



Prince George's County Memorial Library System

**Board of Library Trustees Meeting
July 14, 2021 - 7:00 PM
Zoom Video Conference Call**

Minutes

Board Members Present

Brett Crawford, President
Samuel Epps, IV, Vice President
Angela D. Smith
Dr. Arthuree Wright
Dr. Hiram Larew
Sylvia Bolivar
Toni A. Smith

Prince George's County Memorial Library Attendees

Michael Gannon, Chief Operating Officer for Support Services
Michelle Hamiel, Chief Operating Office for Public Services
Nicholas Brown, Chief Operating Officer for Communication & Outreach
Aishar Pinnock, Director of Talent & Culture
Blane Halliday, Director for Collection Strategies
Carla Moore, Director of Information Technology
Dereje Salehudres, Director of Finance
Shelley O'Brien, Director of Development & Donor Engagement
Steve Fitzgerald, Director Dynamic Content and Engagement
Jessica Freeman, Executive Assistant

Absent:

Welcome and Call to Order by President Brett Crawford: 7:04 PM

May 20, 2021 Board of Trustees Minutes

The Committee chairs provided abbreviated updates from the previous Board meeting to be added to the May 2021 Board meeting since there was a technical difficulty in recording that segment of the meeting. Dr. Wright moved to accept the amended meeting minutes and Dr. Larew seconded the motion. When put to a vote, the minutes were unanimously approved.

Board of Trustees Committee Reports

Personnel & Governance Committee - Toni A. Smith, Chair

Ms. Toni Smith reported that the committee is in the planning stages for the August 28th Board retreat. The committee is also preparing for the CEO's mid-year review. The Board vacancy has been announced and applications are being received to fill the vacancy. The application can be found on the PGCMLS website under the Board of Trustees page. Applications will be accepted until August 13th.

Finance & Planning Committee - Brett Crawford, Chair

The Committee met on July 7th to discuss the strategic budget priorities within a five year scope and with an evolving service model. Discussion points were advocacy for the budget, future staffing needs, improving the Library's branding, and resources needed for changing operational requirements or programmatic opportunities that are being anticipated. The budget process is being done with a collaborative approach with stakeholders and decision makers. Dr. Larew offered the "Why do I Like/Love My Library" poetry that has been posted as testimonials for the County Council in support of the Library's budget.

Community Engagement Committee - Angela Smith, Member

The committee met with the CEO and COO for Communication and Outreach on Monday. The Community Engagement Team, composed of Library staff, is considering a customer survey for the fall to gauge how the Library is meeting the community needs. There is a lot of work being done to transition into in-person programming. There are upcoming advocacy opportunities for the Board to get involved in. Ms. Angela Smith encouraged the Board to write to their senators in support of Build America's Libraries Act. The Board will be asked to advocate through a digital advocacy tool on behalf of PGCMLS for ARPA funding as the Library is essential in increasing device distribution and access to wi-fi.

Chief Executive Officer's Report - Michael Gannon, Chief Operating Officer for Support Services

Mr. Gannon summarized that the written report was primarily about a look back on the implementation of the strategic framework and looks ahead at plans for the future. Mr. Gannon highlighted Douglas Crane's, Director of Palm Beach County Library System, article entitled "[Are We Reaching the End of Library DVD Collections?](#)" in which, Blane Halliday was quoted. This was published in the Public Library Association journal. Mr. Gannon also highlighted that Michelle Hamiel, COO for Public Services, was a panelist for Urban Libraries Council's Advancing Libraries as Antiracists Leaders. Mr. Crawford commented on the strategic framework implementation involving many different stakeholders and noted the good work.

Financial Information and Report - Dereje Salehudres, Director of Finance

Mr. Salehudres provided an overview of the Library's financial activities and budget status for fiscal year-to-date through May 31, 2021.

Year-to-date operating revenues were \$30.21M, which is 89.5% of the budgeted amount, compared to \$30.17M, or 90.9% in fiscal year 2020. This was positively impacted by both County and State contributions but was negatively offset by the system wide closure, which impacted branch revenue.

Year-to-date operating expenditures were \$29.7M, which is 88.2% of the budgeted amount, compared to \$29.73M, or 89.5% a year ago. That was higher than the previous year primarily due to compensation, building and equipment, and other expenditures. This was offset by operating services, supplies, computer software, and utility expenditures.

Overall the fund balance increased by approximately \$84K, from \$5.88M at the beginning of the fiscal year to \$5.96M at the end of May 2021, due to year-to-date surplus, less the use of fund balance in the amount of \$367K.

