

Kent County Public Library Board of Trustees

Board Meeting Minutes of: May 26th, 2026

Call to Order

Present:

Rachel Durso, President; **Clara Rankin**, Vice President; **John Murphy**, Treasurer; **Deborah Westerland**, Secretary; **Bruce Riedel**, Trustee; **Miles Campbell**, Trustee; **Natalie Hagan**, Executive Director; **Annie Woodall**, Chief Public Officer; **Tobi Brown**, Executive Secretary; **Honey Raines**, Public & Youth Services Manager

Ms. Durso called the meeting to order at 4:30pm. Ms. Durso noted that there were 3 absent trustees at the start of the meeting. With a quorum present, business could move forward.

Ms. Rankin joined the meeting at 4:37pm. Mr. Campbell joined the meeting at 4:57pm.

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 \$126,621 in the PNC Checking account and \$200,000 in the Maryland Local Government Investment Pool account.

Mr. Murphy noted the successful transition of funds from the Truist Money Market account to the newly established Maryland Local Government Investment Pool (MLGIP) account.

Ms. Durso asked for the interest rate on the MLGIP account. Mr. Murphy stated that over the last few weeks, the interest rate was set at about 3.6%.

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Secretary

Ms. Westerland noted that the Executive Director evaluation was being finalized. Ms. Durso stated that they expect to bring the Executive Director evaluation to the Trustees at the July meeting for review. Ms. Durso stated that afterward, the Executive Director Evaluation Committee would review the feedback and proceed with the next steps.

Friends of the Kent County Public Library

Ms. Durso noted that the Friends successfully concluded their Spring Book Sale.

Mr. Campbell stated that the Friends were working through their current budget. Mr. Campbell stated that the Friends were discussing options for establishing an alternative storage unit near the library to store materials for the book sales. Ms. Hagan elaborated on the topic and stated that she had previously discussed the option of having an on-site storage shed at the Chestertown Branch.

Ms. Woodall noted that this discussion about a new storage location occurred as a result of the high cost associated with moving the books from the current storage location to the library. Ms. Woodall stated that currently, the Friends were feeling less pressed about finding a new storage spot, as they found an alternative mover for the materials with a lower cost.

Foundation for the Kent County Public Library

Ms. Westerland noted that the library's relationship with the Foundation was strengthening. Ms. Westerland stated that Ms. Hagan and herself have been working with the Foundation to improve communications and to better convey the library's needs.

Librarian's Report

Facilities: Chestertown Branch Roof Update

Ms. Hagan noted that the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) grant for the replacement of the roof at the Chestertown Branch was approved. Ms. Hagan stated that we were on track with the Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA), the Commissioners, and Public Works to facilitate a metal roof replacement for the branch.

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Facilities: Security Request from Foundation for KCPL

Ms. Hagan noted that the library submitted a funding request to the Foundation for the replacement of the cameras and locks at the Chestertown Branch. Ms. Hagan stated that the Foundation agreed to fund the new camera system for the main building and the Chestertown Library Inc. building at a meeting on May 8th. The Trustees discussed the details of the installation of the new cameras.

Facilities: Chestertown Library Inc. Building

Ms. Hagan noted that the Chestertown Library Inc. building has seen an influx of reservations from both nonprofit and for-profit organizations since its launch in April. Ms. Hagan noted that the library was receiving a small pool of revenue due to this influx.

Ms. Hagan noted that the library was awarded a Preservation Maryland grant to continue its improvements to the exterior of the building.

Facilities: North County Branch Update

Ms. Hagan noted that the library is working to get a physical library sign installed near the North County Branch. Ms. Hagan stated that the library was informed by the Maryland Department of Transportation that it does not need a permit to place the sign in our desired location, however permission is needed from the property owners. Ms. Hagan stated that Mr. Walmsley is currently working to get permission from the owners to place the sign.

Facilities: Rock Hall Branch Update

Ms. Hagan noted that the library was awarded a grant to replace the old book drop at the Rock Hall location. Ms. Hagan stated that the new book drop will be wrapped in a bright color with a large logo on the sides to increase the library's visibility.

Facilities: Rock Hall Branch Lease

Ms. Hagan noted that the Rock Hall Branch lease was up for renewal and needed to be reviewed. Mr. Murphy asked how long the lease period was for the renewal. Ms. Hagan answered three years, as presented. Ms. Durso expressed concern around some of the inclusions of the lease, including the library's responsibility for funding certain repairs of the building. Ms. Rankin agreed, and noted that with the current lease agreement, the library would be liable to make capital investments to a building it does not own. The Trustees went on to discuss the details of the lease, its previous iterations, and how to proceed forward with the renewal. Ms. Durso expressed that she would like the Rock Hall

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branch to keep its current location for now, however she felt that the concerns cannot go unaddressed.

Facilities: Chestertown Branch Circulation Desk Relocation

Ms. Hagan provided an update on the relocation of the circulation desk at the Chestertown Branch. Ms. Hagan stated that representatives from both ESRL and the County visited to assess the proposed move and convey any logistical concerns. Ms. Hagan stated that both representatives felt that the transition should be simple, apart from the need for an additional outlet at the new desk location. Ms. Hagan stated that the transition was currently planned for Fall and noted that she would likely be requesting Board approval to close the branch on the chosen moving date.

