

BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES FOR BALTIMORE COUNTY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

October 18, 2022

A meeting of the Board of Library Trustees was held on Tuesday, October 18, 2022, at the North Point Library. The meeting was called to order at 8:00 am by Board President Maureen Walsh David. Other Board members present were: Yara Cheikh, Jane Eickhoff, and Havaca Ganguly.

Staff in attendance: Sonia Alcántara-Antoine, Chief Executive Officer; James Cooke, Chief Operations Officer; Natalie Edington, Chief Customer Experience Officer; Jen Evans, Executive Assistant; Emily Gamertsfelder, Planning & Projects Manager; Cassie Miller, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer; Helen Rowe, Fiscal Services Manager; Elizabeth Storms, North Point Library Manager; and Mary Wilson, Human Resources Manager.

Ms. Walsh David announced a change to the agenda, acceptance of the FY 2022 Audit will move to the November meeting agenda.

COMMUNICATION

Minutes

The Board approved the minutes of the September 20, 2022, meeting (**Eickhoff/Ganguly**).

Correspondence

None.

Upcoming Events

The Owings Mills Branch will be hosting author April Ryan on November 18.

Comments from the Public

The Board heard comments from Nicole Dvorak. Ms. Dvorak expressed concerns about the inclusion of staff in areas of accessibility.

Ms. Walsh David thanked her for her comments.

REPORTS

CEO (Alcántara-Antoine)

Over the summer the Board changed the title of Director to Chief Executive Officer, which more accurately describes the work the CEO does as the head of a busy and leading library organization and puts BCPL in alignment with peer urban public libraries. With this change there will also be others that are related.

James Cooke's title will change from Assistant Director to Chief Operations Officer. Mr. Cooke will now supervise almost all of the non-public facing departments. This will allow these departments to work more efficiently to support public service.

Natalie Edington's title will change from Assistant Director to Chief Customer Experience Officer. All 19 branches plus Adult and Community Engagement, Customer Support Services, Youth and Family Engagement will now be supervised by Ms. Edington. This consolidation will facilitate more streamlined customer service and more collaboration. Ms. Edington will also supervise the three new Regional Managers, who will now directly supervise the branch managers and the Security Coordinator. Ms. Edington will introduce them at the November Board meeting.

CEO Alcántara-Antoine indicated that there will be more changes forthcoming, including the addition of a Director of Development position this year and eventually a Chief Community Engagement Officer.

BCPL is committed to investing in staff. Of the 137 vacant positions recruited for last year, 83 (60%) were filled by internal candidates. Other investments in staff include a new pay scale as of January 1, 2023; a new recruiting process that strives to eliminate bias and allows all candidates to compete on a level playing field; the new Library Supervisor position, which streamlines management in the branches; Library Staff Day, a full day dedicated to the growth and development of all staff; and the addition of 2 key positions to HR – Staff Training & Development Officer and Employee & Labor Relations Officer, both of which directly support staff.

Staff are BCPL's most valuable asset. CEO Alcántara-Antoine expressed her gratitude to the staff for all their hard work and dedication but also the Board of Library Trustees for their steadfast support of our BCPL staff.

North Point Library (Storms)

Elizabeth Storms, North Point Branch Manager, shared information about the community served by the branch. The community of Dundalk is a blue-collar community where there has been considerable economic upheaval. While new industry is slowly returning to the area, 40% of families have an income of \$50,000 or less. This makes the library's role providing digital access crucial. Ms. Storms reported that this past summer saw the branch return to more normal operations, with numbers near those seen before the pandemic. The branch works closely with local schools and provided programming to go with the summer lunch distribution. They have recently partnered with Youth and Family Engagement to provide library service during lunch at a local high school.

Ms. Cheikh asked what forms of transportation youth used to receive meals. Ms. Storms responded that most youth walked or were driven to the branch.

Customer Experience (Edington)

Ms. Edington reported that the Hereford Branch hosted a well-attended event for homeschoolers. The Cockeysville branch provided almost seamless customer service on a day without power, circulating 11,000 items. BCPL hosted the Urban Libraries Council at a reception at Owings Mills. This event featured graduates of BCPL's Entrepreneur Academy providing catering and a pop-up shop for attendees. BCPL will be continuing Dialogs on Race and leading programs for One Maryland, One Book.

