

THE TALBOT COUNTY FREE LIBRARY  
100 W. Dover St.  
Easton, MD 21601  
Minutes of the Board Meeting  
December 5, 2024

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, Don Abbatiello, Town of Easton, Robert Forloney, Terry Moore, Mary Pellicano, Becky Amaral, Sandy Boyd, Sue Regier, Vivi Morris & Mia Mazzeo, Student Liaisons to the Board, Director, Dana Newman, Scotti Oliver, Assistant Director, Shauna Beulah, St. Michaels Branch Manager, Represented the TCFL.

Excused: Andrew Thaler, Alexis Roiter and Pete Leshner, Talbot County Liaison

**Action Items:**

- **Board members voted on and approved the October 17, 2024 minutes.**
- **Board members voted on and approved the Treasurer's Report: Income and Expense Statement & Statement of Activities.**
- **Board members voted on and approved the purchase of VOX books for the naming opportunity gift from the board. The board donated \$4,200 for this purchase.**
- **Board members voted on and approved the library holidays and closings for 2025.**
- **Reminder that we will hold a board training at the January 16<sup>th</sup> board meeting on the topic of understanding treasurer's reports.**

**Review of the October 17, 2024, 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 Ron Engle seconding. All were in favor with none opposed. The motion carried.

**Advocacy sharing:**

Susan Sherman mentioned that the Citizens for Maryland Libraries will hold their meeting here at the library this Saturday. They will be talking about lots of the changes coming up, such as state budgets and more. CML could end up taking on more leadership roles in the future.

Dana Newman relayed that the Maryland State Library and MAPLA go each year to the capital in Annapolis and this year, we will be going in February. This is a great way to meet lawmakers. Dana encouraged board members to attend on February 11, 2025. It will be especially important this next year given the projected state budget shortfall of 2.7 billion. Advocacy will be very important.

Robert Forloney shared his concerns for the budget deficit and shared that on February 13<sup>th</sup> is Arts Day where every sector of the arts is involved and will advocate for keeping arts in the forefront.

Ron Engle said that it is very positive news that both Chuck and Pete were re-elected for the County Council as President and Vice President.

Sue Regier said the Foundation's development committee will be working hard next year to raise funds and if anyone would like to join this committee to let her know.

**Old Business:** Naming Opportunities continued

Dana relayed that she had spoken to library staff about ideas for using the money raised by the board for a naming opportunity and staff suggested a few ideas: VOX books; Maryland Shelf materials; Adult Spanish books; children's bi-lingual materials and teen books. The board discussed the merits of each and different funding levels and decided that purchasing VOX books is the best choice. One other idea that was brought up at a prior meeting was using board funds for recording oral histories from those in our community. This idea will be incorporated into our 100<sup>th</sup> planning of events in 2025.

Susan Sherman made a motion to allocate the \$4,200 donated by the board to purchase VOX books for the naming opportunity with Robert Forloney moving and Becky Amaral seconding. All approved and none opposed. The motion carried.

**New Business:**

*Holidays and Closings*

Dana circulated the library holidays and closings for 2025 and asked for any questions.

Hearing none Dana asked for a vote on the closings with Becky Amaral moving and Sandy Boyd seconding. All approved and none opposed. The motion carried.

*St. Michaels update*

Dana complimented library staff and volunteers for all their hard work moving to the temporary location. We will be offering some programming at this location, such as Storytime, and will be doing a lot of outreach. The temporary location is starting to get patrons stopping in and we even have some new patrons who have seen our new sign. The Bates moving company did a great job of moving everything in quickly and in an organized way. The next construction meeting is December 17<sup>th</sup>. We expect the schedule to change to where we anticipate a 15-18 month schedule where we have a goal of opening in June of 2026.

*FY26 Budget update*

Dana reported that due to the large state budget shortfall, the library will be submitting a flat budget with a few capital outlay requests. For the Easton library, we will be asking for funding to replace some old furniture. At the temporary location, due to the extended construction schedule it will mean we will need to ask for additional rent funds. The library will also be asking for COLA increases of 5% which will be COLA plus merit increases.

*Short Annual Report (Scotti)*

Scotti reviewed the short annual report with the board highlighting the fact that computer and wireless use is up and additional statistics will be added to this report. Current work on gathering program numbers as PLA stats are due by December 15<sup>th</sup>. The final annual report will be ready in late January or early February.

*Date for the June Board Meeting – (find another date since the library will be closed)*

Next year, the Juneteenth holiday falls on a board meeting date and so we will have to choose another date. After some discussion, the board chose Thursday, June 26<sup>th</sup> for the board meeting.

**President's Report**-Susan Sherman thanked Sabine Simonson for her leadership in organizing a wonderful Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon.

Note: For the reports below: written reports were sent out prior to the board meeting and are included at the end of these minutes for your reference.

### **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. A few things to note:

- The Statement of Activities reflects financials through the month of October, about one-third of the fiscal year. On the income side, we are ahead at about 37.1 % of the budget and for expenses, we are at 29.5%.
- We are waiting for several reimbursements to come in, such as for our first reimbursement request to the Foundation for \$14,000.
- Postage expenses are high as there is an increase in mailing costs due to the annual appeal.

Susan Sherman made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report with Ron Engle moving and Robert Forloney seconding. All approved and none opposed. The motion carried.

**County Council Representative's Report**- Pete Lesher was not present and had nothing to report.

**Easton Town Council Representative's Report** –Don Abbatiello reported that the County Council and Mayor are deciding who will pay for the sidewalk repair work. The cost estimate for brick and concrete is \$150,000-\$165,000.

**Librarian's Report**-Dana added one item to her written report and that was to invite board members to the staff holiday get together at Kiln Born on December 17<sup>th</sup> from 6-8pm. Please let Dana know by December 9<sup>th</sup> if you would like to attend. It should be a fun evening of decorating pottery and enjoying dessert items.

**Diversity and Inclusion Committee**- Charles Yonkers submitted his report to the board which highlighted the Citizens for Maryland Libraries Annual Conference on November 2, 2024. The focus of this meeting was "Preserving Freedom: Librarians as Guardians Against Censorship."

**Teen Liaison's Report**-Mia and Vivi shared that they are starting to plan for the Winter book club for ages 8-12 which will start in February. Some of the themes they are thinking of are graphic novels, characters from a certain time period, mysteries and the American Girl Doll theme. Holding an activity for kids is also being planned such as a scavenger hunt.

**Nominating Committee**: Robert reported that there are no nominations and the board at this time does not have any openings.

**Friends' Report**- Sue Regier had submitted her report to the board which highlighted activities surrounding the Friends 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. On December 14<sup>th</sup>, there will be a Friends workshop to discuss plans for 2025 and vote on new officers.

**Foundation Report**- Dana Newman reported that the Foundation will have their next meeting on Thursday, January 16, 2025.

The board meeting officially closed at 6:00 p.m.

**Reminder: Our next meeting will be on Thursday, January 16, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. at Easton.**

Respectfully submitted, Katie Dodds