



DORCHESTER COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

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Hurlock MD 21643
(410) 943-4331

Dorchester County Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, January 19, 2022
Central Branch/Zoom at 6:30pm

Attendees: Crystal Henningsen, Julie Kennedy, Anne Whaples, Claudia White-Cooke, Frances Windsor, Talibah Chikwendu, LaSara Kinser, Kierra Farrare, Wyrta Myster, Amanda Reece, Amber McGinnis, Clinton Weems

Call to Order - 6:31pm, Ms. Chikwendu

Approval of Minutes (No changes needed)

New Business

Audit Presentation - Brian from PKS shared highlights from the last completed audit, noting majority of funding comes from MSDE and the County. The financial reports all report fairly. Our updated OPEB actuary report is good for the next two years.

Introductions of New Board of Trustees Members

Brandon Hesson was unable to be in attendance.

Kierra Farrare is a seventh grade math teacher, a Dorchester native, and was referred by Ms. Chikwendu.

Director's Report

Meeting Room Renovation:

Things are going very well and are on track time-wise. Everything is painted, and only need to complete the floor. The Library would like to continue to use Shore Thing Construction, Inc. for any future projects if floor laying also goes well. The project is on track for use by AARP for tax time. Textured concrete flooring will be put down and rubber bumpers will be added along the walls.

During the renovation, Shore Thing, Inc. discovered that joists were placed horizontally on the concrete walls, which would normally be vertical, so those had to be redone. They also discovered that the glue had not been removed from previous carpet installations beginning in the 1970s. This required additional sanding to remove the layers of glue, and may explain why the carpet glue broke down so easily from the recent installation. The glue removal and stud placement increased the project cost by \$3,300. Aero also needed to be scheduled to remove the HVAC casing, which was an additional \$2,249, for a total of \$5,549. Fundraising and grant applications are still in the works, but were delayed due to COVID fallout.

Bed Bug Update:

The first bed bug portable heating device has arrived. When not fully packed, it can reach heat requirements in two hours. If fully packed, it can take six. Hurlock staff will begin testing this next week to check and make sure it's not putting out too much heat for their building. If it works, two units will be purchased for Cambridge. If successful, it will drastically cut down on quarantine and treatment time.

The Library is still waiting for return calls from other exterminators. Ms. Henningsen is seeking a contract to have monthly dog inspections so that materials and areas can be treated before problems get out of hand. Hopefully, the heating units and dog inspections would reduce overall treatment costs.

Staff are still seeing evidence of community spread. Some patrons have been addressed and told not to return until the problem is resolved.

COVID Changes:

Post-holiday season, COVID-19 had a direct impact on employees, resulting in sever staff shortages. As a result:

Central Branch hours were modified to:

Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays – 10am-6pm

Tuesdays – 12pm-8pm

Fridays & Saturdays – Curbside only.

This allows Hurlock to not have to close to come help at Cambridge. Other libraries are closing satellite branches to filter in their people to their central branches. We are doing it this way to not take anything else from Hurlock. At least 2 local library systems did not return to their pre-pandemic hours where staff are being split up, whereas we did at Cambridge. Anne Whaples commended the staff for keeping things going and open during all of the problematic issues happening. Changes to Tuesday and Thursday help eliminate splitting the staff between morning and evening shifts. Curbside Fridays and Saturdays also allows for minimal staff to provide services.

The Health Department was distributing KN95 masks and providing them for staff and patrons. More will be brought to us when they get more back in. An email was sent to staff about the possibility to get fit tested with the N95 masks if needed. The Library is sharing the link for COVID-19 testing kits that can be sent to home addresses and will help patrons register for the kits.

Mask challenges have been mostly minimal, but we redid the wording on the signs several times to clarify the language.

Hurlock Building Project:

The letters of support are nearly completed for Hurlock and Vienna. A Memorandum of Understanding was drawn up by Hurlock's lawyer and emailed to the Board. This states that the land will be given to the Library, but should the Library leave the property, it reverts back to the Town of Hurlock. This should be read by the Board and reviewed by a lawyer. The deadline to submit a capital grant for this year is March 1, so we may have to wait until next year to apply as many letters and paperwork are still needed.

