

**BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES FOR BALTIMORE COUNTY**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**May 16, 2023**

A meeting of the Board of Library Trustees was held on Tuesday, May 16, 2023, at the Cockeysville Branch. The meeting was called to order at 8:00 am by Board President Maureen Walsh David. Other Board members present were: Yara Cheikh, Havaca Ganguly, Aaron Slater, and Anne West.

Staff in attendance: Sonia Alcántara-Antoine, Chief Executive Officer; James Cooke, Chief Operations Officer; Natalie Edington, Chief Customer Experience Officer; Jen Evans, Executive Assistant; Linda Frederick, Marketing and Development Manager; Emily Gamertsfelder, Planning and Projects Manager; Justin Hartzell, Cockeysville Manager; Gerry Skaw, Fiscal Services; and Mary Wilson, Human Resources Manager. Also in attendance, Bernie Marczyk, Cornerstone.

**COMMUNICATION**

***Minutes***

The Board approved the minutes of the April 18, 2023 **(West/Ganguly)**.

***Correspondence***

None.

***Upcoming Events***

The Big Give on Friday, May 19 will raise additional funds for vital 21st century library projects. Donations support Baltimore County Public Library initiatives including digital equity, Summer Reading Challenge, bookmobiles, Storyville and building improvements. Thanks to a generous matching grant from Anne and Christopher West, every dollar donated on May 19 will be matched, up to \$50,000. The BIG Give will conclude with a sunset concert at the Towson Branch.

***Comments from the Public***

None

**REPORTS**

***CEO (Alcántara-Antoine)***

CEO Alcántara-Antoine highlighted recent BCPL award winners. The Digital Equity and Virtual Services department won Honorable Mention for the Urban Libraries Council 2023 Innovations Award. Media Creation Services won two Communicator Awards of Distinction, from the Academy of Interactive and Visual Arts. Karly Feinberg, Small Business Consultant, submitted a pitch for the 2023 Entrepreneurship and Libraries Pitch Competition. Her pitch came in 2<sup>nd</sup> place, winning \$2500 and then won the audience award, winning \$1000. Her idea is "Clean Start" which would purchase industrial cleaning equipment for use by formerly incarcerated individuals. They would also get to participate in BCPL's Entrepreneur Academy.

BCPL also had tremendous participation at the Maryland Library Association Conference. BCPL sent 26 staff members and 11 of them presented at the conference. Nay Keppler (Woodlawn Library Manager) attended as Maryland Library Association President and Anita Crawford (Technical Services Processing Supervisor) was the conference co-chair and will be the conference chair for 2024. BCPL staff enjoy a positive reputation around the state – we are seen as leaders and innovators.

The CEO then introduced Ann Beegle, the new Director of Philanthropy and Partnerships. Ms. Beegle brings over thirty years of experience in raising money for mission-based organizations, nonprofits, and political committees. She brings comprehensive experience working within local government to develop and execute strategic initiatives. The CEO shared that Ms. Beegle's recruitment marks the beginning of a long-range plan to expand our fundraising efforts at BCPL.

#### ***Statistical Dashboard (Gamertsfelder)***

Ms. Gamertsfelder shared the Statistical Dashboard which included a focus on the Cockeyville Branch. She shared that systemwide visits and circulation are down slightly due to the closure of the Catonsville Branch. Ms. Walsh David asked if Catonsville customers were going to the Arbutus Branch, and Ms. Gamertsfelder confirmed this.

#### ***Cockeyville Branch (Hartzell)***

Mr. Hartzell shared with the Board how heavily used the Cockeyville Branch is by the community. As an example, the branch saw as many as 300 curbside customers a day during the pandemic. Cockeyville is seeing use at almost pre-pandemic levels. The branch is working to reach community members who may not know the library is there as a resource and to work with CCBC to offer English for Speakers of Other Languages programming. A reorganization of the teen space has seen more youths using the branch after school.

The branch is also about to have a small renovation to update windows and seating in the children's area. The branch will remain open during the construction work, with the work area walled off from the rest of the library.

Ms. Walsh David asked if students walked to the branch from school and Mr. Hartzell affirmed that they did. She also asked who was using quiet study areas and Mr. Hartzell shared that many are using the space to telework, and more traditional tutoring has moved into other library spaces.

#### ***Public Services (Edington)***

CCEO Edington shared a customer comment. She also informed the Board about recent programs like Woodlawn's monthly Chess Night and Financial Literacy programs. The CCEO also shared that Cash Campaign of Maryland assisted more than 1,200 customers from the Randallstown Branch with their taxes this year.

Ms. Walsh David asked if the tax service was only available at Randallstown and Ms. Edington affirmed that Cash Campaign does not have the necessary staffing to expand.

