

THE TALBOT COUNTY FREE LIBRARY
100 W. Dover St.
Easton, MD 21601
Minutes of the Board Meeting
February 20, 2025

The meeting was called to order by Susan Sherman at 5:00 pm. Meeting held at the Easton Library.

Attendees: Susan Sherman, Charles Yonkers, Ron Engle, Andrew Thaler, Robert Forloney, Sue Regier, Mary Pellicano, Becky Amaral, Sandy Boyd, Mia Mazzeo, Student Liaison to the Board, Director, Dana Newman, Scotti Oliver, Assistant Director, Shauna Beulah, St. Michaels Branch Manager, Represented the TCFL.
Excused: Don Abbatiello, Town of Easton, Vivi Morris, Alexis Roiter, and Terry Moore
Also attending: Guest Emma Poole, TCFL Communications Manager

Action Items:

- Board members voted on and approved the January 16, 2025 minutes.
- Board members voted on and approved the Treasurer's Report: Income and Expense Statement & Statement of Activities reports.
- Board members voted on and the motion carried with a majority vote/two opposed to support signing the draft letter from the Talbot Equity Coalition to the County.
- On February 24th at a virtual meeting, the board unanimously voted to sign the final letter.
- A reminder that the board will vote on the Medicare Retiree HRA policy at the April meeting.
- Reminder that we will hold a second board training at the April meeting on book banning.
- Reminder that the date for the joint social gathering of the three boards (Trustees, Foundation and Friends) will be Tuesday, April 8th at The Ivy from 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m

Review of the January 16, 2025, Minutes: Susan Sherman asked the board if there were any changes or corrections. Hearing none, asked for a motion to approve with Mary Pellicano moving and Andrew Thaler seconding. All were in favor with none opposed. The motion carried.

Guest: Emma Poole, TCFL Communications Manager

Scotti introduced Emma, who is a recent graduate of Washington College where she has experience working in their Admissions and Marketing offices. The library is excited to have her with us. Emma thanked everyone for welcoming her and that she has begun her work already. She attended Legislative Day in Annapolis and has gotten started on several projects.

The board welcomed Emma to the library.

Advocacy sharing:

Susan and Dana shared that they have received information from the County Council that one of the agenda items for their next meeting will include an amendment to remove the EDI statement from the County's employee handbook. As a result of this amendment the Talbot Equity Coalition, which is a group of county organizations and which the library is a member, has drafted a letter of concern to the County. The Executive Board met today to review the draft of this letter and discussed the content of the letter and the general environment libraries are finding themselves in today. Susan circulated the draft of the letter to all board members and said that a final letter has not been received yet and did the board have any comments. The board discussed the pros and cons of supporting this letter. We want to be supportive of keeping the EDI statement in the County employee handbook but there is also concern about future funding from the federal government. The board agreed that we need to view the final letter before signing on.

Old Business: None

Note: While the meeting was continuing, it was brought to our attention that the final letter was received and so while copies were being made, we moved to an agenda item:

Teen Liaison's Report-Mia Mazzeo reported that the first book group meeting for the American Girl Doll History Book Club went very well. The group made necklaces and talked about the book. We look forward to the next meeting which will discuss a book on Western expansion. We are also in the midst of planning the summer STEAM event. The sign up begins on April 1st. Mia was encouraged to approach the Friends for help with funding for STEAM.

New Business:**100th Year programming:**

Dana encouraged the board to submit any ideas for programs and events for our 100th to herself or to Scotti. Our goal is to have several 100th themed events leading up to the gala on October 16th. Oral histories, and other historical events are in the planning stages.

The final letter from the coalition was handed out to the board with two suggestions. One is to include the recommendation that we add the library's EDI book club, and the other is to take out racial equity in the 2nd paragraph. The board also thought generally, the letter is too long. Some board members wanted to sign the letter now and others wanted to wait to see a final copy of the letter.

