

BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES
North East Branch Library
Tuesday, February 18, 2025
MINUTES

ATTENDANCE: Jennifer Borro, Ravi Gupta, Shirley McCrary-Simmons, Joanne Morton

ABSENT: Erin Dymowski, Alix Gilbert, Jonathan Stauffer

STAFF: Rachel Wright, Executive Director; Adele Cruise, Operations Manager; Frazier Walker, Communications & Development Manager

GUEST: None

CALL TO ORDER

Joanne Morton, Chair

Call to order at 4:08PM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from January, 2025 were filed as written and unanimously approved by the Trustees.

CITIZEN COMMENT

None

REVIEW OF AGENDA

No changes were requested.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Adele Cruise, Operations Manager

The Library is 58% through the fiscal year. Revenues are at 60% and expenditures are slightly below at 49%. There are no areas of concern at this time. The Board unanimously approved the financial report to be filed for audit.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Finance Committee: Treasurer Ravi Gupta shared the Finance Committee met to review the monthly financials, as well as the funding request for the FY26 Operating Budget, which Executive Director then overviewed for the full Board of Trustees. Priorities in the funding request include COLA and merit increases for staff, as well as the addition of positions to address gaps in operations and/or service. Additional funding is requested for the annual increases to library contracts and operating costs. The total funding request represents a 12% increase over FY25. Following Board approval, the funding request is submitted to the County Executive, who must submit his FY26 Budget to the County Council by April 1, 2025.
2. Governance Committee: Chair Morton is collecting signed Conflict of Interest forms from the Trustees, which will then be filed with Library Administration. The Public Comment policy remains under review with the most recent draft available for review on the Board portal. Trustees are asked to provide comment in the hopes of voting soon.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Rachel Wright, Director

1. System Data – Director Wright reviewed circulation data as of the end of January 2025. The Audiovisual line continues to decrease as changes are being made to the collection across the system. There appears to be a growing interest in DVDs as streaming services continue to increase their prices. Perryville's circulation is not yet where it was before the closure, though attendance is approximately the same. Many students visit the branch, especially in the afterschool hour to use spaces and services, but do not necessarily check out books. CCPL will continue to work to grow adult attendance and circulation as we engage the community and they update their routines.

2. Library Updates

- a. Services: Director Wright highlighted upcoming Black History Month programs such as "Black Wall Street" and online watch parties in the North East Branch Library and Elkton Branch Library for Michelle Coles, author of *Black was the Ink* on 2/27. "Tracing the Life of Frederick Douglass" is a program for tween students in conjunction with the exhibit "Frederick Douglass: Advocate for Equality" that is displayed at the North East Branch Library. Upcoming featured programs include Meet & Greet Mystery authors on March 8 at the North East Branch, Longwood Gardens' Community Read running through May, and on Saturday, April 26 at the North East Branch Library, "Taste of India" made possible with a grant from the Cecil County Arts Council.
- b. Spaces: Architects Chuck and Shannon Wray from Quinn Evans hosted community sessions in Elkton on January 29th. 12 attendees representing business and nonprofits attended the breakfast, 15 teens provided input in the afternoon, and 40 community members attended the evening session. Director Wright and Frazier Walker also met with educators from CCPS to solicit input. Some themes emerged from the meetings such as maintaining a good, strong collection; the need for additional study rooms; a dedicated space for teens; flexible spaces for meeting and programs; and consideration of the history of Elkton. Director Wright will present to the Mayor and Elkton Commissioners on Wednesday, March 19 at noon.
- c. Staff: Library associates have been hired for 2 vacant positions in Elkton and North East and will be starting over the next month or two. The HR department will continue to recruit and work to reduce vacancies. The 2025 MLA/DLA annual library conference will be in Ocean City, MD in May. Library Trustees are invited to attend.
- d. Support: County Executive Adam Streight visited the North East Branch Library on January 28 for a tour of the branch and discussion about the Library. We are currently running a National Library Lover's Month campaign for February to encourage patrons and the community to share what they love about the Library. These notes will be used for future advocacy.

3. Legislative Updates: - Director Wright attended Library Legislative Day in Annapolis and met with the multiple members of Cecil County's delegation, including Delegate Hornberger, Senator Hershey, Senator Gallion, Delegate Jacobs, and others – all of whom are supportive of Libraries. Director Wright overviewed this session's library legislation initiatives.

4. Friends Foundation: Save the date for the Books, Bourbon & BBQ event planned for Saturday, May 3rd. Tickets are now on sale.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Proposed Funding Request for the FY26 Operating Budget (Vote)

Trustee Jennifer Borro made a motion to approve the FY26 Funding Request for the Operating Budget, which was seconded by Trustee Shirley McCrary-Simmons. The motion was approved.

CALENDAR

1. Funding Request for the FY26 Operating Budget due to the County Executive - March 3, 2025
2. County's Prior Year Financial and Gift Disclosure – Mailed Feb/March
3. County Executive Submits FY26 Budget to the County Council - April 1, 2025
4. National Library Week; April 6-12
5. Books, Bourbon, and BBQ; Saturday, May 3rd at the North East Branch Library

CLOSED SESSION

As provided in the Annotated Code of Maryland, State Government Article, and Section 3-305, the Board may meet in closed session for discussion of a Personnel matter. A motion to close the meeting was made by Trustee Shirley McCrary-Simmons, which was seconded by Trustee Jennifer Borro. The meeting moved into closed session 5:16pm.

ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Shirley McCrary-Simmons made a motion to end the closed session and adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Trustee Jennifer Borro. Both the closed session and the meeting adjourned at 6:13 pm.

The next Board of Library Trustees meeting is Tuesday, February 18th, 2025.

Respectfully Submitted,



Joanne Morton, Chair