#### ***Customer Service Plan (Brothers/Carl)***

Ms. Brothers and Ms. Carl reviewed the recently launched, system-wide customer service initiative. This initiative focuses on internal and external customer service and provides staff and customers with a BCPL Customer Service Philosophy. Customers can now use either a paper or online feedback form for staff recognition and suggestions. Staff have been given access to resources and training and a way to provide peer-to-peer recognition.

Ms. Walsh David expressed her approval of the initiative and asked if there would be any information available about the initiative in branches. Ms. Carl shared that banners were in branches as well as marketing on branch LED screens and information in the system newsletter.

CEO Alcántara-Antoine shared that the initiative was set to launch just as the pandemic closed the library. Ms. Brothers, Ms. Carl and their team have been working on updating and implementing the earlier plan.

#### ***Operations (Cooke)***

COO Cooke updated the Board on several projects. Demolition at Catonsville has been completed and new construction should begin soon. A first set of schematics for the Woodlawn renovation are under review. Construction is anticipated to start in June to update the glass front of the Cockeysville children's area. Renovation of Pikesville restrooms should begin in September.

#### ***DEI (Miller)***

Ms. Miller shared with the Board that a framework for adding BCPL affinity groups has been developed. Ms. Miller will review applications for new affinity groups and will conduct a survey to determine if there is sufficient staff interest to lead to their success. Ms. Miller also shared that BCPL had hired a New Americans Outreach Specialist and that BCPL's ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) conversation groups will expand to several new locations.

#### ***Fiscal Services (Skaw)***

Mr. Skaw provided the Finance Report. Revenue continues to grow particularly around meeting rooms. Expenditure remains on track for FY 23.

#### ***Human Resources (Wilson)***

Ms. Wilson shared that Human Resources has finished recruitment for the New Americans Outreach Specialist and has selected a candidate to fill the Social Worker position at Essex. She also noted that the new recruitment process has been in place for a year and has been quite successful.

Ms. Cheikh asked about staffing in Human Resources. The Human Resources Department has six staff members: Human Resources Manager, two Human Resources Generalists, Human Resources Assistant, Staff Training and Development Coordinator, and Employee and Labor Relations Officer.

Ms. Walsh David asked if hiring was still a mix of staff promotion and outside candidates. Ms. Wilson confirmed this was so.

***Cornerstone Year End (Marczyk)***

Bernie Marczyk of Cornerstone shared successes from the 2023 legislative session. This year Cornerstone assisted BCPL in successfully advocating for and securing capital project funding. This included \$2.4 million for the Catonsville renovation, \$12 million for a new Lansdowne Library, and \$3 million to be used for Randallstown. Mr. Marczyk shared that while the legislature was supportive, particular thanks should go to Speaker Jones for her support of BCPL.

Ms. Walsh David thanked Mr. Marczyk for his assistance with this session and during Maryland Library Legislative Day.

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

Ms. Walsh David expressed her pride in how incredible BCPL staff are and how much she appreciated the outward facing nature of the customer service push. Ms. Walsh David praised CEO Alcántara-Antoine for moving the system forward. She also encouraged everyone to participate in the Big Give.

**OLD BUSINESS**

***Closed Session Report (Walsh David)***

Ms. Walsh David reported on the April 18 closed session. The Board interviewed candidates to fill Mr. Slater's seat when his appointment ends on June 30. The Board selected a candidate to send forward to the County Executive for appointment. The new trustee's term will begin on July 1.

***Election of Officers (Walsh David)***

The Board elected officers to take office July 1, 2023. They are President – Yara Cheikh, Vice President – Jane Eickhoff, Treasurer – Anne West, and Secretary – Havaca Ganguly.

**NEW BUSINESS**

***Policy – Staff Handbook Section 6-2 Personal Leave (Wilson)***

Ms. Wilson shared the updated Staff Handbook Section 6-2 Personal Leave. This policy was updated to remove references to staff classifications that are no longer current and to align with the contract with IAMAW. The Board approved the Personal Leave Policy **(Slater/West)**.

***Policy – Art/Artifact/Object Donation Policy (Cooke)***

Mr. Cooke presented the draft Art/Artifact/Object Donation Policy. This policy will provide clear guidelines that allow BCPL to explain to potential donors that there are items we cannot and should not accept; help donors understand BCPL’s rights of ownership, display, and deaccession of donated objects; and allow for documented exceptions when and where warranted. The Board approved the policy for immediate implementation **(Cheikh/West)**.

**CLOSED SESSION**

Ms. Walsh David called for a motion to close the public portion of the meeting under General Provisions Article § 3-305 (b) to discuss a personnel matter **(Cheikh/West)**. CEO Alcántara-Antoine and Ms. Wilson joined the Board in closed session. Aye: Walsh David, Cheikh, Ganguly, Slater, and West. Absent: Netzer and Eickhoff.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Board resumed open session at 9:29 and immediately adjourned the meeting **(West/Slater)**.

Submitted by

Anne West

Secretary to the Board of Library Trustees