

THE TALBOT COUNTY FREE LIBRARY  
100 W. Dover St.  
Easton, MD 21601  
Minutes of the Board Meeting  
January 20, 2022

The meeting was called to order by Susan Sherman, President at 5:05 pm via Zoom.

Attendees: Marlene Thomas, Hudson Berry, Susan Sherman, Barbara Heatly, Andrew Thaler, Robert Forloney, Estela Ramirez, Heena Paracha, Ron Engle, Town of Easton Representative and Pete Leshner, Talbot County Council Liaison Director, Dana Newman and Assistant Director, Scotti Oliver represented the TCFL

Excused: John Stumpf and Charlie Yonkers

**Action Items:**

**Board members approved removing adult fines on July 1, 2022. Both children and adult accounts will then be fine free.**

**Board members approved increasing the range of the number of board members from 7-10 to 9-12. By-laws to be amended.**

**Board members approved the operating budget request with a change that the salary increase request for library staff would be 6% instead of 4%.**

**Board members approved the Income and Expense statement.**

**Review of the December 2, 2021 Minutes:** Susan Sherman asked the board if there were any changes. Hearing none made a motion to approve with all approving. Motion carried.

Guest: none

**Old Business:**

**Adult Fine discussion and vote**

Dana reviewed some highlights concerning going fine free for adult accounts.

- On July 1, 2022, the library proposes no longer charging fines for adult card holders.
- We will also waive existing fines on adult patron accounts so that after this date of July 1st the library will be fine free.
- Some reasons to consider fine-free are it would encourage prior users to return to the library; libraries that have removed fines have seen an increase in circulation; and interaction between staff and patrons is improved.
- About half of the public libraries in Maryland have gone fine free.
- If our library went fine-free, we would still continue to charge a replacement fee for lost or damaged items and will keep our collection agency to recover lost items.
- The projected loss of revenue, estimated at \$10,000 would be recovered by funds received from our annual appeal. For 2021, this yielded us nearly \$30,000, twice as much that was budgeted so we would have sufficient funds to cover any loss in revenue.

The board discussed that going fine free would be an excellent selling point and could be an attraction to potential donors. Dana explained to the board that the library will begin to publicize this after we get through the budget

process. Susan asked for a motion to go fine free effective July 1, 2022 with Robert Forloney moved and Barbara Healy seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed.

### **Number of Board Members vote**

Susan Sherman made a motion to increase the number of board members from 7-10 to 9-12. Susan made a motion to approve with Estela Ramirez moving and Hudson Berry seconded. All were in favor. The motion passed.

### **New Business:**

#### **FY2023 Proposed Operating Budget and vote**

Dana reviewed the budget sheet with the board showing the request of a flat budget with supplemental requests. The library is submitting a budget of \$1,839,835 with the supplemental requests totaling \$143,662:

- 10% increase to cover health insurance rate costs over the current year and the employer cost to add one staff member hired in the fiscal year to insurance.
- 6% salary increase for staff and the cost to increase a part-time position to fulltime.
- \$25,000 to be put in a trust for OPEB costs (Retiree Health insurance costs).
- \$6,000 increase to operating and administrative budgets.

Dana also reviewed the FY2023 Capital Outlay request of totaling \$107,217:

- Replacement of the meeting room audio visual system with a new updated audio visual and conferencing system.
- Replacement of four computers at the Easton and St. Michaels libraries.

Discussion of the board followed with suggestions to remain focused on the amount of funds needed for the OPEB fund as there will be several library employees close to retirement and we will need money in that fund. Pete Leshner advocated for having the library staff receive a raise similar to County employees and recommends asking for a 5-6% raise. Robert Forloney suggested the board notes specifically that this raise equates what library workers are doing with other staff in County positions. Susan Sherman made a motion to increase the salary raise to 6% with Robert Forloney moving and Andrew Thaler seconded. All were in favor. The motion passed.