Operations (Cooke)

Mr. Cooke reported on a busy month. The Randallstown meeting room lobby project has been completed. New office space has been created for the manager at Loch Raven. Parking lot projects have been completed at Arbutus, Perry Hall, and Sollers Point. A project is underway at White Marsh to provide improved lighting and new shelving. New self-check machines have been installed at Cockeysville. The bid package for the Catonsville renovation will be posted in the very near future. Baltimore County has engaged Quinn Evans as the principal architect for the Woodlawn renovation project. The community engagement and early design phase will begin soon.

Mr. Cooke also encouraged everyone to visit the exhibit from the Baltimore Watercolor Society on view at Hereford.

Fiscal Services (Rowe)

Ms. Rowe provided the Board with the financial summary. Due to the timing of payments, revenues are currently ahead of expenses. Overall, the budget is where it should be for this portion of the fiscal year.

Ms. Ganguly asked about expenditures for salaries. Ms. Rowe explained that in January, salaries would be rising for all staff and the budget reflects funding for that purpose.

Ms. Walsh David inquired about grant funds. Ms. Rowe assured her that all grants will be spent by the end of the fiscal year and BCPL is seeking reimbursement of funds as necessary.

Human Resources Report (Wilson)

Ms. Wilson shared the Human Resources Report. Human Resources continues to recruit staff to fill a number of positions. This includes recruitment for vacancies created by the promotion of internal candidates. She also reports that 345 staff participated in Staff Day, including a significant number of part-time staff.

Ms. Walsh David was pleased to hear that there continue to be promotional opportunities for staff.

Statistical Dashboard (Gamertsfelder)

Ms. Gamertsfelder shared the Statistical Dashboard. She noted that September's metrics were the most in line with pre-pandemic number to date.

Ms. Cheikh asked if the work of the libraries changed once students returned to school. Ms. Edington responded that there is a shift of focus. Particularly to afterschool programming.

Ms. Walsh David asked if we continue to see new student accounts and if those students received library cards. Ms. Gamertsfelder shared that the majority of student accounts are added in August but there are some added all year. Students do not receive a specific card, they

use the identification used at school or their name with an additional piece of information to identify the correct account.

Operational Plan (Gamertsfelder)

Ms. Gamertsfelder shared the end of year report for the FY 2022 Operational Plan and an update on the status of the plan during the first quarter of FY 2023. Goals for both years were adjusted as we move through the early post-pandemic period and get back to more normal operations and use.

Ms. Walsh David commented that it was amazing the amount of work BCPL staff were able to accomplish during this time. She also appreciated that the plan is a living document that can be adjusted as needed.

Ms. Eickhoff shared her feeling that this was a good plan that is manageable, workable, and comprehensive.

Board (Walsh David)

Ms. Walsh David attended the Citizens for Maryland Libraries annual meeting. She encouraged the Board to go to their website to view videos from the event. She praised BCPL's Media Services department for their work during the event. She shared some statistics from the meeting around digital equity in Maryland and is pleased that this is a priority for BCPL.

Ms. Walsh David met with the Board President from Cleveland Public Library this month and was pleased to note that BCPL is providing service that is on par with larger library systems.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (Miller)

Ms. Miller presented the first quarter DEI report. BCPL will be working on services to New Americans over the next year. This will be an assessment of our current services to this group as well as an opportunity to identify deficiencies. It is hoped that a staff member specializing in this area can join the staff in FY 2024.

Ms. Miller has been training those who will serve as diversity representatives on hiring panels. The focus of the training has been in identifying bias. Similar training will be provided for managers.

Ms. Miller has been working with Ms. Gamertsfelder to create a model for launching and maintaining new staff affinity groups. The Black Library Workers Affinity Group has been a success for BCPL and Ms. Miller looks forward to new groups in the near future.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Policy – Specialist in Residence (Edington)

The Board approved an In Residence policy that will be used by BCPL to bring in subject-matter experts and artists to support the library’s strategic goals **(Cheikh/Ganguly)**.

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

The Board approved updates to the Electioneering Policy to add guidance for press conferences and the publicity for activities covered in the policy **(Cheikh/Ganguly)**.

Policy – Staff Handbook Section 6-19 Floating Holiday Leave (Wilson)

The Board approved changes to the Floating Holiday Leave Policy to better align with the current MOU **(Eickhoff/Cheikh)**.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 am **(Cheikh/Eickhoff)** and the Board was given a tour of the North Point Library by Ms. Storms.

Submitted by

Yara Cheikh

Acting as Secretary to the Board of Library Trustees