

BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES FOR BALTIMORE COUNTY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

June 18, 2024

A meeting of the Board of Library Trustees was held on Tuesday, June 18, 2024, at the Towson Library. The meeting was called to order at 8:04 am by Board Vice President Jane Eickhoff. Other Board members present were: Maureen Walsh David, Claudia Cruz, Michael Netzer, and Anne West. Ms. Cheikh joined by phone and Ms. Ganguly was absent.

Staff in attendance: Sonia Alcántara-Antoine, Chief Executive Officer; James Cooke, Chief Operations Officer; Natalie Edington, Chief Customer Experience Officer; Julie Brophy, Adult and Community Engagement Manager; Ann Beegle, Philanthropy & Partnerships Director; Jen Evans, Executive Assistant; Emily Gamertsfelder, Planning Projects & Data Manager; Robin Linton, Human Resources Manager; Jonathan O'Neill, Employee & Labor Relations Officer; Gerry Skaw, Fiscal Services; Brian Staples, Human Resources; and Kinshasa Vargas-Pile, Loch Raven Manager.

COMMUNICATION

Minutes

The Board approved the minutes of the May 21, 2024, and June 11, 2024, meetings (**Walsh David/West**).

Correspondence

None.

Upcoming Events

Highlighted was the upcoming provision of summer meals at 12 locations. There will also be a No Kid Hungry Press Conference, Friday June 21 at North Point.

Comments from the Public

None.

REPORTS

CEO (Alcántara-Antoine)

This past month, the CEO participated in ULC's CEO's Roundtable focused on service to unhoused customers. Library CEOs from across the country had conversations about how libraries are an integral part of the solution to one of society's most wicked problems. Last week, the CEO had the opportunity to present to a group of NPR Executive Directors from stations across the country. The topic was how public libraries, as a public good and as public institutions, have evolved and how they weather political and cultural storms.

The common theme at both was how libraries innovate to meet their community's needs and how they pivot when things do not work out quite as planned. The CEO wants BCPL to always be

thinking about what our community needs and how to push beyond the boundaries of what we know or what we already do. This is done through trial and error, trying something new and exploring how we can have an impact or if we had an impact at all. This might be a small pilot project, or it could be teaming up with a likeminded partner that can extend BCPL's reach and amplify impact. It might also be finding new partners when the original partner moves in a different direction. Not everything will work out as planned. Being bold, stretching beyond the library's traditional role, evolving, and trying something new means figuring out how to cope when things go awry, learning from failure, and being more resourceful and more resilient so that we can try again.

The CEO introduced Julie Brophy, Manager of Adult and Community Engagement to talk about two BCPL initiatives that did not work out the way we had initially planned: the social worker initiative and the Mobile Library Law Center concept. Both were groundbreaking ideas for BCPL and had tremendous impact while we had them and are being revamped based on lessons learned.

Mobile Library Law Center – Brophy

Ms. Brophy shared that the Mobile Library Law Center (MLLC) was a grant funded vehicle designed with staff from Maryland Legal Aid's Community Lawyering project. During service, the MLLC served 1078 customers leading to 124 cases being opened and many individuals' cases being resolved. Leadership change and restructuring at Maryland Legal Aid means they have ceased participation in the MLLC.

In January, the Mobile Library Law Center service was restructured and rebranded into the Mobile Library Support Center (or MLSC). This is a proactive outreach initiative committed to extending crucial services found at BCPL to underserved, or under resourced communities. During site visits, the MLSC partners with external collaborations to bring more services to those communities.

MLSC has been in service for six months and has seen a rise in the number of customers served per stop. Overall, the transition to the new service model has been positive.

Ms. Brophy also discussed changes to the social worker services provided by BCPL. The service was started with a grant to fund three social worker positions to be hired over 3 years, covering all 19 branches – supervised by a library staff member rather than a board-certified social work supervisor. This model ended service in December 2023. At that time, 1,736 customers had been provided with direct assistance.

