

Allegany County Library Board of Trustees

Regular Meeting

November 19, 2019

Washington Street Library– 4:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

Deb Hendrickson, Stephanie Marchbank, Tom Finan, John Persons, Terry Michels, and John Taube. Other attendees included: Toni Richards and Maureen Caupp for LATI, and Regina Spiker, Lisa McKenney, Ashley Swinford, and Courtney McKay-Jenson.

The meeting was called to order by Deb Hendrickson.

A motion to accept the minutes of the regular meeting on October 15, 2019 was made by Tom Finan seconded by John Persons, and was approved. (Note: Stephanie Marchbank was not present for this vote)

John Taube read the following statement regarding the closed session on October 15, 2019. At the end of the open meeting on October 15, 2019, the Board of Trustees entered a closed session to discuss the Strategic Plan submitted by Vanessa Milio. The reason for the closed session is that the strategic plan suggest reallocation of resources which may include personnel changes. The meeting was closed under the General Provisions Article § 3-305(b):

- (1) “To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals”;

A motion to accept the minutes of the Closed Session meeting on October 15, 2019 was made by Terry Michels seconded by John Persons, and was approved. (Note: Stephanie Marchbank was not present for this vote)

A motion to accept both the statistical report and the financial reports of October 2019 was made by Stephanie Marchbank seconded by Tom Finan and was accepted.

NEW BUSINESS

Review Progress of Strategic Plan Implementation Workgroup

The Library Board of Trustees adopted the Strategic Plan at their October 15, 2019 meeting. The Board requested that an Implementation workgroup be formed to work out how to implement the Strategic Plan.

On the morning of October 17, 2019, John presented an overview of the strategic plan to library staff at an all staff meeting and posted the plan on the library intranet.

John Taube, Tom Finan and John Persons met with Brandon Butler, County Administrator on October 22, 2019 to review the plan as adopted at the October meeting.

The Implementation Workgroup is composed of Board Members; Tom Finan, Deb Hendrickson, and Terry Michels, and staff members; Jennifer Howell, Lisa McKenney, Ashley Swinford, and John Taube. The workgroup met twice to develop methods on how to implement the approved plan.

At the October 17, 2019 meeting the Implementation Workgroup reviewed the strategic plan, discussed recommended goals of the plan and agreed on deliverables for the next meeting. In addition to these topics, staff expressed concern that the online survey missed valuable feedback from hard to reach members of our communities. The workgroup agreed to distribute paper versions of the online survey around the county to ensure we tried to reach all sectors of the county. The last day to respond to the paper version of the survey was November 9, 2019.

After discussing a proposed implementation plan with library staff members of the workgroup on October 28, 2019, John Taube sent an upgraded implementation plan to the entire workgroup prior to our November 4, 2019 meeting.

The proposed implementation plan presented at the November 4, 2019 meeting recommended these actions:

- In light of Jennifer's resignation, no changes to hours or staffing could take place prior to July 1, 2020.
- We should begin the work of developing a comprehensive communications plan as soon as possible. Completion of the communications plan should coincide with the drafting of our proposed FY2021 budget so we can include any necessary adjustments.
- Respond to feedback on our community surveys for more library hours by including an increase in our request for County funding to achieve that goal in the FY2021 budget.
- Use the time between December 2019 and June 2020 to:
 - develop plans for the Information Access Department
 - Begin implementation of the communications plan
 - Build community support for increased FY2021 funding
 - Develop plans for any organizational restructuring necessary
 - Allow sufficient time for staff to feel they can provide input and have a role in how the strategic plan will be implemented.

Preliminary results from the paper version of the community survey were presented by Ashley Swinford at the November 4, 2019 meeting. Ashley included the 351 responses collected as of November 1, 2019 in her report. She anticipated roughly another 100 responses by the close of the survey window. Ashley's analysis showed that the results from the paper version of the

community survey were similar to and in alignment with the 1085 responses to the online survey.

At the November 4, 2019 workgroup meeting, the work group asked John Taube to request proposals from additional firms to develop our communications plan.

Prior to the November 4, 2019 meeting, Lisa McKenney emailed a summary of library staff concerns with the process of how the strategic plan was developed to the workgroup. Reviewing these staff concerns was included in the agenda and discussions of the November 4, 2019 meeting. At the meeting, Jennifer and Lisa walked the workgroup through the staff concerns. Library staff feel excluded from the process and are very concerned about potential changes to library hours. Staff also requested confirmation that the current Grievance Policy allowing staff to elevate their concerns to the Board of Trustees was still in effect. In addition to sharing the staff's concerns, Lisa and Jennifer shared their view of library operations in the last year and where they saw room for improvement.

To address library staff concerns, the workgroup agreed to invite a staff representative from the circulation staff to future workgroup meetings. The workgroup also agreed with Jennifer Howell's request that Nora Drake replace her on the workgroup.

Next Steps for Strategic Plan Implementation

John Taube presented an overview of the work plan during the Pilot Phase of implementation. In the Pilot Phase (December, 2019 - June 30, 2020) we will enthusiastically share our story with the community. We will also develop the processes, strategies and planning needed to implement the Strategic Plan starting in FY 2021.

The work of the Pilot Phase will be divided among 3 workgroups:

- The "Planning Workgroup-Plus"
- The "Planning Workgroup", and
- The "Communications Workgroup."

The composition of the Design Phase workgroup will expand in the three (3) Pilot Phase workgroups.

