

THE TALBOT COUNTY FREE LIBRARY  
100 W. Dover St.  
Easton, MD 21601  
Minutes of the Board Meeting  
January 18, 2024

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

Attendees: Susan Sherman, Charles Yonkers, Becky Amaral, Robert Forloney, Sue Regier, Mary Pellicano, Don Abatiello, Town of Easton, Pete Leshner, Talbot County Liaison, and Van Tran, Student Liaisons to the Board Director, Dana Newman, Scotti Oliver, Assistant Director, and Christina Acosta, Communications Manager represented the TCFL.

Guest: Judy Campbell, ILL -Circulation Clerk

Excused: Marlene Thomas, Andrew Thaler, Vivi Morris, Student Liaison

Absent: Estela Ramirez

**Action Items:**

- **Board members voted on and approved the December 7, 2023 minutes.**
- **Board members voted on and approved the Treasurer's Report: Income and Expense Statement, Statement of Activities, and Quarterly Balance Sheet.**
- **Board members voted on and approved the Operating Budget FY2025.**
- **Board members discussed and will vote via email on the Capital Outlay Request FY2025. This is due to needing to still receive costs and quotes for St. Michaels expansion project shelving and furniture.**
- **Board members voted on and approved the Capital Request FY2025.**
- **Board members voted on and approved the election of Ron Engle to the Board of Trustees.**
- **Dana Newman will email to the board links to current State Legislation and Bills.**

Susan Sherman opened the meeting by letting the board know that Ron Engle has accepted the invitation to join the board. A motion was made to elect Ron to the board with Becky Amaral moving and Sue Regier seconding. None opposed and the motion carried. Ron was warmly welcomed back to serve in this new capacity.

**Review of the December 7, 2023, Minutes:** Susan Sherman asked the board if there were any changes or corrections. Hearing none, asked for a motion to approve with Charlie Yonkers moving and Robert Forloney seconding. All were in favor with none opposed. The motion carried.

**Guest: Judy Campbell, ILL-Circulation Clerk**

Judy explained to the board some of her background of working at the Department of Defense and at the Naval Academy. She started at the library as a substitute and then received the job in Inter Library Loan. This department handles holds on the shore and in other states. We loaned over 13,000 items last year. Judy

expressed how much she loves working at the library. She also enjoys her role as a military liaison. Dana told the board how she greatly appreciates Judy's organizational skills and her very pleasant spirit. The board thanked Judy for her service.

### **Advocacy sharing:**

Mary Pellicano shared that she is continuing to work with ALA and other organizations to combat book banning. She mentioned that you can sign up for newsletters and action alerts.

Dana Newman shared that there is action at the state level where there is a Freedom to Read Bill that can help libraries with censorship issues. Dana will send out the link to some webinars on the topic.

Scotti Oliver shared that she attended an emergency planning event today where it was interesting to see how all the different agencies work together. The library was discussed as a place of recovery after a disaster and as a volunteer recruitment center.

Susan Sherman encouraged board members to attend the meeting in March (5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup>) where the budget will be presented by Dana to the County Council. It helps the library if board members can attend to support the work of the library.

### **Old Business: Time to Care Act updates**

Dana reminded the board that the Time to Care Act is a state collaborative effort where organizations can offer up to twelve weeks of paid leave to eligible employees who have a qualifying need for the leave. There are three options for delivery of this plan and the collaborative is in the process of looking for a carrier. At some point, we will have to decide a percentage to contribute. Dana said this cost will have to be budgeted.

### **New Business:**

#### **Christina Acosta: Annual Report:**

Christina reviewed the Annual Report for 2023 and highlighted several sections, such as lifting up all our new programming, showing Dana in action and not just behind a desk, emphasized the Chesapeake Children's Book Festival, our vast list of partners and lastly, a page on the St. Michaels expansion and renovation. The board thanked Christina for all her work on this excellent report. The annual report is included at the end of these minutes.

Dana Newman shared the handout of the FY25 Budget Request-Initial Highlights. As in prior years, we submit a flat budget with supplemental requests. Highlights include:

#### *FY25 Operating Budget request:*

- Provide a 5% salary increase for staff recognizing their outstanding service and cost of living increase: \$73,701.
- Cost increases to accounting software , staff development and other office expenses: \$8,000
- Cost of the lease for 12 months for the temporary location of the St. Michaels Library: \$42,000
- Water and electric for the temporary location: \$7,800.

This is conservative budget. We are still waiting for two quotes for moving and storage costs and for shelving and furniture.

Susan asked for a motion to approve the operating budget as presented with Mary Pellicano moving and Robert Forloney seconding. All were in favor and none opposed. The motion carried.