Mary Pellicano made a motion that the TCFL Board of Trustees join the Talbot Equity Coalition to sign the letter to the County Council to not remove the EDI statement from the handbook for County employees with Sandy Boyd seconding. A vote was taken to sign the letter with a majority of the board approving. Two board members opposed on the grounds that the letter was still in draft form. With a majority approving, the motion carried. On February 24th at a virtual meeting, the board unanimously voted to sign the final letter.

Introduction of Medicare Retiree HRA proposed policy:

Dana shared a handout outlining the current benefit policy and explained some of the proposed changes highlighted in red. The reason for some of the changes is some plans differ and are not as detailed and so

we wanted to word it differently. Our insurance agent, Avon-Dixon, recommended more details. One change is we now have a ceiling for maximum benefits. Dana asked the board to review the changes and if there were any questions, to send them to her. We will vote on this document at the April board meeting.

Maryland FMLA update:

Dana shared that she just wanted the board to be aware that the state is proposing a delay in implementation of the timeline for Family Medical Leave insurance. This is due to the large state deficit in front of them.

Annual Report Highlights:

Scotti referred members to Annual Report by the numbers. The full annual report will be completed soon. A few highlights included circulation numbers being up, as well as, web site visits. The number of reference questions has also increased. 40% of reference questions are for the Maryland Room. An interesting fact is the high patron use of Hoopla. 40% of our circulation is through online resources like Hoopla showing that while some patrons cannot come into the library, they are accessing our online resources.

President's Report-Susan Sherman shared that she attended Legislative Day in Annapolis and it was a great event. The Centennial committee has been meeting and Susan added that she is also a member of the Food and Drink sub-committee. The ESRL board is currently updating their policy manual.

Treasurer's Report

Mary Pellicano had sent out her report for board review. Earlier, the finance committee reviewed the Income and Expense report & Statement of Activities and approved the documents. To note:

- We are more than halfway through the fiscal year and our total revenue is 51.8% of what has been budgeted.
- On the expense side, we are just under half our budget at 46%.

Susan Sherman made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report with Sue Regier moving and Andrew Thaler seconding. All approved and none opposed. The motion carried.

County Council Representative's Report- Pete Leshar was not present and did not have a report.

Easton Town Council Representative's Report –Don Abbatiello was not present but did let Susan know in an email that if anything comes up that needs the town's attention to let him know. Also, Don has heard from Rick Van Emburgh last week and as soon as the weather gets better, the sidewalk work should begin.

Librarian's Report-Dana added a few highlights to her report:

- Tomorrow we will be meeting with the County Manager regarding the budget and we will keep the board informed of the results.
- Construction is now in the demo stage at the St. Michaels library and we have construction meetings monthly. Andrew Thaler is the St. Michaels library liaison and notes that the demolition process is moving along at a good pace. Some storm drains and other work concerning stormwater had to be addressed. There is the weather to consider but it is going well.
- Amy Wise will be promoted to Assistant Branch Manager at the St. Michaels library. We will also be advertising internally an opening for a Circulation Clerk at St. Michaels.
- Shauna Beulah added the good news that Christmas in St. Michaels gave the library a gift of \$15,000. This will be used towards children's materials at St. Michaels.

Diversity and Inclusion Committee- Charles Yonkers had nothing to report.

Nominating Committee: Robert had nothing to report.

Friends' Report- Sue Regier reviewed her report and highlighted that Friends approved \$10,000 for the library with \$5,000 going towards the CCBF10 and \$5,000 for Summer Reading. Sue clarified that the Friends are also giving the library \$50,000 for books for St. Michaels. Our newsletter editor, Lauren, would like to receive book reviews for the Friends newsletter.

Foundation Report- Dana Newman reported that the Foundation received an anonymous \$25,000 gift. One of the requirements of the gift is that it needed to be segregated into a separate account and so this account was set up at Shore United as a 90 day money market account.

The board meeting officially closed at 6:15 p.m.

Reminder: There is no board meeting in the month of March.

Reminder: Our next meeting will be on Thursday, April 17, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. at Easton.

Respectfully submitted, Katie Dodds