

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
WASHINGTON COUNTY FREE LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
HELD VIA ZOOM
May 12, 2021

Present: Stephen Schutte, President
Laurie Bender
Judith Chambers
Kimberly Halsey
Zach Kieffer
Al Martin
Kristine McGee
Kathy Oliver
Aaron Peterancez

Board Absent: None

Staff Present: Jenny Bakos
Elizabeth Hulett

Kathleen O'Connell
Sara McCall

Minutes

The minutes of March 10, 2021 meeting of the Board were reviewed. Ms. Oliver's motion to accept was seconded by Ms. Chambers and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Executive Director's Report

Ms. Bakos reported we are on track with our budget year despite loss of income from fines, passports and meeting rooms. She advised WCFL is applying for grants to fund projects such as the locker system at North Pointe shopping center, water bottle fillers on the drinking fountains, renovations of the second floor at the Fletcher and a new transit van for Bookmobile/Outreach services.

A contract was signed to install a security system at every branch of WCFL. Staff will be offered panic buttons as part of their lanyards if they happen to be working alone, walking to their car at night, etc.

Ms. Bakos met with county administration regarding adding new facility for Williamsport in the county's CIP. The town has been approached regarding a potential land donation. She reminded the board, we cannot move forward on this project unless the County agrees to own the new building. Once the County agrees to the project, then she can go to the state, discuss an engineering study of the potential land and start the state capital grant application process.

Director of Public Service Report

Ms. O'Connell spoke about plans for reopening and expanding hours for June 1, 2021. As of June 1, 2021, operating hours at the Fletcher will be Monday – Thursday 10:00 AM – 9:00 PM; Friday 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM and Saturday 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM. Sunday hours will resume at a later date. We are in the process of filling vacant positions, training, examining future programming options and revising furniture plans.

Director of WMRL Report

Ms. Hulett reported WMRL was recognized on the show 60 Minutes for the WHILBR photo collection. The show featured a piece on the Ritchie boys.

Financial Report

Mr. Martin reviewed both the WCFL and WMRL Financial Statements as of March 30, 2021. He pointed out that we are over budget on various expenses as one time funds are used.

Ms. Oliver moved to approve the financials, Ms. Bender seconded and the motion was unanimously carried.

Old Business

Strategic Plan: Ms. Chambers reminded board members that a draft of the strategic plan was sent out to the board. The next step is for board members to review a final copy, adopt and send to the State Library. Ms. Chambers motioned for a final version of the strategic plan be sent to the board for an electronic vote with Ms. Bender seconding the motion.

Fine Free: Ms. Bakos has researched this topic and found obstacles to going fine free at this time. WMRL Polaris as their operating system for all three library systems. The system configuration would be cumbersome if one county charged fines and another did not, as the systems try to complement each other's collections. At this time, the other two counties in our Region are not fiscally able to operate fine free. As a conservative region, fines are the one area we are able to show the ability to financial support our organization.

Policy Review/Update:

Volunteers, Interns & Summer Helpers Policy -- Mr. Martin moved to accept as presented and Ms. Bender seconded the motion with unanimous approval from the board.

Continuing Education and Tuition Reimbursement – Ms. Oliver requested replacing the word “should” with “shall.” Ms. Chambers moved to accept the policy with the recommended change. Mr. Martin seconded the motion with unanimous approval from the board.

Computer use with Fine/Fee Balance – Administration and staff asked this policy be removed as it is a barrier to patron usage. Mr. Martin made the motion to remove this policy, Ms. Oliver seconded the motion and the board unanimously agreed to remove this policy.

New Business

Distribution of funds to the Endowment: Ms. Bakos asked to transfer a portion of the projected FY 21 surplus to the endowment to support long-term, expensive projects. She presented three areas to designate the funds. Ms. Chambers moved to approve the transfer and Mr. Kieffer seconded the motion with unanimous approval from the board.

Western Maryland Regional Library Reorganization: The Maryland State Library contacted Ms. Bakos and Ms. Hulett regarding initiatives to reorganize the Regional library infrastructure. Currently,

Maryland law states the largest library in the regional system has governing power over the library system (Md. Code, Educ. § 23-202). For WMRL, WCFL is the largest system, thus the board of trustees as the board for WMRL. The board of trustees for WCFL appointed an advisory board consisting of the regional library directors and assistant directors to work through routine practices such as the draft budget. The other regional libraries in the state of Maryland have moved away from this model and function differently.

The change the state library is proposing is that each regional library have their own functioning board of trustees. Staff concerns pertain to benefits (which they are currently under WCFL health insurance policy, etc.) and increases in administrative costs that are currently absorbed by WCFL. Staff are working on analyzing the costs associated with these changes. An increase in administrative fees will reduce the services WMRL can provide.

Discussion ensued regarding the legal status of WMRL. Currently, WMRL operates under WCFL's policies, procedures, tax ID, tax exempt status, a division of the financial audit and included in WCFL's 990.

Ms. Bakos will send out the proposed legislation after this meeting. Members of the board asked to have the current legislation sent out as well. As a board, members would like to evaluate the information to form an educated opinion for the situation.

Fletcher Renovation: As WCFL reopens, the Fletcher does not have enough office space for staff. Ms. Bakos provided information on a plan to add office space on the second floor of the Fletcher and move the security team into the new office space. Ms. Oliver moved to proceed with Ms. Chambers seconding the motion and the board approved unanimously.

Teen Advocate: Mr. Schutte and Ms. Chambers met with the Teen Library Council and would like the board to consider a non-voting position on the board for the Teens. Ms. Bakos asked that Mr. Schutte, Ms. Chambers and Ms. McGee to provide a framework/plan, including by-law adjustments for the next meeting.

Board Comments

Board members feel staff are doing a great job getting through the pandemic. They are pleased with the fiscal responsibility and forward thinking shown by staff.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 21, 2021 at 12:00 noon at the Fletcher branch in room 334.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenny L. Bakos

JENNY L. BAKOS
Secretary