After discussions with the social workers on staff, both during their tenure and as exit interviews, it was decided to adjust the service model and look at social services models at libraries. As a result, the decision was made to hire a board-certified social worker supervisor to provide direct supervision and allow BCPL to broaden the hiring pool. Adjustments will also be made to focus service on high need branches with high social vulnerability. Assistance will still be available to other branches when needed.

In April, the Social Work Supervisor, Ellie Camlin started work. Ms. Camlin has visited branches and departments to assess community needs and staff training needs before additional social workers are hired.

Ms. Cheikh expressed the Board's appreciation for the update and for the Adult and Community Engagement departments' flexibility.

Customer Experience (Edington)

Ms. Edington introduced Kinshasa Vargas-Pile, the new Loch Raven Library Manager. Ms. Vargas-Pile comes to BCPL from Enoch Pratt Free Library.

While the Catonsville Branch has been closed for renovation, the staff has continued community outreach. Catonsville staff expanded Library@Lunch with monthly visits to 4 schools including a mental health residential facility for youth. Staff visited Westside Men's Shelter providing resume and online job search assistance. They also register men for long term lending hotspots and Chromebooks and partnered with Sharped Dress Van to provide interview clothes.

The Summer Reading kickoff at Cockeysville was attended by over 1,500 customers.

Operations (Cooke)

The Catonsville renovation continues to make progress. Permitting issues have been resolved and Property Management is working to facilitate the arrival of delayed materials for the studios. Mr. Cooke was very appreciative of the work of Property Management on resolving issues. The renovation of the restrooms at Pikesville will begin shortly. Temporary restroom trailers are being set up while the public restrooms are unavailable. Over the last several years \$3 million has been spent on upgrades to Pikesville. A project to replace the lighting at Storyville Rosedale has been completed.

BCPL will be recruiting a Capital Project Manager to work with the COO.

Fiscal Services (Skaw)

Mr. Skaw provided the Finance Report. There were no notable changes from last month.

Human Resources (Linton)

Ms. Linton shared statistics from the recent recruitments by Human Resources. Ms. Linton spent much of the last month updating key Human Resources policies presented at the meeting.

Statistical Dashboard – Gamertsfelder

This month's statistical focus related to digital equity.

Foundation Report – Beegle

Ms. Beegle shared that the Philanthropy and Partnerships department added a position for an Individual Giving and Engagement Coordinator. That position was filled with an internal candidate, and the department will now recruit to fill the vacancy that was created. The staff of Philanthropy and Partnerships also attended professional development training from the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

After assessing the impact of events hosted by the Foundation, the decision was made to sunset the Toast Among Ghosts event. The Foundation will be moving away from a transactional approach and focusing on donor cultivation, growth, and retention through relationship building. This will include donor events like author lunches and library tours.

Ms. Beegle was also happy to announce the Foundation was the recipient of a gift of \$20,000 from the remaining campaign funds of former Councilwoman Cathy Bevins. Ms. Beegle also presented a check to BCPL for \$343,000 to reimburse funds spent on projects supported by the Foundation.

Labor Relations – O’Neill

Mr. O’Neill shared that the new Collective Bargaining Agreement (FY 25 Addendum) was signed by the Library CEO after passage of annual budget. Human Resources has worked collaboratively with the union to update key policies to address language and implementation required by the FY 2025 Agreement.

The FY 2025 Addendum will take effect July 1 and includes a 3% mid-year COLA (tied to level approved by Baltimore County), Longevity Pay, Exempt Compensation, Bilingual Pay, and an increase in the hourly premium for part-time staff working on Sundays. Support from Ms. Linton, the new Human Resources Director, has expedited the required collaboration process.

Individual training for new supervisors continues and a new training system, including full contract training, relevant for various levels of supervisory/manager responsibility is being developed.

The Labor Management Committee has worked with Human Resources and the union to continue an effective exchange of ideas. Most recently, the new Temporary Employee category language was provided in advance to the union for input.

A new system for automatic dues deductions was developed in partnership with Digital Equity and Virtual Services and the Baltimore County Office of Information Technology. An assessment of the process will be conducted by Fiscal Service at the start of FY 2025.

An Arbitration hearing regarding Introductory Period language in Contract has been set for June 26.

