankin, and Ms. Boothby Rice volunteered for the Trustee Recruitment Committee.

Executive Director Evaluation Committee

Ms. Durso noted that the Trustees needed to establish a temporary committee for the evaluation of the Executive Director (ED). Ms. Durso noted that this committee would likely function until mid-summer. Ms. Durso nominated Ms. Westerland, Mr. Campbell, and herself for the committee.

Ms. Durso proposed that the Executive Director Evaluation committee work on revising the evaluation process, including editing the established rubric and form. Ms. Durso explained that she felt the current evaluation format did not adequately collect or analyze relevant information to assess the Executive Director's strength and weaknesses in their position.

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Mr. Murphy asked the Trustees if they felt a need to establish a Safety Committee like they did for 2026. The Trustees discussed the Safety Committee and decided there was not a current need to establish one.

Librarian's Report

Facilities: Chestertown Library Inc. Building Renovation Updates

Ms. Hagan stated that the library will be applying for a Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) grant for a historical display in and around the Chestertown Library Inc. building. Ms. Hagan stated that she's been working with several organizations, including the Kent Cultural Alliance, to establish a plan and a budget for the project.

Ms. Hagan noted that the library was planning a launch event for the building in April. Ms. Hagan provided additional details about potential partners, themes, and historical elements the library aims to incorporate into the event. Ms. Hagan reviewed the details about the wrap up of the project. Mr. Walmsley noted that the library received approximately \$14,000 in kind during the duration of the project.

Facilities: Chestertown Branch Roof Grant Update

Ms. Hagan stated that the library was waiting for a response from the County regarding the latest quote for the roof of the Chestertown Branch.

Ms. Hagan stated that she recently met with Morgan Miller, the Maryland State Librarian, to discuss the KCPL's current needs, fundraising initiatives, grant opportunities, and the needs of the local area. Ms. Hagan stated that Ms. Miller provided helpful insight regarding KCPL's concerns about securing funding for the roof.

Facilities: Rock Hall Branch

Ms. Hagan noted that she's been attending the Main Street of Rock Hall meetings to better network and connect with the town. Ms. Hagan stated that the town seems to be building an emphasis on events and celebrations and identified opportunities for the library to connect the community.

Ms. Hagan noted that the landlord of the Rock Hall Branch building provided a draft for a 2-year lease of the building. The Trustees discussed the details of the proposed lease. Mr. Murphy requested that the lease document be sent to the Trustees for review following the meeting.

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Facilities: Miscellaneous

Ms. Hagan noted that the MDoIT Assessment has been completed and that a detailed report was provided to KCPL. Ms. Hagan stated that KCPL will need to show improvement in at least one of categories from the report. Mr. Campbell asked what the main shortfalls from the report were. Ms. Hagan stated that the main concerns were about liability in case of an incident. Ms. Hagan explained that KCPL is connected to multiple organizations, like ESRL, which can cause grey areas in responsibilities when there is an issue with a network, device, or building. Ms. Hagan stated that she will be looking at developing and revising policies to address these concerns, as well as implementing a risk assessment procedure.

Ms. Hagan reviewed the incidents that have occurred within the library this past month.

Ms. Hagan noted that Senior Staff is working to create a draft of the Strategic Plan. Ms. Hagan stated that once the Senior Staff has completed the draft, it will be put before the Trustees for input. Ms. Hagan noted that the goal was to have the main draft of the Strategic Plan completed by the start of summer.

Collections

Ms. Hagan reviewed the recent success of the launch of the KCPL Library of Things. Ms. Hagan stated that the library was looking to expand this collection and it's offerings.

Ms. Hagan stated that the library was revisiting its procedures surrounding Organizational Library cards. Ms. Hagan explained that the library would be revising these cards, adding organization-only items to the collection, and creating initiatives to encourage community organizations to get one.

Programming

Ms. Hagan provided an overview of the upcoming library programs. Ms. Hagan noted that the summer reading program was actively being planned. Ms. Hagan stated that this year the library would be developing a sponsorship program for the summer reading program to assist with funding. Ms. Hagan stated that the library would be highlighting local authors during the month of February for Love Your Library Month.

Staff

Ms. Hagan stated that she would be attending Legislative Day on February 10th and invited a member of the Board to attend in tandem.

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Ms. Hagan stated that, with the passing of recent legislation in the state of Maryland, the Trustees have the option to appoint a student board member. Ms. Hagan explained what pieces of the legislation affected this option and what the impacts of creating this position would have on the Board.

Ms. Hagan noted that KCPL currently has two staff members in Advanced LATI and two additional staff members eligible to sign up for LATI Early Start.

Old Business

The Trustees did not discuss any old business.

New Business

FY27 Budget Discussion

Ms. Hagan reviewed the details from a recent meeting she had with the Commissioner's Office regarding the budget. The Trustees went on to discuss the status of the FY26 budget and how this would affect the FY27 budget.

Ms. Hagan stated that the library will be working to increase transparency about where funding is being spent, how an increase in funding positively affects the services provided by the library, and what steps the library is taking to use funding efficiently. Mr. Murphy noted that the library would be moving forward with trying to incorporate another staffing position into the new budget.

Ms. Hagan asked the Trustees for their input on what they would like to see in the FY27 budget. Ms. Rankin stated that she was interested in seeing funding for updated safety measures, as well as new signage. Mr. Murphy suggested that the library look into noise control within the Chestertown Branch space. Ms. Durso stated that she was interested in finding funding to improve the library's outdoor spaces so they can be better utilized.

Adjournment

Mr. Murphy moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Durso seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:45pm.