

BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES FOR BALTIMORE COUNTY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

February 21, 2023

A meeting of the Board of Library Trustees was held on Tuesday, February 21, 2023, at the Lansdowne Branch. The meeting was called to order at 8:05 am by Board President Maureen Walsh David. Other Board members present were: Yara Cheikh, Havaca Ganguly, and Mike Netzer.

Ms. Eickhoff, Mr. Slater and Ms. West arrived after the CEO's report.

Staff in attendance: Sonia Alcántara-Antoine, Chief Executive Officer; James Cooke, Chief Operations Officer; Natalie Edington, Chief Customer Experience Officer; Cynthia Swanson-Farmarco, Lansdowne Library Manager; Jen Evans, Executive Assistant; Emily Gamertsfelder, Planning and Projects Manager; Helen Rowe, Fiscal Services Manager; and Mary Wilson, Human Resources Manager.

COMMUNICATION

Minutes

The Board approved the minutes of the January 17, 2023 **(Ganguly/Cheikh)**.

Correspondence

The Board has received additional correspondence with updates on the status of the Fink bequest as it is probated in Wyoming.

Upcoming Events

The CEO highlighted *Dialogs on Race: Gun Violence*, on Tuesday, February 21 and community engagement sessions that will be taking place at Woodlawn on Thursday March, 2.

Comments from the Public

None

REPORTS

CEO (Alcántara-Antoine)

A contingent of 14 from BCPL recently participated in Maryland Library Legislative Day, including Board members Maureen Walsh David and Yara Cheikh. This event occurs annually and representatives from many public libraries visit legislators in Annapolis. This year included citations for Maryland libraries and included recognition of BCPL from Del. Ebersole from the floor of the House of Delegates. During one-on-one meetings with legislators, BCPL advocates highlighted how BCPL is serving its community, discussed ongoing capital needs, and requested support for key legislation that directly impacts BCPL. The week culminated with a presentation to the Baltimore County Delegation.

There is momentum on several key capital projects, including Catonsville Library which just closed to the public for a year's long renovation, and Woodlawn Library which will hold a community engagement event on March 2 to kick off the design study leading to a renovation and expansion.

Ms. Eickhoff, Mr. Slater, and Ms. West arrived

Statistical Dashboard (Gamertsfelder)

Ms. Gamertsfelder shared the Statistical Dashboard which included some items specific to the Lansdowne Library.

Lansdowne Branch Report (Swanson-Farmarco)

Ms. Swanson-Farmarco shared information about the community served by the Lansdowne Branch. The Lansdowne community has one of the highest Social Vulnerability Index Scores in Baltimore County, with more than 40% of households making under \$50,000. Branch visits for Lansdowne have risen significantly over the last months. The branch works diligently find ways to support the community.

Ms. West asked if it was anticipated that Catonsville customers would use the Lansdowne Branch during the closure of Catonsville for remodeling. CEO Alcántara-Antoine shared that it is more likely customers would go to Woodlawn, which is closer.

CEO Alcántara-Antoine stressed that Lansdowne is an example of how the system does so much with the limited space available and how vital libraries are to the community.

Customer Experience (Edington)

CCEO Edington highlighted the programs provided by BCPL for Black History Month and Book Lovers Bash.

Ms. Walsh David shared how much she personally enjoys Book Lovers Bash.

Operations (Cooke)

COO Cooke shared that there are 12 active projects underway or under design. The Catonsville Branch has closed to the public to allow staff to empty the building for the start of the renovation. It is anticipated that the branch will be closed for 12 to 15 months. BCPL may be awarded additional State Capital Grant funding to offset the cost of the project. BCPL and Property Management intend to conduct a feasibility study in FY 2024 about renovation of the Lansdowne Branch.

Ms. Cheikh asked if the additional capital funds would be used for additions to the Catonsville renovation. COO Cook shared that the additional funding would be used towards the current cost of the project.

Fink Estate Report (Cooke)

BCPL was one of a number of local institutions to benefit from the estate of Mrs. Lyndon J. Fink. To date her gift to BCPL has been \$1.4 million. These funds have been used to meet branch needs for furnishings and fixtures, an area where budgeted funds rarely meets actual system needs. COO Cook has used funds to provide every branch with some needed furniture or fixtures.

Mr. Netzer asked if BCPL had a naming policy or would be recognizing Mrs. Fink with a plaque. Ms. Walsh David confirmed that there is a Naming Policy. Approval of some kind of recognition was also expressed by the rest of the Board.