The Library has incurred \$4.5M in CIP expenditures and recognized the same amount as revenue. Grant related revenue and expenditure were about \$444K and \$454K respectively.

Comments and Questions from the Board

Mr. Crawford clarified that the fund balance gained \$84,000 but that \$367,000 was spent. The fund balance then was decreased by \$280,000. Dr. Larew inquired about the materials budget and if there would be spending to close the gap between what has been spent and what is available to spend. Mr. Salehudres reported that spending was done towards the end of the fiscal year in order to close the gap.

Capital Improvement Plan Report: Michael Gannon, Chief Operating Officer for Support Services

Hyattsville Branch

This project is experiencing the most delays and the branch is not anticipated to open to the public until sometime in October.

Surratts-Clinton Branch

It is believed that the exterior water issues have been resolved. Mr. Gannon walked through the branch following a heavy rain and witnessed no water in the branch. He has been assured by the construction team that they have not seen any either.

Bladensburg Branch

There has been a delay in receiving the final disconnection notice from WSSC. This is needed to get the raze permit. Hazmat abatement has been completed already.

Baden Branch

Support Services has submitted an application for a state capital grant today to help fund the build out of the Health Center. The County has agreed to match the \$1.58M that the Library is applying for from the state with \$1M. It is unlikely to receive notification of the award from the state until the end of the calendar year.

Langley Park

There is still an option for the Boys and Girls club; however, liens on the property were recently discovered, so that is slowing the process as well.

Comments and Questions from the Board

Mr. Crawford expressed disappointment that the Surratts-Clinton Branch won't be opening in the fall. Mr. Gannon indicated that he could see the branch opening in January or February 2022. Dr. Wright inquired if there are Library services for the Hyattsville community since the branch opening has been delayed. Mr. Gannon indicated that the temporary site was given back over to the landlord already as the lease was not able to be renewed. There is unfortunately no other stopgap in place to provide services to the Hyattsville community prior to the opening of the branch. Customers are being directed to neighboring branches. Dr. Larew inquired about the funding that would be needed to be raised for the Baden project should the state capital grant be received. Mr. Gannon indicated that this would reduce the amount to a few hundred thousand dollars.

Talent & Culture Report: Aishar Pinnock, Director of Talent & Culture

The Library moved into Phase 3, which put all branches in a one shift schedule and ended telework. There have been no reported COVID cases since April 2021.

Comments and Questions from the Board

Mr. Crawford inquired if more staff have been able to use their accrued leave now that summer is underway. Ms. Pinnock indicated that yes, staff are using their leave but she expressed concerns over the Buildings & Grounds staff, especially, as they have earned larger amounts of supplemental leave as they have been onsite during the system closure. They are still needed on site for the heightened cleaning regiment but they are encouraged to use their leave. Mr. Epps encouraged the Board to

approve an extension of leave roll over since there are heightened staff concerns about losing their accrued leave and there may be undue strain on the Library system when staff attempt to use their leave simultaneously. This request was previously submitted to the Board and Mr. Crawford indicated that this will be brought back to the board at a later Board meeting.

Foundation Report: Shelley O'Brien, Director of Development & Donor Engagement

Foundation Event in October

Ms. O'Brien shared that the Foundation is excited to have a large October event at the National Harbor who graciously is hosting the event at no charge since they are pleased with the Library's partnership. The event will be October 23rd and 24th. The event will be Oktoberfest in nature.

Bladensburg Branch Groundbreaking

Ms. O'Brien is also in the midst of planning the Bladensburg Branch groundbreaking event, which is anticipated to be sometime in late August and is being planned in conjunction with the County Executive's office. But this will also depend on the final disconnection letter being received.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding

Ms. O'Brien has been working with a committee of PGCMLS staff to engage the 12 municipalities to support the Library with their recently received ARPA funding. Ms. O'Brien has spoken to both the Greenbelt and Bowie's City Councils and is hopeful that both will provide some funding toward the Library's digital equity projects.

Comments and Questions from the Board

Dr. Larew commented that this is a positive that the Library is working to partner at the local level and receive funding through those avenues in addition to national, state, and county efforts.

Race & Social Equity (RSE) Update: Michelle Hamiel, Chief Operating Officer for Public Services

The audit team has been established. A member from the Prince George's Co. Government's Human Resources Department and a member from the County's Human Relations Commission are on the audit team. Everyone on the training subcommittee has been trained on how to conduct an anti-racist audit. The subcommittee has created an anonymous staff survey that will be done on paper, which will be given in September. The surveys will be poured over by the committee and then focus groups will be conducted to ensure that every staff member's response has been captured.

