

Allegany County Library Board of Trustees

Regular Meeting
February 11, 2025
4:00 p.m.
Westernport Firehall

PRESENT:

Deb Hendrickson, Renee Kniseley, Juli McCoy, Sue Rudd, Artie Travis and John Taube.

Library Leadership Team: Lisa McKenney, Andrea Everett, Ashley Swinford, Kate Metzger, Shea Morse

The meeting was called to order by Renee Kniseley.

A motion to accept the minutes of the regular meeting on January 14, 2025 was made by Sue Rudd seconded by Deb Hendrickson and was approved.

A motion to accept both the statistical report and the financial reports of January 2025 was made by Deb Hendrickson seconded by Sue Rudd and was accepted.

NEW BUSINESS

Library Leadership Team recommendations on the FY26 Library Advisory Committee Recommendations

John reviewed the budget preparation timeline with the Board. The FY2026 operating budget will be prepared with the necessary funding to maintain all 6 library branches. Budget requests are usually due to the county commissioners at the end February.

John also stated that we are also drafting a “backup” budget as an alternate budget if the County is unable to meet our funding request.

The next step for the Library Advisory Committee’s recommendations is for the Board to select from the recommendations which ones it would like to be included in the drafting of the “Backup” budget.

John then proceeded to share with the Board the Leadership Team’s comments on each one of the Library Advisory Committee’s recommendations.

Board members were asked to send their individual preferences on each recommendation back to John by March 1, 2025. Based on those responses we will prepare the “Backup” budget for discussion and sharing at the 3/11/2025 Board meeting.

Presentation of the FY2024 Annual Financial Audit

The audit is complete and there were no findings. Copies of the Audit will be distributed to Board members. Robert Diss of Lindsay and Associates will present the results of the financial audit of FY2024 to the Board for acceptance at our March 11, 2025 meeting in the Frostburg Library because it is better equipped for Zoom conferencing.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Presentation of the 2nd draft of the proposed FY26 Operating budget

John presented the second draft of the proposed FY2026 Operating Budget. He noted that we have revised the draft in light of the increase in state aid to the library system. The preliminary state funding formula indicates that Allegany County’s population grew by 6 people which resulted in an increase in state aid of \$19,257.

This helped greatly as it reduced our funding gap to \$159,270. There is a bill in the General Assembly to delay the FAMLI/TTCA contributions for an additional year. If it passes, we can further reduce our request of the County. As it stands, we will be asking the County Commissioners for a \$159,270 increase in our budget request.

Artie Lee Travis moved to approve the FY2026 proposed operating budget for submission to the county. The motion was seconded by Deb Hendrickson and was approved.

Leadership Team Updates

- Director of Administrative Services
- Director of Human Resources
- Director of Outreach and Marketing
- Coordinator of Public Services

PUBLIC COMMENT

Twenty seven individuals signed up to comment during the public comment period. There was near unanimous support for keeping the George’s Creek and Westernport Libraries open in FY2026. Those wishing to keep the libraries open offered numerous suggestions. County Administrator Jason Bennett stated that it is very unlikely that the county will be able to provide additional funding in FY2026. Mr. Bennett also stated that the library system is not eligible for the typical Rocky Gap Casino grants.

John closed the public comment period by saying that the Library Board and Staff share the frustration of those present. We are encouraged by the demonstration that the library is such a valuable piece of the community. Unfortunately, the “pie isn’t getting bigger” and we will do as much as we can with the funding we are allocated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and UPDATES

Every month, we send a list of new library items that haven't been checked out in the first 45 days to each branch. Library staff are instructed to send the items on the list to another branch for an increased chance of being checked out. We call this report the "Inactive New to the Library Reports." The Business Intelligence Analyst at WMRL shared a preliminary analysis that showed that 41.3% of new items were checked out in the first 30 days, while 48.7% of items on the Inactive new to the library lists were checked out after they were moved.

Next Board Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 11, 2025 at 4PM at the Frostburg Library.