

Allegany County Library Board of Trustees

Regular Meeting

February 14, 2023

4:00 p.m.

George's Creek Regional Library

PRESENT:

Deb Hendrickson, Renee Kniseley, Juli McCoy, Terry Michels, Bill Bingman, Sue Rudd, Gary Leasure (via telephone), and John Taube.

Library Leadership Team: 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 January 10, 2023 was made by Bill Bingman seconded by Renee Kniseley and was approved. (Note: Juli McCoy was not yet present for this vote)

A motion to accept both the statistical report and the financial reports of January 2023 was made by Deb Hendrickson seconded by Sue Rudd and was accepted.

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of Proposed FY2024 Operating Budget

John reported that the Leadership Team has continued to gather information and adjust our proposed budget for FY 2024. Our proposed budget request is usually due to the county before our March meeting. The Leadership Team met on 2/2/2023 to discuss and address our needs. The proposed budget is a result of those discussions.

The proposed FY 2024 operating budget includes these items:

- Starts our wage scale at \$15 per hour,
- Adds new and reassigns part time staff so that each branch has funding for a 21 hours per week part-timer to cover for all branch absences,
- Adds 6th staff member to the LaVale public services staff,
- Adds 1 additional events and programming specialist staff member,
- Converts the Westernport contract part time staff to a full time non-exempt staff member, and
- Increases our funding request in "Facilities-New" category to support our server replacement cycle.

The result of these changes include:

- Staff wage increases of between 11% and 13% for grades 1 through 6,
- Staff wage increases of between 6% and 8% for grades 7 and above,
- No change in operating hours,
- Maintained the staff one time annual bonus program,
- No change in health insurance contributions,
- No change in the collection budget total.

Ali from the Leadership Team had an excellent suggestion that we take a more long term view and request additional county funding so that we can raise wages now that will be more attractive not only this year, but in upcoming years as well.

In this scenario, Grade 2 staff (part timers and contractual staff) would start at \$15.45 per hour instead of \$15 per hour. Our Grade 3 staff would start at \$15.91 per hour rather than \$15.45. These wages would be more competitive with our hiring competition and on par with starting wages at Washington County Free Library.

The proposed budget requests an increase in funding from Allegany County of \$250,000.

John and the Board reviewed the proposed budget and discussed the larger than normal county funding request. Board members were concerned about the commissioner's and the public's reaction to the request and the possible repercussions of the request. John indicated that \$150,000 of our request was driven by the Governor's advancing the minimum wage increase to October 2023. The remaining \$100,000 of our request is for improvements to services that benefit all community residents.

John and Ashley indicated that they will be drafting the budget pitch using data showing that despite being the second lowest funded and staffed library system in the state, we continue to do remarkable things. We will also make the case that the "good things that are happening should be rewarded with the funds to continue to benefit community members."

After a healthy discussion, Sue Rudd moved to approve the proposed FY2024 wage scale. The motion was seconded by Renee Knisely, and approved by the Board.

Deb Hendrickson then moved to approve the FY2024 proposed budget for forwarding to the county commissioners. Bill Bingman seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

Request to use Reserve funds

John reported that the South Cumberland Library had a heating unit fail that caused there to be no heat in the children's room. After consulting with the County, we decided that the best course of action would be to replace the entire unit for \$7000. The new unit will come with a five (5) year warranty. Last year, to prepare for these types of unexpected breakdowns, we started transferring \$1000 a month out of operation into our Reserves account. John requested that we reimburse our operating account from the Reserve account to pay for this repair.

Bill Bingman moved to approve the request to reimburse our operating funds from the Reserve Account. The motion was seconded by Sue Rudd and approved by the board.