The RSE team is looking at diversity training that can be taken online as there were a number of staff who missed the opportunity to attend the Zoom diversity training that was held in June. Additionally, training for staff on serving Asian Americans, the Latin X community, differently-abled, homeless populations, inclusive thinking and generational differences are also being sought.

Comments and Questions from the Board

Mr. Crawford inquired about the sustainability of the plan of the RSE team. Ms. Hamiel provided that the strategic framework is for the upcoming three years. The plan is that once the audit is completed, the necessary changes can be made in phases rather than all at one time. The goal is also to look through an equity lens as to hopefully avoid the need to continue to evaluate what the Library is doing time and time again. Mindfulness and looking through an equity lens will be key in moving forward. Dr. Iarew requested continued updates on the work of this committee.

Spotlight: FY 2022 Collection Priorities, Blane Halliday, Director for Collection Strategies

Mr. Halliday reported that 2020 is like no year that the Library has seen before. Both the pandemic and social justice movement have forced the Library to re-evaluate.

Pandemic

During the Library's complete closure for three months and limited opening for the next twelve months, Materials Management quickly pivoted in terms of collection philosophy from a priority on physical materials to prioritizing digital materials as physical materials were inaccessible during the three month closure. Physical circulation plummeted to nearly zero while digital circulation increased 31% overall. Overdrive use alone has increased 19% since last year and 40% over two years ago. Physical materials circulation has recovered roughly 20% of where they were pre-pandemic. The share of physical vs digital has flipped, with digital now representing 73.28% of all usage to 26.72% physical over the past year. It appears that reopening in June, is slowly reversing the preference of digital materials towards physical materials. These trends are very similar to other similarly sized libraries throughout the country. The department will be monitoring this closely.

Due to budget constraints, the department must make difficult decisions between buying physical materials, the digital equivalent, or not at all. More times than not, the Library is able to meet the customers' needs through the Inter-Library Loan program within a reasonable amount of time. Spending from 2016 - 2021 has increased on print materials, while spending on digital materials has dropped somewhat. The category of materials that spending is truly decreasing is "other," which is comprised of Blu-rays/DVDs, books on CD, and

things of that nature. While the Library is not seeking to eliminate those items, demand seems to be waning with customers.

Mr. Halliday mentioned three platforms that have recently been enhanced;

- Lectorum's MakeMake: This resource includes over 400 titles from Lectorum--one of the largest US distributors of Spanish language books. All titles are in native Spanish (no translations from English).
- ABCmouse: Another resource focused on the younger set (essentially ages 2-8). Although this was available in the branches for years, due to the pandemic the Library was able to negotiate a remote component. The content is mostly in English and geared towards English speakers, but there are hundreds of puzzles, activities, videos, and books available in Spanish as well.
- Overdrive Magazines: In January, Overdrive took over the old Zinio periodicals platform, giving PGCMLS instant access to thousands of previously-unavailable magazine titles, many of these offered in Spanish, Chinese, French, and other languages.

Social Justice

Interest in materials and content focusing on social justice, reform, anti-racism, and the like skyrocketed. In April, Ingram (the Library's largest book vendor) was engaged to conduct a diversity audit of the Library's print collections. A diversity audit is essentially a way of analyzing the collection data to make sure that the Library is including a wide variety of points of view, experiences, and representations within a collection. This audit looked at 11 typically marginalized groups/areas. Mr. Halliday noted that this audit included only print titles (no e-audio or physical audiobooks, no ebooks, no digital are included). Due to the pandemic, many titles last year were purchased digitally only and therefore these were not included in the audit. Mr. Halliday's department's selectors have been working hard to see that PGCMLS collections represent and welcome all in the Prince George's County community. The audit served as a means to identify gaps in the collection in specified interest areas. Using the audit data, Ingram generated selection lists for each of the interest areas, identifying those that the Library system owned versus those the Library system did not. The Selection Librarians then made purchasing decisions on these titles with the goal being a more diverse and inclusive popular materials collection. The plan is to revisit with a similar audit within 24 months in order to gauge the ongoing progress.

Future Planning

Due to reopening into Phase 3 only a month ago, enough data is not yet available to see where customers would like to see the collection go. Recent consolidations such as Overdrive's acquiring Zinio and Overdrive's even more recent purchase of Kanopy digital video service mean that the customer's experience and interaction with digital content is getting easier and more streamlined. The recent addition of circulating Chromebooks via Online2Go branding means that more County citizens will have even more potential access to these digital resources. PGCMLS is keeping an eye on the recently passed Maryland ebook law, which could

be the harbinger of future litigation between the publishers and public libraries. For the time being, it does not affect how service is provided to customers, but down the line it most certainly could, especially since it was expanded in its final reconciliation process to include “electronic literary products”, not just ebooks. This could include Amazon’s Audible product, which to date has been accessible to all Libraries.