### **Patron Facility Survey highlights**

Dana explained to the board that in October the library conducted a patron facilities survey which is helpful both for the planning of the new facilities master plan and for planning for the St. Michaels expansion and renovation. It was heartening to see the data from the survey, especially seeing how many patrons come into the library on a weekly basis. Another interesting piece of data was a very high number of patrons come to use the library for browsing and taking out materials. Dana will send the survey results to the board.

**President's Report**-Susan Sherman reported a few items:

- Barbara Heatly is stepping down from Treasurer but will continue to serve on the board and as liaison to the Foundation. All said thank you to Barbara for her work as Treasurer. While the position is vacant, Charlie Yonkers will perform some of the tasks of the Treasurer, with Dana's support, including check-signing. Susan Sherman and Rob Forloney are also authorized to sign checks.
- The board will be holding some of its meetings in St. Michaels. The next meeting at the St. Michaels library is on June 16, 2022.

**Treasurer's Report** – Dana Newman reviewed the Income and Expense Statement showing the two columns for the current budget year and comparing income and expenses to the previous year. We are pleased that our contributions increased with 2021 seeing \$30,000 in annual gifts. Several donors averaged gifts of \$100 versus \$50 last year. The board thanked Dana for the new format of the financial report and found the chart easy to read and appreciated the notes on the side. Dana thanked John Stumpf for his work on the new report. Susan Sherman made a motion to

approve the Treasurer's report with Robert Forloney moving and Marlene Thomas seconded. All in favor. The motion carried.

**County Council Representative's Report-** Pete Leshar reported that the County Council is receiving budget requests from area agencies and the week of March 1st will be budget hearings.

**Easton Town Council Representative's Report-**Ron Engle reported that Easton will be hosting the Fire and Ice Festival February 18-20. The library will have two ice sculptures featured. Ron suggested that Dana could reach out to the Town of Easton to get on their town docket. The Town will be getting more ARPA grant funds this year so the library can ask for more than \$25,000.

**Librarian's Report-**Dana highlighted a few key items from her report:

- The Foundation met and approved paying \$5,000 for a facilities audit for the St. Michaels library which will help with the next grant application.
- Friends were given an anonymous gift of \$5,000 to go towards expenses of the Chesapeake Children's Book Festival in June.
- The library branches have given over 600 Covid-19 test kits to the public, as well as, KN95 masks. Patrons have been so appreciative.
- We have 50 new Extended Loan Wi-Fi hotspots that can circulate for up to 2 months. Dana encouraged the board to advocate and share with others in the community about this service.
- Due to the increase in Covid cases, we have cut back our in person programming but we have been offering several virtual programs.
- Our annual appeal campaign made over \$30,000 which is double from last year. This shows us how much the community values the library.

**Diversity and Inclusion Committee-** Charles Yonkers was not in attendance and the committee had not met. Scotti shared some highlights including the start of the libraries EDI Book Group. This book group is moderated by Christina Acosta, TCFL Communications Manager and highlights a diverse group of authors. The library will be very interested in studying the results of the 2020 Census as it will help us with our strategic planning. Talbot Family Network is presenting the Dismantling Racism workshop today. We continue to work with our community partners such as Talbot Family Network, Chesapeake Multicultural Center and more.

**Nominating Committee-** Robert Forloney reported that the committee will meet later this month to discuss a potential board member.

**Friends' Report-**Dana reported that Tyson Lubin is no longer on the Friends Council. She reported that Friends had their monthly meeting on Tuesday where Friends are planning a Bowling for Books event TBD. The Friends Council is looking for new members. Friends do a lot of fundraising for the library and are an enthusiastic group.

**Foundation Report-**Dana Newman reported that Barbara Heatly is the new board liaison for the Foundation. The Foundation met this morning:

- The directors voted to have Amanda David, Financial planner at Edward Jones, join the Foundation.
- The portfolio is doing well with the current value of Asset Classes at \$3,062,361.
- Foundation members were asked if anyone wanted to serve on the TCFL Strategic Planning committee.
- The board approved \$5,000 for the St. Michaels facilities audit.
- The board is seeking to hire a consultant for marketing and fundraising, especially giving opportunities for the St. Michaels expansion and renovation.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm. Our next meeting will be on Thursday, February 17, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted, Katie Dodds