

THE TALBOT COUNTY FREE LIBRARY
100 W. Dover St.
Easton, MD 21601
Minutes of the Board Meeting
December 2, 2021

The meeting was called to order by Susan Sherman, President at 5:00 pm.

Attendees: Marlene Thomas, Hudson Berry, Charles Yonkers, Susan Sherman, Barbara Heatly, Andrew Thaler, John Stumpf, Robert Forloney, Tyson Lubin, Talbot County Free Library Friends, Ron Engle, Town of Easton Representative and Pete Leshner, Talbot County Council Liaison

Director, Dana Newman and Assistant Director, Scotti Oliver represented the TCFL

Guests: Amy Wise, TCFL Library Associate

Absent: Estela Ramirez, Heena Paracha

Action Items:

- **Board members discussed eliminating adult fines and subsequently asked that Dana write up a motion approving the library to eliminate adult fines that can be taken to the next board meeting in January 2022.**
- **Board members discussed updating the number of board members from a range of 7-10 to a range of 9-12. The board approved having Susan send out a motion to be voted on at the next board meeting in January 2022.**
- **Dana will send out the dates for Strategic Planning meetings to be held 5-6:30pm starting in February 2022.**
- **Board approved the statement of activities and were in favor of the draft of the new format of the treasurer's report.**
- **The board will hold a few meetings in 2022 at the St. Michaels library.**

Review of the October 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: Amy Wise, Library Associate at the St. Michaels branch. All welcomed Amy who explained her role at the library:

*I have been here three years and before coming here worked at the Glen Burnie, MD branch and the library in Cambridge, MD. There are so many opportunities and I really love this job.

*I do programming with youth at both branches and conduct outreach at the St. Michaels Community Center, especially with STEM. I enjoy organizing the Minecraft club for youth, working with tweens and teens and presenting programs on 3-D printing. Thanks to board member Andrew Thaler for donating a 3-D printer and teaching me skills in this area.

*Some other tasks I do is managing the libraries Instagram account and overseeing scavenger hunts for the new SEA card. A goal of mine is to further develop virtual gaming projects.

All on the board thanked Amy for her work.

Ron Engle had to leave the meeting early so he presented his report:

Easton Town Council Representative's Report-Phase one of the Rails to Trails is done. This is the trail that will extend from Aurora Street down to Port St. The process is slow going, but we are excited to have this phase completed. The last of the funds to applicants who applied for grants has been distributed. The library received funds from the town ARPA funds. Ron encouraged all to attend the holiday town parade on Saturday at 6:30pm.

Old Business: Dana reviewed the results of the email votes. The votes were discussed at the last meeting, but due to not having a quorum, the votes were taken via email:

*Draft of the audit

*December 23rd closure for the holidays

*Representation of 2 people to the ESRL board

*statement of activities and quarterly balance

All of these items were approved by the board.

New Business:

Adult fine discussion

Dana gave a brief history of fines and how there had been concern of lost revenue. Since then, there has been a law with public libraries in Maryland to no longer charge fines for those under 18. Our library has instituted this law and it has been well received. Dana then asked the board to discuss the possibility of not charging fines for adults.

- If our library went fine-free, we would still continue to charge a replacement fee for lost items.
- 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 with staff and patrons is improved.
- The board discussed a few ideas for ways to build any revenue lost to charging fines and researching special materials tracking software.

The board asked that Dana Newman write a motion that can be sent ahead of time to the board for voting on at the next meeting in January.

Board bylaws

Susan Sherman explained to the board that we currently have 7-10 members of the board. The board is a full board now and with other strong candidates who could help the board and lots of events going on, Susan proposed increasing this membership to 9-12. Robert Forloney added that this is an important move as we can benefit from having advisors, it increases the chance for a quorum and it helps with staggering board terms. Susan Sherman will write a motion that can be sent to the board ahead of time for voting on at the next meeting in January.

Strategic planning process

Dana Newman reviewed the process with the board saying that if there are board members who would like to serve on the strategic planning taskforce to let Susan Sherman know. The taskforce will be a mix of board members, TCFL staff and other community partners. We hope to complete this process in FY2023. We will hold monthly meetings for 1.5 hrs (5:00 p.m.-6:30 p.m.) and the meetings will take place before the monthly board meetings. Dana will send out to the board a list of planning meetings starting in February 2022.

New format for treasurer's report discussion

Dana reviewed with the board the new format for the treasurer's report and emphasized that it was a sample only. The sheet breaks down data into three areas: Current Month, Year to Date and % of Annual Budget Consumed. Board members liked the color coding, the total income column and comparing current and previous years is a good overview.

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

- The library annual appeal letter has gone out. If board members haven't received one yet, it should be on its way.
- Susan and Dana met with Cassandra Vanhooser, regarding the Frederick Douglass literary landmark established at the Tuckahoe Park. Tentatively in September, there will be ribbon cutting to commemorate this event.
- The board was invited to the library holiday party on Wednesday, December 15th from 6-8pm. It is a lovely event each year and the board was encouraged to attend.

Treasurer's Report – Dana Newman reviewed the Statement of Activities report for July-October 2021. We are showing public funds at 33.5% of the budget and our total income at 33.2%. Salaries and payroll expenses are where we should be for this timeframe. The DVDs line shows zero purchases but the library has placed a large order of DVDs. There will be a new treasurer's report to replace the statement of activities in January. Susan Sherman asked for the board to approve both the statement of activities and to work with the new budget. All in favor. The motion carried.

County Council Representative's Report- Pete Leshner did not have a report.

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

- Susan Sherman and Dana attended the regional governance conference where groups made recommendations to current laws for regional libraries. This is a key discussion as much of the law is the same from 1957.
- The 2021 annual appeal letter went out in November.
- The library will be receiving 50 new Extended Loan Wi-Fi Hotspots with all of the funding for this coming from the Emergency Connectivity grant program.
- Waterfowl Festival was a success with over 850 coming to the library over three days.
- The Maryland Room will be working with staff and volunteers to record oral histories as part of the "Living and Dying with COVID-19" oral history project. This will be a year long project.

Diversity and Inclusion Committee- Charles Yonkers reported that the EDIAJ committee continues to make great progress. Between our community partners, such as Talbot Family Network, Chesapeake Multicultural Center and more, and the library staff, we have an impressive collection of people paying attention to diversity and inclusion issues. The library has done a good job with flagging topics on the website, promoting EDI books and holding events. We lift up Jeremy Hillyard, a Spanish teacher at the High School, who is interested in working with the library to offer programs that engage the community.

Nominating Committee- Robert Forloney reported for Estela Ramirez who was not present. He thanked board member Marlene Thomas for agreeing to serve on the nominating committee.

Friends' Report-Tyson Lubin shared one item with the board before he had to log off the meeting due to connection issues. The pop-up book sale was very successful. It was held each Monday in November in the Frederick Douglass room. Thank you to Suzanne Sanders for leading this event.

Foundation Report-Dana Newman gave the report. The Foundation investments are going well. The directors voted to have John Watters, a retired Financial Advisor, join the Foundation. The directors also voted by email to have Amanda David, Financial Advisor with Edward Jones, join the board. The board voted to move ahead with the process of hiring a consultant to help with both the St. Michaels capital campaign and with library fundraising. The St. Michael's facilities audit was discussed with Dana approaching the Foundation to pay for this audit.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm. Our next meeting will be on January 20, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted, Katie Dodds