Budget

Ms. Hagan stated that the Friends of the Library expressed their satisfaction with the outcome of their Spring Book Sale. Ms. Hagan stated that the Friends indicated that they would likely be providing over \$10,000 to the library from sale revenue, but that the final number would be provided in the near future. Ms. Hagan noted that the Friends started work on a merchandise store account and hoped to start designing items for the store soon.

Ms. Hagan noted that the library was applying for a \$19,000 LSTA grant to support the Library of Things and Organizational Borrowing collections. Ms. Hagan noted that the library was rewarded the CRRF grant from the Local Management Board, which will be used for the Summer Reading Program.

Ms. Hagan noted that the library received the budget allocation from the county, which totaled about \$908,083. Ms. Hagan noted that the library has not been informed about the state's allocation yet.

Collections

Ms. Hagan provided an update on the collection development over the past month.

Ms. Hagan noted that the library has expanded its Board Game collection and replaced damaged items in the STEAM kits to return them to circulation.

Ms. Hagan noted that the new ILL software, SHAREit, has been delayed due to technical issues; no official launch date has been provided at this time.

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Ms. Hagan stated that the new digital library offerings, Kanopy and Blackstone Audio, will be launching on June 1st. Ms. Hagan noted that she's received correspondence from a few concerned patrons about the loss of KCPL's Hoopla offering. Ms. Hagan stated that she's been addressing these concerns and that, after an explanation of the situation surrounding Hoopla, many patrons have responded positively.

Programming: Summer Reading Update

Ms. Raines provided an overview of the Summer Reading program that KCPL will be hosting from June 1st – August 30th. The highlights are as follows:

- The Summer Reading Challenge will consist of both reading minute tracking and activity completion.
- Participants in the Summer Reading Challenge have options on how to participate, all of which can earn you prizes
- Summer Reading programming will include programs themed around the 250th anniversary of the United States.
- KCPL has set a community goal of 500,000 total minutes read by the community. If this Community Goal is reached, the library will donate books to the KCMS media center. If the stretch goals (750,000 & 1,000,000 minutes) are reached, the number of donated materials will increase.
- Preschool programming has increased this year due to community interest.

Ms. Hagan noted that the library received over \$5,000 in Summer Reading sponsorships. The Trustees discussed the details of the Summer Reading Program.

Programming: Outreach

Ms. Hagan recounted the outreach events that KCPL has participated in during April and May, totaling seven appearances in the community. Ms. Hagan stated that she plans to put a focus on outreach next spring in an effort to increase the number of events the library participates in. Ms. Hagan stated that she will be looking to restock the library's outreach materials in the near future.

Staff: New Hire

Ms. Hagan noted that an offer letter has been accepted for the new Library Associate position in the Facilities, Patron, and Administrative Services department. Ms. Hagan noted that the new hire would be starting on June 15th. Ms. Woodall noted that once the new hire started, the library would be considered fully staffed for the first time since 2019.

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Ms. Hagan provided an overview of the accomplishments of the Staff Training Day on 5/7. Ms. Hagan noted that the Chestertown Branch was successfully inventoried, and that the staff that attended the MLA|DLA Annual Conference compiled a list of sharable takeaways.

Old Business

Strategic Plan

Ms. Hagan provided an overview of the current draft of the Strategic Plan. Ms. Durso stated that she supports the layout of the new strategic plan and felt that it was a positive transition from the previous iterations. Ms. Durso stated that the next course of action would be to develop executable goals within the plan.

Ms. Hagan stated that she planned to perform focus groups to get input before creating the goals. Ms. Hagan explained that after the goals are in place, she plans to create a plan for executing the goals within each year. Ms. Hagan also stated that once the strategic plan was complete, she planned to create a refined document to share with the public.

Ms. Durso proposed receiving feedback on the goals in the fall and launching the plan at the start of the 2027 calendar year. The Trustees went on to discuss the next steps for the development and implementation of the strategic plan.

Student Members of the Board

Ms. Hagan noted that Maryland legislation passed on May 26th, 2026, authorizing a county board of library trustees to provide for the selection of a student member of the board. Ms. Hagan noted that the legislation would take effect on July 1st, 2026. Ms. Hagan noted that the selection of a student member of the board would not have to pass through the County Commissioners and was not a requirement for the Board to adopt.

Ms. Hagan stated that she's been in contact with the Kent County Public High School to aid in connecting the library with eligible students. Ms. Durso recommended contacting other local schools to stay equitable when providing this opportunity to the community. The Trustees discussed the next steps for recruiting a student member of the board. Ms. Durso stated that the Bylaws of the Board of Trustees will have to be revised to outline the incorporation of the student member into the Board's normal functions. Ms. Durso stated the Board will revisit this topic at the following meeting.

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New Business

Operations Reserve Policy

Ms. Hagan reviewed the current Operations Reserve Policy and noted that it had not been updated since 2018. Ms. Hagan stated that this policy was a Board centered policy, and as such it was up to the Trustees to develop. Ms. Rankin asked if there were any notable issues with the policy. Ms. Hagan answered no and explained that the main concern was the policy's age. Mr. Murphy noted a lack of parameters and/or formulas surrounding the calculation of the operating reserve in the policy. Mr. Murphy suggested the development of clarification in the policy. Ms. Durso recommended the policy be reviewed at the next Finance Committee meeting and be brought to the full Board at the meeting in June.

Ms. Hagan noted that there will be several policies to review at the June Board meeting.

Adjournment

Ms. Durso moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:50pm.