

Allegany County Library Board of Trustees

Regular Meeting

November 15, 2022

4:00 p.m.

South Cumberland Library

PRESENT:

Deb Hendrickson, Renee Kniseley, Juli McCoy, Terry Michels, Sue Rudd and John Taube.

Library Leadership Team: Lisa McKenney, Andrea Everett, Ashley Swinford, Ali Cline

The meeting was called to order by Terry Michels.

A motion to accept the minutes of the regular meeting on October 11, 2022 was made by Juli McCoy seconded by Renee Kniseley and was approved.

A motion to accept both the statistical report and the financial reports of October 2022 was made by Sue Rudd seconded by Juli McCoy and was accepted.

NEW BUSINESS

Presentation of FY 2022 Annual Financial Audit.

Tim Michaels and Carson Imes of Huber Michaels and Company presented our annual financial audit. Their findings show a clean opinion. After reviewing the information presented, Sue Rudd moved to accept the findings of the audit, Renee Kniseley second the motion and the motion was approved.

Allegany Arts Council Grant Partnership

John reported that the Allegany Arts Council has approached the library system as a partner to apply for a \$50,000 Maryland State Arts Council Grant for a public art installation. The Arts Council was interested in an installation at the LaVale Library. The library system is interested in an installation that will aid in shading the patio or provide a combination of additional seating and shade along the perimeter of the patio.

Enabling Legislation for Collective Bargaining in Maryland Public Libraries.

John briefed the Board on a potential bill to be introduced to the General Assembly in the 2023 session.

Increasingly, Maryland's public library staff have been approached by various unions and have shown interest in organizing.

Currently, three out of 24 public library systems in the state have employee unions.

The bills that unions bring forth to enable collective bargaining tend to be written to benefit the union more than the staff, the library system, or the community.

The legislative committee of the Maryland Library Association would like to introduce state-wide legislation to enable collective bargaining in Maryland public libraries.

By bringing forward a well written bill that encourages a transparent and collaborative climate, staff will have the time and information to make educated decisions, without the false urgency of pending legislation or pressure from outside organizations on whether they wish to enter into a discussion with a union.

While their library staff has not formed a union, Howard County passed enabling legislation that is written in this model. At this time, their legislation is the template for this bill.

Passing legislation that enables collective bargaining does not mean that public library systems are or will become unionized; it simply creates a fair and open process for staff to pursue if they wish to do so.

We understand that not all legislators will support a statewide bill that enables collective bargaining. We believe they will understand the motivation to secure legislation that supports staff, library systems, and the community rather than future legislation that may not support all stakeholders.

There will still be unionization interest and efforts in public libraries without this legislation. Having this legislation in place will save counties significant costs and time in the negotiation process if public library staff opt to unionize.

A similar bill enabling collective bargaining rights across the state's community colleges was passed last year (HB894).

Proposed Joint Board Summit

John reported that he is working with the other regional directors to host a joint Board summit. This would be a one day meeting in a convenient location so that board members from all three counties could share ideas, concerns and form mutually supportive connections. Tentatively we are looking at May 18, 2023.

Telecommuting Policy

John stated that at a recent Board meeting, Board members indicated that they were interested in reversing the telecommuting policy of the library system. John requested that the Board allow the leadership team to revise the policy rather than eliminate it. Eliminating it entirely at this time, would have disruptive effects on staff in every department. For example, Tech

Processing staff would no longer be paid to review and order books from home, Events staff could not coordinate or plan events from home, IT staff would be unable to monitor library systems from home, in the Outreach Dept, the graphic artist works predominantly from home. Eliminating the possibility of paying staff for work done at home, would also be counter productive during a covid quarantine period when staff may be well enough to work but the CDC guidelines indicate staying home. Sue Rudd moved to grant the request to revise and upgrade the telecommuting policy, the motion was seconded by Juli McCoy and was approved by the Board

December Holiday Schedule

John briefed the board on the holiday schedule. Due to earned vacation time and the lack of resources, the George's Creek, Washington Street and Westernport Libraries will not open between the Christmas and New Year's holidays. Staff from those branches will be scheduled to work at the other locations so that we may maintain hours of operation at those locations.

Proposed FY2024 Budget Goals discussion

The Leadership Team proposed that we set the FY2024 budget goal to get the ACLS wage scale to start at \$15.00 per hour. By moving at an accelerated pace, we address numerous concerns within the library system.

- It addresses the continuous cycle of staffing hiring, training and losing,
- It addresses current staff wage concerns
- It addresses the 2017 wage study that indicated then we were underpaid
- It shows staff that we are going to bat for them

The Board agreed to this proposal as the goal for our FY2024 Budget. Board members also asked John to include two (2) additional full -time service specialist positions to the proposed budget.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Leadership Team Updates

- Director of Administrative Services
- Director of Human Resources
- Director of Outreach and Marketing
- Coordinator of Events and Programs
- Coordinator of Branch Services

Quality of Worklife Survey - Update

Andrea and John reported that we received 26 responses to the anonymous Quality of WorkLife Survey. The results are currently being reviewed, analyzed, and formatted for distribution.

We are working with Gail Griffith, a recent retiree from the Carroll County Public Library to help us use the data collected in the Quality of Worklife Survey to forge a path to continue making the library system the best that it can be.

To help us gain a fuller understanding of the survey results we will be holding (at least) 5 staff debriefing meetings so that staff can share their thoughts and concerns directly with Gail. These meetings will be held the week of December 5, 2022. Staff will be assigned to a staff group to meet with Gail. This will allow us to give everyone a chance to be heard and ensure that our buildings stay open on their regular schedule.

Gail will also be meeting with the Board at their January 2023 meeting to share the results and plans.

Board Vacancies

The county commissioners will make their appointment at the November 17, 2022 meeting.

WSL Windows and Sidewalk grant update

Work on the sidewalks and wall is progressing. The goal of the sidewalk projects is to have it done before the Christmas holiday and before winter weather causes delays.

Leadership Team Roles

As requested at the last meeting, John distributed brief summaries of Leadership Team Members roles.

PUBLIC COMMENT

ANNOUNCEMENTS and UPDATES

Branch Monthly Reports for October 2022 were sent via email.

The LaVale Civic Improvement Association donated \$500 for bird feeders and birdhouses outside the children's window at the LaVale Library. The bird feeders and houses have been installed.

The Chromebooks (75) we purchased with the CDBG Funds for South Cumberland are no longer within the grant period and are eligible to be checked out from any ACLS branch. Staff are working on processing and redistributing the Chromebooks to our branches for public use.

The LaVale Lions Club donation for the LaVale Library is still working its way through Club procedures.

ACLS Holiday party is scheduled for 12/16 from 7-9PM at the Sherwood bowler in Frostburg.

John read the following statement "On October 11, 2022, at the close of regular business, Terry Michaels moved that the Board moved into a closed session. The motion was seconded by Juli

McCoy. The purpose was to discuss a personnel matter. Board members meeting at the LaVale Library that day included Terry Michels, Sue Rudd, Deb Hendrickson, Renee Knisely, Juli McCoy, and Bill Bingman. Library staff, John Taube was present for the discussion. The closed session was adjourned at 6:20PM.”

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Next Board Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at 4PM at the LaVale Library.