

Allegany County Library Board of Trustees

Regular Meeting
September 12, 2023
4:00 p.m.
Westernport Library

PRESENT:

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

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

The meeting was called to order by Renee Kniseley.

A motion to accept the minutes of the regular meeting on August 8, 2023 was made by Gary Leasure seconded by Bill Bingman and was approved. (Note: Juli McCoy was not present for this vote)

A motion to accept both the statistical report and the financial reports of August 2023 was made by Sue Rudd seconded by Bill Bingman and was accepted. (Note: Juli McCoy was not present for this vote)

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of updated One-time Bonus Policy

John reviewed the updated the One-time Bonus Policy. The intent of the policy remains the same “to recognize and reward library staff for their excellent efforts and provide another tool to keep the library system an appealing place to work”

There are two significant upgrades to the proposed policy:

- 1) The updated draft provides the flexibility to vary the bonus amounts to match the level of work completed by the individual staff.
- 2) The second significant difference is that the Executive Director replaces the Board as the arbiter of who receives a bonus and how much they receive.

Juli McCoy moved to approve the updated bonus policy. The motion died as there was no second of the motion. The Board asked John to rewrite the policy to include equal bonus amounts for all library staff.

Request to modify the policy for replacement charges for minors.

John reviewed the events that led the Leadership Team to make this recommendation. To reduce real or perceived barriers for minors to gain access to the many print and online resources and services that public libraries offer, the General Assembly in 2020 adopted a regulation that Maryland Public Libraries “may not charge a fine for overdue library materials on a minor’s library material.”

The regulation did allow public libraries to charge replacement fees to a minor’s account when material was not returned and considered “lost.”

And this is where our transitioning new adults get tripped up.

In accordance with our library card policies, parents and guardians must sign a library card application from a minor indicating that they will be responsible for any and all charges on the minors account.

Unfortunately, when the minor turns 18 years old, they keep the same account and library card number. This results in the replacement charges remaining on the minor’s account and the debt becomes their responsibility.

Both the library and the patron often discover that they inherited the debt to the library when they return as young parents several years later.

We propose that when minors turn 18 years old, that the library system waive any outstanding replacement charges so the new adult starts with a “clean slate” and zero balance with the library system. Charges would only be waived upon turning 18 years old.

Minors and their parents or guardians would not be absolved of responsibility as they would still be prevented from borrowing items if their lost item charges were greater than \$20.

We make this proposal because the library rarely receives payment in these instances and because it often spoils a future potentially good library relationship with the new parent and children.

Our research shows that there are:

- 222 patrons who are 18 years of age who owe \$3588.35,
- 194 patrons who are 17 years of age who owe \$3332.58,
- 200 patrons who are 16 years of age who owe \$4037.63, and
- 156 patrons who are 15 years of age who owe \$4408.92 in replacement charges.

John concluded that while we could potentially be forgoing income, we feel the potential to transition these minors into adult library users who bring their children to the library outweighs the cost.

The Board questioned if there was a method to transfer the debt from the minor's account to the parent when the minor turned 18 years old. Lisa McKenney stated that the patron database does not have a mechanism to transfer the charges and all of the details would be lost if we did this.

The Board asked John to poll the Library Director's in Maryland to see if they had a more creative solution to this issue. They also asked the Leadership Team to brainstorm additional work-arounds for discussion at the next meeting.

Time to Care Act - Options Update

The Time to Care Act is the paid Family Medical Leave for MD which goes into effect in January of 2026. Every employer has 2 basic options: join the state plan or apply for an exemption by proving that you have an alternative that meets the criteria of the law (whether that is through self-insurance or through the marketplace).

John reported that the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo)/ Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE)/ Maryland Municipal League (MML) are banding together to form a "Collaborative" to put out an RFP and purchase insurance and benefit management to comply with the Act.

John stated that the contribution rates for employees and employers will be released in October 2023 but the deadline to sign an MOU declaring our intention to join the Collaborative is October 1, 2023. John and Andrea will be attending a meeting with the Collaborative on September 20, 2023 to learn more.

Presentation: AI and the Library

Shea Morse gave us an overview of AI, ChatGPT, and how they may influence libraries and what we do, and how we provide services.

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

Board vacancy

The County Commissioners have yet to appoint Terry's replacement or reappoint Deb and Gary. John reported that the county plans to act on the appointments at their September 21, 2023 meeting.

Review of Board member position description

The position description for library board members was deemed satisfactory and no comments or additions were suggested.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Joanna Wilson and Carol Kenney from the Friends of the Westernport Library complimented Kathy Murphy on her role as Service Leader at the library. They also announced that they have elected a secretary and requested that the library system pay closer attention to the weeds and bushes at the library and increase maintenance on them.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and UPDATES

Branch Monthly Reports for August 2023 are attached.

Library of Things Circ Stats - in roughly 8 months of availability at LaVale Library, the most popular items to borrow include : the DeWalt Drill Bit set (11 CKOS), the Dewalt Drill driver (10 CKOS), the crochet hook kit(6 CKOS), the bosch wall scanner (5 CKOS), and the heart cake pan (5 CKOS).

Update on LaVale Public Art and Shade Project - The updated schedule of work indicates that the planters and benches will be installed by November 1, 2023. The work on the canopies portion will take place over the winter months, with installation scheduled for April 2024. A reception will be held in May 2024.

Chromebook giveaway - We are working with the County IT department and other partners on a Connected Devices Grant application. The grants are sponsored by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development to address the digital divide. Households with an income of 200% or less of the Federal Poverty Level are eligible to receive a chromebook. We plan to use all branches of the library systems as distribution points and hope to hold our first event before January 2024.

Washington Street Library Roof Replacement - The County has awarded the contract to Gray Roofing for \$49,000. The work includes replacing the original shingles on the "Addition" portion of the building constructed in the late 1960s. We expect the work to be completed this fall.

South Cumberland Trust Gift- The South Cumberland Trust has gifted the branch \$5000 to spend on in house gaming systems. We expect the equipment to be in place and available by October 1, 2023.

Next Board Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 10, 2023 at 4PM at the Washington Street Library