Comments and Questions from the Board

Mr. Crawford inquired about how price fixing and the cost of materials is going up could erode the ability for the Library to purchase needed items for the collection. Mr. Halliday responded that the biggest price increases are seen in both the e-book and e-audio materials. There has also been a change in that previously e-books and e-audio were purchased for the Library to own; however, now the industry has turned to licensing rather than owning. Electronic books or e-audio can be licensed for 24 months or 26 circulations, whichever comes first. At the same time, prices for those licenses are going up. So while the overall amount that is able to be spent on materials, whether electronic or physical, remains the same, the cost of electronic items in large part is eroding the ability for the Library to purchase needed materials for the collection. Mr. Crawford asked if inflationary pressures are being considered in future budget planning and if there is a significant need to increase the materials budget. Mr. Halliday indicated that it is very dependent on the overall Library budget and that there has been a slow decrease in demand for physical materials with the advent of digital materials. Digital materials are also more costly than physical materials. Mr. Crawford cautioned against interpreting the data provided to indicate that there is less demand for physical materials as another way of interpreting the data is that demand has declined as there has been a lack of materials, which would also cause less circulation. Dr. Larew encouraged Mr. Halliday and leadership to ensure inflation is built into the materials budget and ensure that a robust materials budget can be in place.

New Business: Proposal for FY 2022 Internal Budget Reallocation

Mr. Gannon explained that there are many training and conference opportunities that are coming about that leadership would like to be able to offer attendance and travel expenses to staff. It is being proposed that since travel and training was underutilized in FY 2021, that the remaining balance (\$36,800) be shifted instead of into the fund balance but into the operating budget for the purpose of sending more staff to training and conferences. Although training is typically underfunded, this would be a one time only request since so little dedicated travel funding was spent in the previous year. After discussion and encouragement of the Board to ensure that the funds will be spent in a cost efficient manner, Dr. Wright moved to approve the appropriation of \$36,800 from the fund balance to training and associated travel expenses for FY 2022. Ms. Angela Smith seconded the motion and when put to a vote, the motion passed with one abstaining vote.

The proposal also included the internal budget reallocation for FY 2022. Mr. Salehudres reported that the County approved the Library’s ~\$33.4M budget with the County contributing 72%, State \$23.1M, and the

Library generating \$2.4M itself. Operating expenditures are approximately 24.5% of the budget and the only part of the budget that will be impacted by the budget reallocation. Funding within the operating budget is being requested to be moved to ensure that priority items are funded, while not changing the overall budget amount and no money is being requested to be utilized from the fund balance. After some Board inquiry and discussion, Mr. Epps moved to approve the internal budget reallocation as proposed. Dr. Wright seconded the motion and when put to a vote, the motion passed unanimously.

New Business: Proposal an Updated Telework Policy

Ms. Pinnock summarized that in the Library system was closed and working remotely for the better part of a year, the Library wanted to make some adjustments to the policy regarding eligibility and evaluation of those teleworking. Highlighted changes include:

- Excluding hourly employees
- Meeting expectations in an annual evaluation in order to qualify for telework
- Good attendance as a qualifier to telework
- Personal technology requirements
- Telework not to exceed two days per work week
- Episodic or occasional telework to be included

Comments and Questions from the Board

Ms. Toni Smith clarified that employees who work remotely would need to use their own devices to be able to work remotely and raised concerns. Ms. Moore indicated that only a select few staff are able to connect to the internal network through the VPN. Those that are able to connect to the internal network via the VPN have PGCMLS issued and secured devices to ensure security. Mr. Epps moved to approve the updated telework policy and Dr. Wright seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business: Proposal an Updated Telework Policy

Mr. Crawford reported that Ms. Bolivar pointed out that the next regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled to be held on Yom Kippur. Mr. Crawford proposed the meeting be moved to September 23rd. Ms. Bolivar moved to move the Board meeting on September 23, 2021 and make the meeting a hybrid meeting to be held both in person and via Zoom. Ms. Toni Smith seconded the motion and when put to a vote, the motion carried.

Requests to Address the Board

No requests to address the Board.

Closing Statements: Dr. Larew moved to close the public Board meeting and enter into a closed Executive Session for the purpose of administrative planning for the Board retreat and mid-year review for the CEO. Ms. Bolivar seconded Dr. Larew's motion and the motion carried.

- **Adjourn:** 8:56PM