

THE TALBOT COUNTY FREE LIBRARY  
100 W. Dover St.  
Easton, MD 21601  
Minutes of the Board Meeting  
January 16, 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, Don Abbatiello, Town of Easton, Robert Forloney, Terry Moore, Mary Pellicano, Becky Amaral, Sandy Boyd, Vivi Morris, Student Liaison to the Board, Director, Dana Newman, Scotti Oliver, Assistant Director, Shauna Beulah, St. Michaels Branch Manager, Represented the TCFL.  
Excused: Andrew Thaler, Alexis Roiter, Sue Regier and Mia Mazzeo

**Action Items:**

- **Board members voted on and approved the December 5, 2024 minutes.**
- **Board members voted on and approved the Treasurer's Report: Income and Expense Statement, Statement of Activities & the Quarterly Balance Sheet.**
- **Board members voted on and approved the submission to the County of the FY26 Operating and Capital Outlay budget request.**
- **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 will be on Tuesday, April 8<sup>th</sup> at The Ivy from 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m**

**Review of the December 5, 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 Robert Forloney seconding. All were in favor with none opposed. The motion carried.

Guest: John Allan, Digital Literacy Instructor for TCFL

Scotti introduced John who gave a few highlights of his work. He offers a class once a week on either a Monday evening or Thursday morning from February-May. The experience of helping people with their computer questions has been a good experience. There is no set curriculum and it is like a round robin discussion where participants bring their questions. Sometimes a question will resonate with the whole group. Attendance is usually between 2-7 students and we cover a variety of topics from Chatbot, Bluetooth, cyber security and more. What is exciting to see is the confidence building and the growth of a students ability to try new things. Small group work is a good format.

The board thanked John for his work.

**Advocacy sharing:**

Mary Pellicano shared that she attended an ALA webinar on Standing up for Libraries in the first hundred days and what to expect with the new administration. ALA will have trainings on ways we can advocate for libraries. It is important to reach out to lawmakers.

Robert Forloney reminded us that with the current deficit, it will be a good chance to advocate and meet with legislators on Legislative Day on February 11<sup>th</sup>. We are lucky to have very supportive delegates.

Dana Newman also mentioned that the MLA and MAPLA organizations are also very supportive of libraries. The ESRL is also very supportive. It is very important especially this year, to send in letters of support and to advocate. Mary Pellicano suggested that in person meetings with constituents are the most effective but emails also work well. Sharing stories is very impactful.

Charlie Yonkers shared a story of when he was sitting in the library reading a newspaper when a fellow patron mentioned to him how lucky we are to have the library and to have all the newspapers to read. The patron explained he is 92 years old and comes into the library each day to read the paper.

**Old Business:** *None*

**New Business:**

Note: Don had to leave the meeting early and so he was moved up in the agenda:

**Easton Town Council Representative's Report** –Don Abbatiello reported that he had spoken with Town officials about the sidewalks and they will be starting this winter to repair the West Street sidewalk. Rick Vandering of the Town proposed the brick border with concrete. The County will be paying most of the cost with the Town doing most of the work. The Board thanked Don for this news.

#### *Budget training/introduction*

Dana presented a power point showing the board how the library submits the budget to the County. Some highlights included:

- In the Budget Timeline slide, there is a new procedure. Last year, Dana and library staff would go present the budget to the whole Council and would have library advocates in attendance. This year, the procedure is going to involve having the Agencies Directors meet one on one with the County Manager. The County is asking the Manager to vet agency requests.
- In the Budget Instructions sheet, given the fiscal reality of the state budget deficit, the library will be submitting a flat budget with supplemental requests. FY26 Operating Supplemental Budget Priorities include a 5% salary increase for staff and \$10,000 to cover cost increases in the areas of postage, janitorial and building maintenance supplies and to continue funding Wi-Fi service in Cordova and the cost of data for the hotspot program. In the operating budget, we have included \$45,000 for the continued leasing of the temporary location of the St. Michaels library.
- FY2026 Capital Outlay request includes \$100,000 for the St. Michaels opening day collection; \$24,347 for patron computers and \$5,000 for children's desks at Easton.
- Dana highlighted a lovely advocacy sample letter written by Mary Robinson, a library volunteer.

Dana reported that she had a good discussion with the Trappe Commissioners who were open to having Trappe be a hold pick up location. We will be talking to ESRL about this. Having a hold pick up location is part of the libraries strategic plan.

Susan Sherman made a motion to accept the FY26 budget for submission to the County with Mary Pellicano moving and Robert Forloney seconding. All approved and none opposed. The motion carried.

**President's Report**–Susan Sherman will nominate the library for a Talbot Positive Impact Award. The board has had the first of three trainings for the year and so the next training in April will be on book banning using a presentation by CML and in August we can have a training on advocacy.

## **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 & Quarterly balance sheet and approved the documents. To note:

- January 1 marks the halfway point in the fiscal year and we have received 41% of our budgeted income.
- On the expense side, we are just under half our budget at 45.2%.

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

**County Council Representative's Report-** Pete Leshar explained property assessments to the board and how new homeowners are challenged by the expense. Property taxes are predictable, but income tax receipts are unpredictable. The County will be budgeting in a conservative manner.

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

- The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala fundraiser will be on October 16<sup>th</sup> and there is a committee planning this gala. We have different ideas for things to offer from celebrating the decades to special music. It is a fundraiser and so the Foundation is being asked to help pay the initial costs which should be offset by revenue from the event.
- Oral histories in Talbot County will be tied into MD Talbot 250 in 2026.
- Construction is now in the demo stage at the St. Michaels library and we have construction meetings monthly.
- Diana Hastings is holding a monthly Storytime and is partnering with the Art Academy for other programs. Amy Wise continues to lead the book club at the detention center and is now leading a men's group.
- We have hired Emma Poole for our Communications Manager
- If you see Karen Collier or Laura Powell, please thank them for all their work in buying new books for the St. Michaels Opening Day collection.

**Diversity and Inclusion Committee-** Charles Yonkers had sent out his report to the board for review which highlighted Talbot Coalition on Equity meeting on December 5 and that the EDIAJ Committee met on December 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Teen Liaison's Report-**Vivi Morris & Mia Mazzeo had submitted their report to the board for review which highlighted the American Girl Doll History Book Club taking place from January-March and the dates for the Project STEAM camp.

**Nominating Committee:** Robert reported that we are a full board at this time. Please let Alexis Roiter, Becky Amaral or myself know if you have ideas for suggesting new board candidates. Next year we will have folks going off the board and so we need to start looking now to fill these roles.

**Friends' Report-** Sue Regier was not present. Dana noted that the Friends will have a book sale on Friday, March 28<sup>th</sup> and the month of May is the Friends membership drive.

**Foundation Report-** Dana Newman reported that the Foundation met this morning, and that Mary Pellicano is our liaison. Our investment manager reported that the portfolio is doing well with 3.3 million. We keep funds for the St. Michaels renovation and expansion in a different account and we note that there is enough in this account to make up the \$150,000 difference.

The board meeting officially closed at 6:45 p.m.

**Reminder: Our next meeting will be on Thursday, February 20, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. at Easton.**

Respectfully submitted, Katie Dodds