

THE TALBOT COUNTY FREE LIBRARY  
100 W. Dover St.  
Easton, MD 21601  
Minutes of the Board Meeting  
April 21, 2022

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

Attendees: Hudson Berry, Susan Sherman, Charles Yonkers, John Stumpf, Heena Paracha, Ron Engle, Town of Easton Representative and Pete Leshar, Talbot County Council Liaison  
Director, Dana Newman and Assistant Director, Scotti Oliver represented the TCFL, Emilie Knud-Hansen, President of TCFL Friends and prospective board member, Leslie Parkerson  
Excused: Marlene Thomas, Andrew Thaler, Barbara Heatly, Robert Forloney  
Absent: Estela Ramirez

**Action Items:**

**Board members present approved the February 17, 2022 minutes, vote carried over to email as there was not a quorum at the meeting. Three additional emails were received to approve the February 17 minutes.**

**Board members present approved the Income and Expense Statement, vote carried over to email as there was not a quorum at the meeting. Three additional emails were received to approve the Treasurer's Report.**

**Board members present agreed that holding future board meetings in person with a hybrid option was a good idea. Board members not present will be asked for their feedback via email.**

**General reminders:**

**Dana will bring recommendations about some meeting room policy updates to the next board meeting or the one after that.**

**Susan proposed to the board that half our meetings next year be held in St. Michaels.**

**A poll will be sent out to determine a date for the August retreat.**

**Susan will send an email to board members asking to vote on Leslie Parkerson.**

Susan opened the meeting by introducing a prospective board member, Leslie Parkerson. Leslie has a financial background, has always loved and supported the library and wants to be more involved with the community. The board welcomed her to the meeting.

**Review of the February 17, 2022 Minutes:** Susan Sherman asked the board if there were any changes. Hearing none asked for a motion. John Stumpf moved with Charles Yonkers seconded. All approved and the motion carried. The vote was carried over to email as there was not a quorum at the meeting. Three additional emails were received to approve the February 17 minutes.

**Guest:** none

**Old Business:** none

**New Business:**

### **Strategic Planning update**

Dana shared with the board some updates on the strategic survey and upcoming focus groups:

- The strategic survey has been extended to April 29th so all were encouraged to complete the survey which is in both English and Spanish. So far, we have received over 250 responses and are hoping for more. A few interesting statistics from the survey were highlighted:
  - 38.5% of responders visit the library one or more times a month
  - 84.8% of visitors use the library to check out books and materials
  - One helpful statistic that will help the Strategic Planning Taskforce, is the number one service patrons said they wanted to see is more programming for seniors.
  - Dana explained that the goal of the survey is to find out what the community needs are and what we should be focusing on as we develop our strategic plan.
  - The library will be holding a Teen Focus group at Easton and at St. Michaels, as well as, a Public community focus group at each branch. Board members were encouraged to attend one of the public focus groups.

### **Meeting Room policy possible changes**

Dana explained that there are a few concerns about our meeting room policies in that we have had a few instances where patrons were not understanding our patron code of conduct. Our library meeting room policies currently do not allow fundraising, no selling of things, no political campaigning and no religious services. Groups may hold business meetings. Our meeting room is open to the public so is a limited public forum which allows groups to use the room and express themselves under the First Amendment and so the library will be getting some legal opinions as we go forward. Dana shared a chart showing what several other Maryland library policies are in these areas and will bring a recommendation to the next board meeting or the one after that.

### **Meeting in-person or via Zoom**

Susan asked the board whether they wanted to hold future board meetings in person or a hybrid format. It was suggested that people call in if you can't attend in person. The board discussed the options and decided that the next meeting in May will be a hybrid meeting in Easton. The June meeting will be hybrid in St. Michaels pending the testing of the equipment. Susan also proposed to the board that half our meetings next year (2023) be held at St. Michaels.

### **Budget update**

Dana reviewed with the board that she is completing a capital grant FY24 for the St. Michaels renovation & expansion project. She noted that costs for the project have gone up close to 30%. Pete Leshner will be reporting further on the library budget in his report.

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

- The Foundation Directors met this morning and heard a presentation from Ms. Jayme Dinger who is a marketing consultant with What's Good, LLC. The Foundation will be contracting her to develop a marketing plan for the library. The goal of her work is to increase the library and Foundation

relationships in the community which can later lead into a capital campaign for the St. Michaels renovation and expansion project. Jayme will be developing a taskforce and so if any board members would like to join, to let Susan know.