County Council Budget Request FY23:

The budget request includes:

- A COLA of 2% for all staff members. Libraries are also approaching the State Legislation for a per capita increase. The 2% increase comes to about \$13,000.
- Information about the Meeting Room and the Hurlock building project was included.
- A statement that the Library, Board, and Town of Hurlock will be approaching them regarding the new Hurlock Branch Library in the near future for letters of support, but funding would not be necessary until FY24 at the earliest.

ESRL Governance Update:

Talibah Chikwendu and Ms. Henningsen attended the Regional Libraries Conference in Annapolis back in December. The main document was broken down into sections and small groups were formed to discuss each one, then the groups rotated for additional review. In the end, the libraries the most at risk felt heard and were able to rewrite the portions of most concern. The next step is for a lawyer to review the document to confirm or deny the changes. After the review, the document will be resubmitted to the group for discussion. Once

everyone is mostly in agreement, the changes will be turned into a bill and presented to the Governor.

Water Main Break:

The Central Branch had to close on November 30, December 1, and December 2, for a water main break near the County Office Building. This left the Courthouse, County Office, Library, and nearby apartment building without water for several days until it was repaired.

Committee Discussion and Appointments:

Ms. Chikwendu read over the committees and their purposes and noted that people may have to be on more than one committee. Ms. Chikwendu assigned the following (*please note, some names may need adjusted as these were to be finalized via email):

Committee of Building and Equipment: Ms. Kinser, Mr. Hesson, Ms. McGinnis. This committee has charge of the general policies relative to provisions for necessary equipment and procurement of a place of building suitable for library purposes. They will play a big role in the Hurlock Building Project and join the Director in critical architect and contractor meetings, assist with selection of contractors, and creating/give presentations to the County/Town Councils as needed.

**Committee on Finance:* Ms. White-Cooke, Mr. Hesson, Ms. Myster. This committee reviews the Director's recommendations relative to the acquisition of funds and proper financing of the Library. This will include the Treasurer and 4 additional members for five total. They are responsible for approving the annual and amended budgets and presenting them to the Board of Trustees. They would meet with the Director to discuss the budget no less than 3 times per year and present results to the entire Board for a vote.

Planning and Development Committee: Ms. Whaples, Ms. Chikwendu, Ms. Farrare. This committee is responsible for the long range objectives for Public Library Service and consists of three members. They are responsible for tracking Library trends and services, collaborating with the Director to establish a 3-5 year strategic plan, and will alert the Board to opportunities and needs for improvement in the Library's progress.

For example, South Dorchester is the Library's most underserved population. One idea to increase services is placement of a Book Locker that could also serve as a mobile hotspot. Patrons could place holds on materials and have them delivered to a kiosk with a set of lockers. When they scan their Library card, the lockers would open and the materials would be checked out and ready for them. There are ways to connect a mobile hotspot to the locker as well, to provide another connectivity option within the community. The committee would talk to members of the community to inquire about interest and placement and would work with the Director to see the project through to fruition.

Personnel Committee: Ms. Whaples, Ms. White-Cooke, Ms. Farrare, Ms. Reece, Ms. Myster. This committee is responsible for reviewing job descriptions, formulating and recommending salary scale with step increases, working with Director on staff evaluations, and consists of five members. They traditionally review and update existing job descriptions with the Director to ensure accuracy. Should an employee be recommended for termination, the committee would meet with the Director to review all complaints and concerns. They would then determine a course of action to be presented to the Board of Trustees in a closed session. They are also responsible for reviewing employee grievances. For example, if an employee is written up for excessive tardiness and feels that the Director has been unjust, they may request a meeting with the Personnel Committee to have the case reviewed.

Nominating Committee: Ms. Windsor, Ms. Farrare, Ms. Kinser. This committee is responsible for presenting a list of officers and Trustee candidates at the July meeting and should consist of three members. They are responsible for reviewing Trustee candidates and for presenting a list of Executive Committee members (President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary) to the Board of Trustees for a vote.

Adjournment - 7:29pm, Ms. Chikwendu