

THE TALBOT COUNTY FREE LIBRARY
100 W. Dover St.
Easton, MD 21601
Minutes of the Board Meeting
May 18, 2023

The meeting was called to order by Susan Sherman, President at 5:05 pm. Meeting held in Easton.

Attendees: Susan Sherman, Charles Yonkers, Marlene Thomas, Becky Amaral, Mary Pellicano, Robert Forloney, and Sue Regier

Director, Dana Newman and Christina Acosta Communications Manager represented the TCFL.

Excused: Pete Leshner, Talbot County Liaison, Andrew Thaler, and Scotti Oliver, Assistant Director

Absent: Estela Ramirez, Heena Paracha

Action Items:

Board members approved the April 20, 2023 minutes.

Board members approved the Income and Expense Statement.

Board members approved the TCFL Resolution Authorizing USDA Grant Application

Action items that didn't require a vote:

Dana Newman will send the board videos on succession planning.

The terms of service will be added to the board roster.

Susan Sherman will send a thank you letter to Ron Engle for his service to the board.

Susan Sherman will send out action items for the June board meeting.

The board was reminded to turn in volunteer hours to Sabine Simonson.

Susan Sherman called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. and thanked all for attending. The goal of our work is to come up with action items for what the board needs to do with all the information we gathered from last month and tonight. We will discuss these action items at our June board meeting.

Review of the April 20, 2023 Minutes: Susan Sherman asked the board if there were any changes. Hearing none, asked for a motion to approve with Robert Forloney moving and Charlie Yonkers seconding. The motion carried.

The treasurer's report had been emailed to the board prior to this meeting. Dana Newman asked if there were questions. Hearing no other questions, Susan Sherman asked for a motion to approve the Treasurer's report with Robert Forloney moving and Charlie Yonkers seconded. All in favor. The motion carried.

Guests: No guest

Dana Newman: General reminders:

Ron Engle is no longer our Town of Easton liaison. He sends his well wishes. Individual board members are welcome to send a thank you card to him. Susan will draft a thank you letter from the board.

The Chesapeake Children's Book Festival is on June 24th and we look forward to having over 20 authors. Please talk to Scotti if you would like to volunteer.

We also have a Delmarva blood drive, Hunger Coalition panel, and outreach event sponsored by PNC at Moton Park and we welcome author Patrick Smithwick. We have a lot of interesting events coming up if the board can help to promote.

New Business:

Talbot County Free Library Resolution Authorizing USDA Grant Application:

Dana explained to the board that the library has applied for this grant and there are several steps in the application process to receive funding. A motion was made to approve the submission of this grant and to authorize Dana Newman to oversee the grant and accept funds for the library with Charlie Yonkers moving and Susan Sherman seconded. All in favor. The motion carried.

Old Business: Board effectiveness training completion

FINANCE

Our board can be held liable if we are faced with fraud or other issues. The board is responsible and so we want to make sure we are all aware of the finances. Several layers of accountability:

- Board meetings are held nine times during the year.
- Annual audit
- We have a board Treasurer.
- Dana Newman highlights items to note on the monthly ledger.
- For those board members who sign checks we have separate categories and the process is kept separate in that there is an accountant who prepares checks and board members alternate signing the checks.
- Each year a 1099 is prepared and is a public document.
- Financial reports are sent out a week before a board meeting which gives members time to review. We have good oversight.
- Division of duties helps the budget process as it feels transparent.
- The public is welcome to attend board meetings.
- The fact that we are holding this meeting tonight shows transparency.

Does the board understand the budget process?

- What is the budget process?
 - Dana went over the process briefly where in the fall October/November, they start to look at the needs for the following year.
 - January is the month where we bring the budget to the board to review.

- One of the goals is to tie closer together the budget with the strategic plan.
- An idea could be having the Board Finance committee meet with Dana in December to see if there are any questions.
- Dana further explained that in January/February the County sends the letter of instruction. County agencies send in a budget that is the same as the year before but with a supplemental requests with this.
- The library staff are not County employees so we manage the hiring and make salary decisions.
- The County gives us 80% of our funding. The County does a lot for the library such as building upkeep and offering a health plan.
- Robert Forloney reminded the group that the board is a governing board so we can suggest things but we don't tell the library the specifics, such as with hiring.
- Both the capital and operating budgets are approved by the Board so the board needs to have an understanding of the budget process and recommendations.

Fundraising questions?

- The library has asked the board for their support in the St. Michaels Expansion and Renovation project.
- Sue Regier explained that there is a Development Work group under the Foundation. The Foundation is now the lead and will take on the bulk of the fundraising. We are working with a consultant, Mr. Graham Lee who knows the area and has many contacts. We are highlighting potential donors and are hoping the board can be involved in some of the fundraising ideas, such as hosting small home parties.

TRAINING

What training have we had recently?

- EDI Training
- Intellectual Freedom and Censorship training
- Purchasing of books.
- Board committees might submit a written report a week before board meetings.

What training should we have?

- Library utilization especially around advocacy.
 - What are the trends?
 - How are libraries used today both practically and theoretically?
- Recommend reading the book, *The Library Book* by Susan Orlean.
- Dana Newman, Sue Regier and Jo Powers went to the Future of Libraries conference. Mary Pellicano and a number of staff attended the MLA Conference.
- Helpful to see what other libraries do by going on site visits.

Prioritizing the training to the top three:

- Fundraising-Friendraising/Advocacy
- Library Activities
- Best practices by boards

We can do these trainings three times a year by adding on about 15 minutes to a regular board meeting. In between meetings the board can send out helpful articles. At our September board meeting we could cover our first training topic on Fundraising-Friendraising/Advocacy. We can ask the Development work group to do a presentation. It is important to share knowledge.

BOARD RECRUITMENT DIVERSITY, ENGAGEMENT AND RETENTION

Board members discussed how to keep board members engaged:

- Snacks
- Ask board members what interests them as this can help a member focus on a responsibility.
- Find out what the library needs.
- Volunteer at outreach events, such as manning the table at the Farmers Market.
- It would be helpful to receive a list from the library of what is going on at the library and actually sign up.
- Think about how people are involved, for instance maybe there is someone who wouldn't be able to be a full board member but could they advise or serve on a committee. There are others ways to be involved.

Our board has had several new members. Ideally, terms are staggered with term limits. All board members should be involved in recruiting new members but we have the Nominating committee who does this. The board gives the committee suggested names of potential board members and the committee reaches out to them to have a conversation to make sure it would be a good fit. We also do a public announcement of new board members.

- Suggest that on each board meeting agenda we add members term of service.
- The Nominating committee actively seeks diversity culturally, socio-economically, racially.
- We are seeking to have another Teen on our board.
- Continuity of board members has been a challenge and it has been a challenge to recruit younger board members.
- Zoom helps to retain members.
- It is a challenge when there are library activities during the day when board members might work. It makes it difficult to attend these daytime events.
- Offer more social activities that board members can attend where we can talk about non-business matters and get to know each other better in a social setting.

BOARD EFFECTIVENESS/EVALUATION:

Susan Sherman will write out action items for next months meeting. This can help us figure out what we are going to measure. It will help identify what we can do. For instance, how often should we measure our effectiveness?

- Yearly evaluation
- Total hours volunteered.
- Executive Committee feedback.
- Evaluate at the end of the fiscal year.
- Formal evaluation done at the end of the year.

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm. **Our next regular board meeting will be on Thursday, June 15, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. at St. Michaels.** Respectfully submitted, Katie Dodds