In the Pilot Phase, there will be three (3) work groups:

- The Planning Workgroup will be composed of library staff and meet weekly to make recommendations and explore options to implement the strategic plan recommendations in FY2021.
- A larger planning workgroup (called Planning Workgroup-Plus) will include the members of the Planning Workgroup, and representatives from the Board of Trustees, Communications Consultant, HR consultant, and a potential partner agency. The Planning Workgroup-Plus will meet monthly to review work completed by the planning

workgroup and serve in an advisory capacity. The Planning Workgroup-Plus will regularly update the Board of Trustees on its work. Board Members Deb Hendrickson, Terry Michels, and Tom Finan agreed to continue serving on the Planning Workgroup-Plus.

- A Communications Workgroup will work with the communications consultant/firm to draft the comprehensive communications plan. The Communications Workgroup will be composed of the Executive Director (John), Online Services Specialist (Ashley), and the Arts and Graphic Specialist (Renee). The Communications Workgroup will meet weekly with the communications consultant/firm to draft the plan.

The goals of the workgroups in the Pilot Phase include:

- Planning Workgroup-Plus
 - Planning Workgroup
 - Propose plans and strategies to implement the recommendations of the Strategic Plan
 - Propose adjustments to hours, staffing and budget to carry out plans designated in strategic plan starting in FY2021.
 - Propose contingency plans for hours, staffing, and budget to carry out plans designated in strategic plan starting in FY2021 if additional funding is not granted.
 - Communications Workgroup
 - Ensure that marketing and communications plans publicly demonstrate the value of library programs, collections, and staff.
 - Widely share the ACLS Story with community groups and stakeholders.

Critical to the success of carrying out the strategic plan is to start to enthusiastically tell the ACLS story starting in January 2020. The ACLS story will highlight the many ways we enrich and enhance the community as well as clearly state our values. Presentations to community groups and stakeholders will also include the feedback we received from the community survey, the recommendations of the strategic plan and our priorities in satisfying those demands. These presentations and meetings will take place while the Pilot Phase workgroups work progresses.

These communications will also build our case for the additional funding we will request in FY 2021 and to clearly say what will happen if we don't get it. We do not want to surprise the public, our partners, and the elected officials if we need to adjust hours, staffing and services due to budget shortfalls starting July 1, 2020.

Comprehensive Communications Plan

The adopted strategic plan recommends we develop a comprehensive communications plan as soon as possible. The implementation workgroup also agrees that this is a necessary early step. The implementation workgroup asked John Taube to request proposals to develop our plan for consideration. John requested proposals from 7 firms in Maryland and proposals are due on November 15, 2019. We received four (4) proposals and the Communications Workgroup is meeting on 11/27/2019 to review them.

The proposals were not evaluated in time for a recommendation to the Board. Since the Board will not meet again until January 2020 and to ensure that the communications plan will be completed in the desired time frame, Terry Michels made a motion to allow the communications workgroup to proceed with selecting a communications firm from the proposals received not to exceed a total cost of \$9000. Terry's motion was seconded by Tom Finan and was approved by the Board. (Note: John Persons was not present for the vote).

ACLS Organizational Structure

In light of the resignation of our Director of Programming, John Taube remarked that the Library System has the opportunity to examine our organizational structure and make sure it aligns with the work called for in the Strategic Plan. During the transitional period, Lisa McKenney has taken over the payroll functions, Story Corp and Adult Programming staff will coordinate programming with John Taube. John Taube has also worked out agreements for assistance with HR matters on an as-needed basis with the Regional Library and ATR, a local Human Resources firm.

As part of the Pilot Phase implementation, the Planning Workgroup will also recommend an organizational structure to fulfill the work it recommends.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

LaVale Library - Renovation and Expansion Update

Murphy & Ditenhafer have sent the concept drawings to Belt to ensure it is within the expected budget. Todd Grove of M&D responded that the "opinion of probable costs" based on the concept drawings fell within the project budget. Mr. Grove is now drafting the full agreement to complete the architectural and engineering drawings. We resume meetings as soon as possible.

LaVale Library - Process for Selecting a Temporary Location

John Taube has been scouting and gathering prices of temporary locations. John's strategy was to find the best location and the best price and then request that Allegany County pay a portion of the rent. John has secured pricing on 3 potential locations. The terms are for an 18-24

month lease. The lease prices gathered so far do not include the cost of utilities, so John will contact the utility companies for estimates.

John Taube and the Board agreed that John bring a recommendation regarding the temporary location to the Board by the January 14, 2020 meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Courtney McKay-Jenson suggested that the library investigate the First People's Bank as a temporary location in the LaVale Plaza.

Nicole Halmos, Treasurer of the Friends of the Washington Street Library updated the Board on their goals to increase use of the library, increase the feeling of community in the library and increase funding for the library. She also mentioned their latest project to sponsor a bi-monthly lecture series in 2020. The lecture series will feature presentations related to Presidential Themes.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and UPDATES

Ashley Swinford, Online Services Coordinator has begun sampling library users to get Net Promoter Scores. Net Promoter Scores are national recognized scoring of how customers feel about the service and experience they received on their last visit. We plan on using this data to support our case for additional local funding.

Due to scheduled leave, Huber, Michaels will be unable to present the FY2019 Financial Audit to the Library Board at the November 2019 meeting.

Additional painting and upgrades will be made to the Washington Street Children's room entryway during the holiday period to minimize disruption to scheduled activities.

John Taube expressed that he is concerned with rate and cost of repairs on library facilities. He hopes it will not require us to transfer operating funds from other accounts. We will keep an eye on the budget and see if that will be necessary.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Next Board Meeting is Tuesday, January 14, 2020 at 4PM at the South Cumberland Library.