Fiscal Services (Rowe)

Ms. Rowe provided the Board with the financial summary. Ms. Rowe highlighted salary costs, noting that the new salary scale went into effect January 1st. She also noted that open positions are being filled and it is anticipated that expenditures will remain on target with an anticipated \$1.3 million being added to fund balance.

Ms. Walsh David asked if the variance in grants was a timing issue and Ms. Rowe confirmed that as the case.

Mr. Netzer asked if energy costs were going up. Ms. Rowe affirmed that this was anticipated and that BCPL would receive projected costs from Baltimore County.

Human Resources Report (Wilson)

Ms. Wilson shared that interviews for Director of Philanthropy and Partnerships would be taking place soon.

Operational Plan (Gamertsfelder)

Ms. Gamertsfelder shared highlights from the 2nd quarter Operations Plan Progress Report. These included the removal of the identification requirement to use a public PC, eliminating a service barrier, and that BCPL is ahead of target on some areas of programming.

Ms. Eickhoff complimented Ms. Gamertsfelder on the format of the report.

Ms. West asked about camera kits. CCEO Edington shared that the kits were designed for small business owners with a 35mm camera and light box to help them take photographs to promote their business.

Ms. Cheikh asked if BCPL's teen Discord server activity was moderated. CCEO Edington indicated that it was.

Board (Walsh David)

Ms. Walsh David shared her pleasure at attending Legislative Day and meeting members of Baltimore County's delegation. She expressed her appreciation of how knowledgeable and well prepared BCPL's attending staff members were.

Ms. Walsh David acknowledged Councilman Pat Young, who was in attendance as an observer at the meeting. She expressed her appreciation of the relationship that has been built between BCPL and Baltimore County and how that has positively impacted projects like the upcoming Woodlawn expansion.

Ms. Walsh David also shared that Mr. Slater's term on the Board would end in June. The Board will be recruiting a member to fill his seat over the next few months.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

FY 2024 Budget (Alcántara-Antoine/Rowe)

CEO Alcántara-Antoine presented the draft FY 2024 Budget Request. She stated that in FY23, BCPL has been focused on being fiscally conservative, living within the budget, and exemplifying good stewardship of taxpayer dollars by making data-driven decisions to best allocate resources. All of this was in anticipation of the new pay scale that began in January 2023; the implementation of Library Service Assistant position and general restructuring; and the cost of resuming Sunday service hours in FY 2024.

Ms. Rowe then walked the Board through BCPL's budget request. Overall, BCPL is requesting an increase of 5.33% from the County General Fund. It is anticipated that State Aid for Libraries will increase by 1.54%, salary costs will rise 4.43 %, the cost for benefits will rise 8.42 %, and the cost of utilities will rise 26.24%. BCPL has no control over a number of these costs and receives budget numbers from Baltimore County.

Board members asked a number of questions about specific areas of the budget. Ms. Cheikh asked about OPEB and pension contributions costs, and Mr. Netzer asked about State pension contributions. Ms. Rowe shared that numbers for those items were provided by Baltimore County and the State. Ms. Ganguly inquired whether Baltimore County anticipated a revenue increase and Ms. Rowe shared that the County has a Spending Affordability Committee to advise the Executive Office and Council.

From the audience, Councilman Young shared some insights into the budget process. He shared the need to consider the possibility of some kind of recession in the coming fiscal year and the necessity of the Spending Affordability Committee report in decision making.

Ms. Walsh David expressed her appreciation for the Councilman's remarks. She also praised CEO Alcántara-Antoine and Ms. Rowe for their work building relationships with the Office of Budget and Finance.

The Board approved the FY 2024 Budget Request (Cheikh/West).

CLOSED SESSION

Before calling for a motion to close the meeting, Ms. Walsh David informed attendees that the public portion of the meeting would not resume. Rather, she would make a statement about any decisions made in the closed session at the March meeting. She then called for a motion to close the public portion of the meeting under the General Provisions Article § 3-305 (b) to conduct the performance evaluation of the CEO, and to discuss the reappointment of a Trustee (**Eickhoff/West**). Aye: Walsh David, Cheikh, Eickhoff, Ganguly, Netzer, Slater, and West. Also present in the closed session will be CEO Alcántara-Antoine.

ADJOURNMENT

The public meeting adjourned at 9:10 am (**West/Netzer**).

Submitted by

Anne West

Secretary to the Board of Library Trustees