*FY25 Capital Outlay Request:*

Dana explained to the board that the focus of this section is the yellow highlighted area showing the \$300,000 requested for the St. Michaels library collection. It also has two areas where the figures for furniture and shelving are still pending. A vote will be taken by email when the figures are available. The library also has funds for the expansion from the Foundation (\$454,000) and help from the TCFL Friends. Some good news is the Maryland Library Capital Grant in the proposed Governors budget, includes 2.8 million for St. Michaels. Dana relayed to the board that it will be important to advocate for this.

*FY25 Capital Request:*

Dana explained that we need to turn into the County the full cost of the St. Michaels expansion and renovation project. The cost for this is 5.9 million. As the entire amount may not be awarded by the state grant. Susan asked for a motion to approve this capital request with Robert Forloney moving and Sue Regier seconding. All were in favor and none opposed. The motion carried.

**President's Report**-Susan Sherman had a few highlights:

- Thank you to Sabine for her help with the CML (Citizens for Maryland Libraries) December meeting that was held here at Easton. Susan explained that it was her last meeting as President, although she will continue as a board member.
- Susan is on the ESRL search committee to find a new Regional Director who is retiring at the end of the fiscal year.
- Attending the library holiday party in December where they had a great trivia game and excellent food was a very fun evening.

**Treasurer's Report**

Mary Pellicano and the finance committee reviewed the Income and Expense report, Statement of Activities and the Quarterly balance sheet and approved the documents. A few things to note:

- The library is in the process of requesting \$28,000 from the Foundation as it's first reimbursement request.
- The USDA rural development grant hasn't been dispersed yet. This is for \$70,000 for a rural grant for the design process. We expect these funds soon.
- We are also expecting to pay the quarterly bill for health insurance.

Susan Sherman made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report with Charles Yonkers moving and Becky Amaral seconding. All approved and none opposed. The motion carried.

**County Council Representative's Report**- Pete Leshar reported that the County Council is focusing on the budget. The County has not been spending what we had projected and so we have some reserves. It is a good time to

submit capital requests. One area that might receive questions is that the library is asking for the full amount for the expansion, as the County was anticipating state funds to come through.

**Easton Town Council Representative's Report** –Don Abatiello reported that they are beginning to review ARPA requests and the library is still in for consideration. They have 1.6 million to spend.

**Librarian's Report**-Dana Newman highlighted a few key items:

- The Fire and Ice Festival is next month and if the board would like to volunteer, we can find a job for you.
- We have started to partner with the Department of Social Services where a caseworker comes over to the library once a week to meet with anyone who might have questions or needs assistance. The social worker reported that she spoke with between 13-17 people in a two hour period. The need is there. Many asked questions about housing, food, job assistance and much more.
- We have started a new program with the detention center. Amy Wise, Library Associate at St. Michaels, will lead a book club. There will be a women's group and a men's group. Staff do a great job at outreach events.

**Diversity and Inclusion Committee**- Charles Yonkers reported that the EDI committee met today. A reminder that the committee members are Shauna Beulah, Christina Acosta, Mary Pellicano, Susan Sherman and Robert Forloney. We discussed what the issues are in the community and what issue or topics to flag as a sensitive issue. The library website is wonderful as it is amazing to see all the diverse programs that are happening. We should all have great pride in what the library is doing.

**Teen Liaison's Report**-Van Tran reported that she and Vivi Morris are working on two projects. The holiday book club and the STEAM summer camp. The camp will be the second year they have offered it and they are looking for funding of \$1,000. Van was encouraged to ask Friends for this funding.

**Nominating Committee**-Robert Forloney reported that they have officially elected Ron Engle to the board and the committee is in conversation with two potential board members. Robert also reminded the board to let him know if someone has the name of a potential board member.

**Friends' Report**- Sue Regier reported that the Friends are planning for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the TCFL Friends, a booksale on April 26<sup>th</sup> and will work at a table at the Fire and Ice Festival. Friends will also be helping to raise money for the St. Michaels expansion and renovation.

**Foundation Report**- Dana Newman reported that the Foundation met this morning and reviewed funds that have been raised for the St. Michaels expansion and renovation, discussed the investment portfolio, and the donations received as a result of the annual appeal. Dana thanked Sue Regier for her help with leading the development work group. Sue explained to the board that she and Dana are planning to meet with potential donors. A meeting with Patrick Roth, Director of the St. Michaels community center said they could help host library events at the community center while the library is closed. Building community partnership is key.

Susan Sherman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:35 pm with Charles Yonkers moving and Robert Forloney seconded.

**Reminder: Our next meeting will be on Thursday, February 15, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. in Easton.**

Respectfully submitted, Katie Dodds