

## BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES FOR BALTIMORE COUNTY

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING

February 15, 2022

A meeting of the Board of Library Trustees was held via Zoom on Tuesday, February 15, 2022. The meeting was called to order at 8:02 am by Board President Maureen Walsh David, and a notification of recording was given. Those wishing to speak during public comment were asked to sign up using the Q&A tool on Zoom. Other Board members present were: Yara Cheikh, Mike Netzer, Paul Schwab, Aaron Slater, and Anne West.

Staff in attendance: Sonia Alcántara-Antoine, Director; William Carroll, Staff Association President; James Cooke, Assistant Director; Natalie Edington, Assistant Director; Jen Evans, Administrative Assistant; Jessica Faulkner, Library Manger; Lisa Keil, Planning & Projects Data Specialist; Helen Rowe, Fiscal Services Manager; Joey Schenning, Staff Association Past-President; and Liz Sundermann-Zinger, Digital Equity and Virtual Services Manager.

#### COMMUNICATION

##### *Minutes*

The Board approved the minutes of the January 18, 2022 meeting (**Netzer/West**).

##### *Correspondence*

None.

##### *Upcoming Events*

Tax preparation services from Cash Campaign of Maryland will begin at Randallstown this month.

#### REPORTS

##### *Director's Report (Alcántara-Antoine)*

Director Alcántara-Antoine spoke about Maryland Library Legislative Week, during which library leaders head to Annapolis or log in to Zoom to meet with legislators about the importance of libraries. The Director and a group of BCPL leaders will be meeting with Baltimore County legislators throughout the week to discuss what BCPL is doing to serve the community, brag about accomplishments during the pandemic, and highlight needs and opportunities ahead. They will also be expressing support for a bill that has been introduced this session that would increase per capita funding for all libraries across the state. This funding is critical to projects like the upcoming Catonsville and Woodlawn renovations and would help transform locations in need of priority investment like Lansdowne and Essex. She noted that Woodlawn, Lansdowne and Essex are ranked in the Top 5 highest in the "Social Vulnerability Index" which means that residents are particularly vulnerable in terms of their socioeconomic status, household composition and disability, minority status and language, and housing and

transportation. New library facilities in those communities aren't just a 'nice to have' but a 'need to have,' and would be a game changer for residents.

BCPL will continue to utilize budget dollars efficiently to spruce up our spaces for use by and enjoyment of the community. Small improvements have a positive impact on the customer experience. This month, we added a long-awaited laptop bar at Essex Library, space for tutors at Cockeysville Library, and a new Teen Zone at Towson Library. The Director is passionate about libraries being integral to the quality of life in every community. Investing in libraries – whether it's through its operating budget or its facilities – is investing directly in the health and wealth of the community.

The Director also shared that with COVID-19 metrics in Baltimore County continuing to head in the right direction, yesterday afternoon the County Government announced the end of the indoor mask requirement for employees and visitors to County buildings and facilities, effective Monday, February 28, 2022. In addition, mandatory COVID testing for unvaccinated county employees will also end. As with other pandemic-related practices, BCPL will mirror both these changes. This means that the COVID-19 Testing and Vaccination policy that the Board approved last month will expire a month earlier than expected. We will also transition back to in-person programming, outreach, and public-use of meeting use in March. BCPL has been proud to partner with Baltimore County government on mitigating the pandemic to ensure the health and safety of staff and customers. This is a positive and welcome step in the right direction towards normalcy at BCPL and beyond. We will continue to be vigilant, however this is the right thing to do for our community.

Ms. Walsh David expressed the Board's support for BCPL's capital funding efforts and assured the Director that they would assist her efforts as needed.

#### ***New Manager Introduction (Cooke)***

Mr. Cook introduced Jessica Faulkner, new library manager at Reisterstown. Ms. Faulkner comes to BCPL from Enoch Pratt Free Library. Ms. Faulkner expressed her pleasure to be joining BCPL and looks forward to working the Reisterstown staff and community.

#### ***Statistical Dashboard (Keil)***

Ms. Keil shared the statistical dashboard for January 2022. Ms. Keil pointed out that in-person visits are up, in part, because BCPL participated in the distribution of COVID-19 home test kits, which saw a large number of staff visit branches for that purpose.

Ms. Walsh David asked if curbside pick-up was included in the door count and was assured by Ms. Keil that we did count those visits in the door count.

#### ***Facilities Report (Cooke)***

Mr. Cooke reported that focus and planning has turned to three or four major renovations for the next year. The start of the Catonsville renovation has been delayed due to the unexpected need to replace windows. Reisterstown is having issues with its doors and HVAC system.

Ms. Walsh David and Ms. West complimented the presentation given by Mr. Cooke and Director Alcántara-Antoine at the annual Planning Board meeting.

***Finance Report (Rowe)***

Ms. Rowe provided the Board with the January financial summary. Revenues and expenditures continue to be below previous projections. Ms. Cheikh asked if fee revenue was down due to the library moving to fine free. Ms. Rowe explained that we are not currently budgeting for fine revenue and the funds in question were from service like passports and notarization.

***Staff Association Report (Schenning & Carroll)***

Mr. Schenning reviewed the Staff Association Annual Report. Highlighting social, volunteer, and fundraising activities for 2021. Mr. Carroll updated the Board on the upcoming Polar Bear Plunge and other activities of the Association.

***Board Report (Walsh David)***

Ms. Walsh David acknowledged the work of Director Alcántara-Antoine during her first year at BCPL.

Mr. Schwab will not be seeking reappointment. Ms. Walsh David expressed the Board's thanks for his contributions to making the library better. The Board will be seeking a candidate to fill the vacancy over the next few months.

**OLD BUSINESS**

***FY 2023 Budget Request (Rowe).***

Work continues to refine the FY 2023 Budget Request. Ms. Rowe and Director Alcántara-Antoine have met with the County Administrative Officer in advance of a budget meeting with the County Executive.

**NEW BUSINESS**

***Policy – Electioneering, Political Campaigning, Protesting, and Related Activities (Edington)***

After clarification on staff wearing political campaign items, which is addressed in the Staff Handbook, the Board approved the Electioneering, Political Campaigning, Protesting, and Related Activities Policy for immediate implementation **(Cheikh)**.

***Policy – Information Tables and Materials for Public Pickup***

The Board approved the Information Tables and Materials for Public Pickup Policy for immediate implementation **(Slater/West)**.

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

The Board heard from Brandi Horseman of the Hereford Library who disagreed with the Board aligning with Baltimore County on weekly COVID-19 testing for the unvaccinated. Ms. Horseman stated the vaccine did not mitigate infection rates and unvaccinated staff were being unfairly singled out.

Ms. Walsh David thanked her for her comments.

**CLOSED SESSION AND ADJOURNMENT OF PUBLIC MEETING**

Ms. Walsh David called for a motion to close the public portion of the meeting under the General Provisions Article § 3-305 (b) to discuss a personnel issue that affects a specific individual and to perform the evaluation of the Director. Additionally, under General Provisions Article § 3-305 (b) the Board would discuss matters related to collective bargaining negotiations **(West/Schwab)**. Aye: Walsh David, Cheikh, Netzer, Schwab, Slater, West. Also present in the closed session will be Director Alcántara-Antoine.

Before moving into closed session, Ms. Walsh David confirmed that no votes would be made in the session that would need ratification and called for a motion to adjourn the public meeting **(Netzer/Slater)**. Ms. Cheikh briefly stated that it is scientific fact that vaccines are effective including the one for COVID-19. The public meeting was then adjourned.

Submitted by



Anne West

Secretary to the Board of Library Trustees