



Allegany County Library System
31 Washington Street, Cumberland, MD 21502
(P) 301-777-1200 (F) 301-777-7299

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Allegany County Library System Board of Trustees: Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday – January 13, 2026 – LaVale Library

I. Welcome

1. Call to Order was at 4:01pm
2. Roll Call: all present
3. Adoption of Agenda - **Motion made by Deb Hendrickson, second Jack Coburn. Passed.**

II. Approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes of November 18, 2025 – **Motion made by Bill Bingman, second by Katie Weir. Passed.**

III. President Report - Renee Kniseley

Renee Kniseley thanked and congratulated the administrative team for the successful meetings for the Library Ambassadors Program, citing the thoughtful preparation and meaningful work that will result from this program. She also mentioned that she, Lisa McKenney and Ashley Swinford would be going to PACE. Finally, in the future, the Board will be focusing on the work related to the Westernport Library and the FY27 budget, the Board is committed to the necessary work to move the library forward.

V. Interim Executive Director Report - Lisa McKenney

- Request to rename Washington Street Library and Review of Gift, Donation and Naming Rights Policy—A motion was made by Juli McCoy to plan a rededication to recognize Mary Walsh's contributions to the Allegany County Library when the plaque is re-installed in the library. The motion was seconded by Molly McCord and unanimously passed.
- Request from Save the Westernport Library to install a donor plaque in the Westernport Library. The Board requested more details about the plaque size and concept. The plaque must reflect funds received by the Westernport Library. A motion was made by Deb Hendrickson, seconded by Katie Weir and was unanimously passed.
- Copies of Laws of Maryland Related to Public Libraries 2025 edition were distributed to the Board in print and electronic copies.
- A subcommittee was formed to work on drafting updates for the Board of Trustees Handbook and Bylaws. Renee Kniseley, Juli McCoy, Deb Hendrickson, Molly McCord, Katie Weir, Ashley Swinford and Lisa McKenney will work on it together. A goal was set to have a draft to view by the March 10 meeting.
- An early draft of the FY27 budget was shared along with detailed notes for each account.





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- Budget and financial report: —**Motion made by Bill Bingman, second Deb Hendrickson. Passed.**

VI. Library Administrators Updates

- Marketing and Outreach, including Statistics — Ashley Swinford
 - Statistics for November and December 2025 – **Motion made by Deb Hendrickson, second by Jack Coburn. Passed.**
 - Westernport Library Community Survey Report was distributed to the Board. (see end of minutes for full report) The Board advised the Library to keep doing what we are doing
- Branch Services— Shea Morse updates Meal in a Mug, Battle of the Books, Summer Reading 2026 plan, attended Maryland Tech Connect, co-hosted an AI program, quarterly check-in with 7 supervisees. February 5th is Take Your Child to the Library Day. In February, we're doing a Winter Reading Game, a Valentine-themed Saturday storytime at South Cumberland
- Human Resources— Alexis Halterman – presented three policies Nursing Mothers/Childcare Policy, Voluntary Sick Leave Donation Policy, Workplace Violence Policy. The Board had wanted some more time to review the policies and revisit at February meeting. Lexi also working on end of year taxes, W2s, setting up trainings for beginners ASL, de-escalation of behavior, productivity and CPR. Lexi planned the holiday party.
- IT, including Facilities Updates — Jason Armstrong dealing with numerous HVAC issues across the system. Updated switches and equipment. Working to port GC and Westernport copper phone lines from SEGRA to Comcast.

VII. Public Comment - Requests to Address the Board – no members of the public were present

VIII. Closing Remarks & Motion to Adjourn **Motion made by Jack Coburn. Adjourned at 6:14PM**

Upcoming Meetings: February 10, 2026 South Cumberland Library





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Summary of Findings - Westernport Community Survey

The Westernport Community Survey gathered input from 74 unique respondents, the majority of whom are current library users (61.6%), with 63% living in the Westernport Library service area.

Respondents skewed older, with 44.4% age 55+, while 22.2% of households included children under 18, indicating engagement from both seniors and families.

What We Heard Most Clearly Across responses, there was strong, consistent support for maintaining the Westernport Library as a core community resource, with emphasis on:

- Restoring and expanding basic, in-branch library services
- Improving access to technology and the internet
- Providing safe spaces for youth and families
- Serving as a community hub and meeting place
- Offering educational programming and lifelong learning opportunities
- Partnering with local organizations to extend reach and relevance

Respondents repeatedly emphasized the importance of the library as a free, accessible, and essential service, rather than a specialized or limited-use facility.

Usage, Access, and Barriers

Feedback highlighted several practical barriers to use:

- Limited or inconvenient hours of operation
- Transportation challenges
- Awareness gaps around services and programs

Preferred visit times clustered around late afternoon and early evening (4:00–7:00 PM), with Saturdays emerging as the most convenient day overall.

These preferences align with comments calling for greater flexibility and consistency in availability.





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Services: What the Community Values Most

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Respondents expressed strongest interest in:

- Traditional, in-branch services
- A Library of Things

There was notably less interest in:

- 24/7 lockers
- Home delivery services

This suggests the community values the physical library space and staffed services more than remote or automated options.

Outreach Effort & Awareness

Surveys were made available in multiple formats—written (paper), online, and by phone—to ensure participation from residents with varying levels of internet access and comfort with technology. To maximize awareness and accessibility, the library implemented a multi-channel outreach campaign, including:

In-person outreach

- Surveys and flyers distributed at Town Hall, businesses, and churches
- A direct mailer sent to over 2,500 households in the Westernport service area
- Westernport Elementary newsletter

Online outreach

- Paid Facebook advertising
- Email campaign to library contacts

Radio

- Radio interviews were conducted with WCBC, Allegany Radio, and WFWM.

Collectively, these efforts reached over 20,000 impressions across all channels, significantly expanding awareness of the survey. The total cost of the outreach campaign was \$2,559.30—representing nearly 30% of the ACLS marketing department’s total annual budget.

A Key Contextual Insight





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While Westernport has shown strong vocal advocacy for the library, the survey response volume—despite incentives and outreach—suggests a distinction between emotional support and sustained engagement. This gap mirrors existing usage data.

Bottom-Line Takeaway for the Board

While the survey does not represent a statistical consensus, it provides clear directional guidance when considered alongside circulation data, program attendance, and in-person engagement. Respondents consistently value a visible, open, staffed, and welcoming library that emphasizes core services, flexible hours, and community connection. The findings reinforce that the Westernport Library's strength lies not in specialized alternatives, but in its role as an accessible, everyday public space.