Request to close for MLA Conference

The annual Maryland Library Association conference is scheduled for May 10, 2023 through May 12, 2023. At last year's conference, Tuere and John discussed how it would be a great opportunity for more ACLS staff to attend the conference for networking and workshops. Working with the Leadership Team, we have devised a plan to use our Staff Development Grant funds to register interested staff and hire a bus for them to attend the Thursday May 11, 2023 portion of the conference. Eighteen (18) staff members have expressed interest in attending. John requested permission from the Board to close the library system on Thursday, May 11, 2023 so staff can attend the MLA Conference. Those staff who do not wish to attend the conference will have their work schedule adjusted so the library will maintain normal Friday and Saturday hours of operation. Funding for the registration, and travel expenses will come from our staff development grants budget.

A motion to close the library system on May 11, 2023 so staff could attend MLA Conference. The motion was seconded by Deb Hendrickson and approved by the Board.

Request Permission to host a Naloxone Vending Machine

The Allegany County Health Department has requested that we host a naloxone vending machine at our George's Creek Regional Library to serve the community in that area. The machines are self contained and dispense a 2 inch by 2 inch box with naloxone and instructions when the person pushes the button. They are placing other units at the Possibility Shop in Cumberland and at the Auxiliary in Frostburg. The health dept will maintain and restock the machines regularly and we will have no other interactions but to plug it in. This will be treated as a pilot program. The health dept feels that this will not change our customer base as the addicted are already among us and using our services. Instead it will bring harm reduction resources to family and community members in the effort to reduce overdoses.

After consulting with staff and the Leadership team, we began drafting a MOU with the Health Department to host the vending machine. John requested Board consent to host the Naloxone Vending machine.

The Board and Leadership Team discussed the pros and cons of this proposal. Concerns about liability, duty to respond, and staff safety were discussed. After the discussion, we agreed that the benefits and precautions in place outweigh the risks. A motion to accept the placement of

the Naloxone Vending machine in the George's Creek Regional Library pending approval by the Library's attorney and review by the County's Attorney was made by Bill Bingman. The motion was seconded by Renee Kniesely and approved by the Board.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Leadership Team Updates

- Director of Human Resources
- Director of Outreach and Marketing
- Coordinator of Events and Programs

WSL Windows and Sidewalk grant update

The work has been completed.

Allegany Arts Council Grant Partnership

Public presentation of the three (3) final proposals will be made at 6PM on Monday March 6, 2023 at the LaVale library.

Collective Bargaining in Maryland Public Libraries

John reported that before the bill prepared by the library legislative committee could be filed, a delegate from Harford county filed a bill with similar intent. The legislative committee is working with the delegate to amend their bill toward our shared goal.

ACLS Culture Improvements - update

John updated the Board. The Leadership team and staff continue to work toward the goals set in the responses to the Quality of Worklife Survey. Staff have worked to be more communicative, a schedule to update circulation policies has been set, and the Leadership Team continues working on their to do list. Ali Cline and the Leadership Team have begun the process of creating an operations manual by updating and reworking the intranet.

PUBLIC COMMENT

ANNOUNCEMENTS and UPDATES

At our January 10, 2023 meeting, the Board adjourned into closed session at 6:35PM to meet with Gail Griffith and discuss the results of the Staff Satisfaction survey as it relates to the performance of the library system and its leadership team. The closed session was adjourned at 6:55PM.

Working with the WMRL Business Intelligence Analyst, we converted the FY2021 State Library statistics into graphs for ease of use. Unfortunately, the graphs don't change the data, we are still one of the least resourced library systems in Maryland. We will use these data as we prepare our budget pitch.

Branch Monthly Reports for January 2023 were sent via email earlier.

Please prepare to discuss potential Board members to fill the three (3) vacancies we will have on July 1, 2023 at our March meeting.

Shea Morse has accepted the position of Coordinator of Branch Services.
Jess Shipley has accepted the position of Service Leader at the Washington Street Library.
Caitlin Molter has accepted the position of Service Leader at the Frostburg Library.

Due to high demand, we are starting a pilot program to reserve LaVale Meeting Room B for library use Monday through Friday from 1:30PM until closing. This allows our programs to proceed as well as allow staff to prepare for other events.

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

Next Board Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 14, 2023 at 4PM at the Westernport Library