Mr. O’Neill summarized that the new Human Resources director provided crucial input into the drafting of proposed policy amendments and initiatives. Open communication with the union,

and consideration of the union's position, is reflected in low grievance and arbitration statistics. The shows BCPL's ongoing collaboration and willingness to partner toward solutions with the union.

Board Report (Cheikh)

Ms. Cheikh thanked the incredible staff of BCPL for all the wonderful programming this month and the staff that gave reports at this meeting. The full agenda spoke to the vitality of BCPL as an organization. There is exciting and worthwhile work being done at BCPL through a wide range of programs and services.

Ms. Cheikh thanked the Foundation for their efforts during The Big Give. Most Board members made gifts for the event, and she encouraged everyone to participate in this fundraiser which helps support BCPL programming. She also thanked Ms. Walsh David for chairing the nomination committee, composed of Ms. Walsh David, Ms. Ganguly, and Ms. Cruz.

Ms. Cheikh acknowledge that this is Jane Eickhoff's last Board meeting. The Board is hopeful that the County Executive will appoint Ms. Eickhoff's replacement before our July meeting. Ms. Cheikh spoke on behalf of the entire board past and present who had the good fortune to work with Ms. Eickhoff to share how much she will be missed. Ms. Eickhoff was a meticulous, thoughtful colleague, and an exceptional source of institutional knowledge. A citation from Senator West and a gift from the Board were presented to Ms. Eickhoff.

OLD BUSINESS

June 11, 2024, Closed Session Report (Cheikh)

Ms. Cheikh reported that a personnel discussion around the evaluation of the CEO was held in Closed Session. The Board did not vote on any business.

NEW BUSINESS

Election of Officers – Cheikh

The Board unanimously elected officers for FY 2025 as follows: President – Yara Cheikh, Vice President – Anne West, Treasurer – Havaca Ganguly, Secretary – Claudia Cruz.

Policy – Staff Handbook Temporary Employment (Linton)

Staff Handbook Section 4.2 (a) Types of Employment - Temporary Employment Policy will allow BCPL flexibility to meet interim staffing needs. This policy also gives authority to terminate Temporary Employees to the Chief Executive Officer. The Board approved the Temporary Employment Policy **(West/Cruz)**.

Policy – Staff Handbook Exempt Compensatory Time (Linton)

Updates to Staff Handbook Section 5-16 Exempt Compensatory Time will make it clear when management is authorized to grant compensatory time for exempt employees and provides a

clear definition of emergencies. The Board approved updates to the Exempt Compensatory Time Policy **(Walsh David/Cruz)**.

Policy – Staff Handbook Longevity Pay Policy (Linton)

Steps for longevity were included in the 2022 salary plan developed by consultants. Longevity Steps are part of the agreement with the union that will go into effect on July 1, 2024. The Board approved the Longevity Pay Policy and thanked Ms. Linton and her team for their work **(Walsh David/West)**. Ms. Linton thanked the Human Resources team, Mr. Cooke, and Ms. Edington for their assistance in developing the policy.

Policy – Recording Studio Policy and User Agreement (Edington)

Due to the unique equipment and service the recording studios will provide, a policy and user agreement was considered necessary to address the expectations and responsibilities of customers, BCPL, and other parties. The Board approved the Recording Studio Policy and User Agreement for use at the Catonsville Library **(West/Cruz)**. Users of the studio will sign the agreement after being trained on the equipment to the Recording Studio Specialist or other Catonsville staff.

Ms. Eickhoff called for a motion to close the public portion of the meeting under General Provisions Article § 3-305 (b) to discuss a personnel matter at 9:20 am **(West/Cruz)**. Aye: Cheikh, Cruz, Eickhoff, Netzer, Walsh David, and West. Absent: Ganguly. CEO Alcantara-Antoine, Ms. Linton, Mr. O’Neill, and Mr. Staples were present at the Closed Session.

The Board resumed open session at 9:29 am. Ms. Eickhoff reported that the Board had voted unanimously to authorize the personnel actions discussed in closed session.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board meeting adjourned at 9:30 am **(Walsh David/Cruz)**.

Submitted by

Anne West

Acting as Secretary to the Board of Library Trustees