- The Executive Committee met and discussed holding our board retreat in August where these three topics might be covered:
  - Board self-evaluations and board effectiveness;
  - Banning books-we will help the board understand what is going on with this issue and hone a unified response;
  - Invitation for Jayme Dinger to present the marketing and fundraising plan she puts together as a result of the taskforce meetings.

Our board meetings fall under public meetings and so a recommendation was made to put a notice at the end of the agenda saying time for public comment. After hearing what the County Council follows, which is that meetings are open meetings which means the public may listen but there is no expectation that they may speak, our board will not put this note on the agenda.

### **Treasurer's Report –**

Dana Newman reviewed the Quarterly balance sheet and asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, she shared the Income and Expense Statement which shows activity through the end of March 2022.

- It was brought to the board's attention the yellow highlighted item which reflects a negative of - 1,074.05. This reflects an amount due from the Friends so that is why it is negative.
- The public funds say \$0.00 due to the fact that the County grant was pending.
- The comments are the same as the last report except in the health insurance category where the March and April payments had not been made yet.

Susan Sherman asked for a motion to approve the Treasurer's report with Charles Yonkers moving and Susan Sherman seconded. All in favor. The motion carried. The vote was carried over to email as there was not a quorum at the meeting. Three additional emails were received to approve the Treasurer's Report.

**County Council Representative's Report-** Pete Leshar reported that the County Council is fully funding the library budget requests, even funding the start of an OPEB fund. Pete reminded the board that the budget still has to go to the public hearing and then voted on, but that essentially, the library will be receiving its request. Dana thanked Pete for his advocacy and all on the board thanked Pete for his continued support.

**Easton Town Council Representative's Report -** Ron Engle reported that the Town of Easton has been challenged in being able to competitively fund some key positions, such as police officers. There is a new CEO at the Economic Development Commission. The Town is working on some improvements such as signage at the new John Ford Park and expanding the growth at South Point. The Town is going to hold a Comp Plan meeting that all are welcome to attend and will be recorded on Zoom. This is a critical meeting for our planning and the town of Easton. Ron lifted up the fact that Dana has worked at many public events in the town which is good for building relationships between the town and the library.

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

- There was a security incident at the St. Michaels library where a man was observed breaking several window panes on the Children's area side. Shauna is following up with both the police and County maintenance.
- National Library week held April 4-9, featured an array of events, including Bill Peak reading from his children's book.
- AARP did a wonderful job providing free tax-aide to over 130 patrons at both branches. We are fortunate to have this great partnership.

- We are continuing to build relationships with BAAM and the Chesapeake Multicultural Center.

**Diversity and Inclusion Committee-** Charles Yonkers reported that the committee met yesterday and are busy partnering with several community agencies, such as the Senior Center and the Chesapeake Multicultural center. Charles relayed to the group how he attended a workshop sponsored by United for Libraries where the topic was the rising book banning concern. It is alarming seeing this national attack on libraries of wanting to influence and censor library collections. The library will need to prepare staff by looking at our collection policy and how to best collectively respond as a board.

**Nominating Committee-** There was no one at the board meeting on this committee, but Susan thanked the committee for inviting Leslie Parkerson. Susan relayed that the board will take a vote and will be in touch directly with Leslie on approving her for being a new board member.

**Friends' Report-** Emilie Knud-Hanson introduced herself as the President of the Friends Council and highlighted several upcoming Friends events:

- Friends donated \$1,000 to the Chesapeake Children's Book Festival.
- May begins their membership drive
- Several book sales are being planned with the date of June 17th being the first sale at Easton. Book donations will begin on Tuesdays before the sale.
- We have a few fundraiser ideas being planned, such as an Improv Night and a Friends cruise on The Patriot with proceeds to go to St. Michaels.
- We could use some more Friends on the Council and so if anyone is interested in being on the Council we are looking for new members. A goal is to have a Teen on the council.
- Friends are involved with the Strategic Planning focus groups.

**Foundation Report-**Dana Newman reported that the Foundation met this morning and heard the presentation by Jayme Dingler. The Foundation will seek to hire Jayme to create a marketing plan for the library. FBB financial planners circulated their portfolio report showing an ending value, as of the end of March 2022, of \$3,001,391. The Foundation received several donations, including an anonymous gift of \$10,000 to create an archive of the history of the Talbot Boys statue.

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm. Our next meeting will be on Thursday, May 19, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. via hybrid format at Easton.

A reminder that the June 16<sup>th</sup> board meeting will be held at St. Michaels, in person and hybrid pending the testing of equipment.

Respectfully submitted, Katie Dodds