

THE TALBOT COUNTY FREE LIBRARY  
100 W. Dover St.  
Easton, MD 21601  
Minutes of the Board Meeting  
September 18, 2025

The meeting was called to order by Susan Sherman at 5:00 pm. Meeting held at the Easton Library.

Attendees: Susan Sherman, Mary Pellicano, Robert Forloney, Andrew Thaler, Charles Yonkers, Sandy Boyd, Becky Amaral, Alexis Roiter, Sue Regier, Ron Engle, Director, Dana Newman, Scotti Oliver, Assistant Director, Emma Poole, Communications Manager, Represented the TCFL.

Excused: Pete Leshner, Talbot County Council Liaison, Terry Moore, Becky Amaral, Robert Rankin, Town of Easton Liaison

Guest: Peggy Ford and Sabine Simonson

**Action Items:**

- **Board members voted on and approved the July 17, 2025 minutes.**
- **Board members voted on and approved the Treasurer's Report: Income and Expense Statement & Statement of Activities reports.**
- **The board reviewed part one of the Annual Update on Strategic goals and will continue to review remaining goals at the December board meeting.**
- **A reminder that the next board meeting is on Tuesday, November 4<sup>th</sup> at 5PM at Easton. The audit will be presented at this meeting.**

**Review of the July 17, 2025, Minutes:** Susan Sherman asked the board if there were any changes or corrections. Hearing none, asked for a motion to approve with Ron Engle moving and Charlie Yonkers seconding. All were in favor with none opposed. The motion carried.

**Guest: Sabine Simonson, Community Liaison/Volunteer Coordinator**

Sabine shared that she has been working at the library for 18 years where she is in charge of volunteers and is involved in many community activities. Prior jobs included being a pre-school teacher, sales and a wedding planner. She enjoys being a staff liaison to the Friends and is especially proud to be an ambassador with the Talbot Chamber. Working closely with the Marland Library Association. She is also part of Citizens for Maryland Libraries events, is manager of four Facebook pages and manages *On the Shelf* where she did a recent episode on the St. Michaels construction site. Sabine relayed to the board how much she loves her job. Everyone on the board thanked her for her work and support of the library.

**Advocacy sharing:**

Mary Pellicano shared that funding for IMLS has been re-instated for now.

Susan Sherman shared that she is President of ESRL Board of Trustees for one year and that Morgan Miller mentioned she was relieved and hoped funding continues.

Robert Forloney said that he has been supporting the library with the One Maryland One book, *Kin*. It is great to have lots of recognition for the library by having the OMOB discussion held at the college on October 7<sup>th</sup>.

Mary Pellicano held a book discussion on *Kin* and had about 20 people attend.

Dana Newman said that her own book group met last night and had read it.

### **Old Business:**

#### **Solicitation Policy**

Dana relayed to the board that based on recommendations, we will pull the solicitation policy from consideration for the board. There had been a few concerns about it and so it was determined that we really don't need this policy.

### **New Business:**

#### **Board Survey results - Susan**

Susan thanked board members who submitted feedback to the survey. The results were sent out to members. Susan said the goal is to focus on three areas. Susan then asked the board to share their top three ideas of what the board should be focusing on and discussion followed. Several topics were discussed as being key:

- Diversity
- Issues facing libraries today
- Freedom of speech
- Forward thinking
- Crisis management and contingency planning
- AI and its effect on library services
- Existential threats to libraries in general and many more.

After hearing all the ideas, these top three topics were chosen:

1. Threats and challenges to libraries
2. New funding streams
3. Longterm planning

A small group of the board will meet to start to identify the issues and become more prepared to handle these challenges.

#### **Annual library goals from strategic plan - Dana**

Dana reviewed the handout outlining the annual update with focusing on the St. Michaels expansion where the estimated opening month is February 2026. Upgrades at the Easton Library were also noted such as replacing the library AV system. The lifelong learning goal was also highlighted where we were able to offer

digital literacy classes in the branches and outreach at the Senior Center. It was noted that this annual update is part one of the strategic plan update and that part two will be reviewed at the December board meeting.

### **Fundraising update (brick campaign, gala, and St. Michaels naming opportunities, annual appeal) - Dana**

Dana shared that the brick campaign has raised \$8,500 so far and all were encouraged to buy a brick. The gala celebration has raised over \$61,800 so far with many generous sponsorships and we have had great success with our raffle prizes. Our goal is to raise \$100,000. We have also had a few people who have given a gift for a naming opportunity, including a donor who purchased a Circulation Naming Desk for the new library.

### **President's Report-**

Susan Sherman shared that the board completed the annual evaluation for Dana Newman. A few goals were discussed from the evaluation: The reopening of the St. Michaels branch; developing the new strategic plan for '26-'29 and continue our community outreach. Susan also shared that she is the new President of ESRL (Eastern Shore Regional Library board).

### **Treasurer's Report**

Mary Pellicano had sent out her report and is included in these minutes. Earlier, the finance committee reviewed the Income and Expense report & Statement of Activities and approved the documents. To note:

- We are a little over 2 months into the fiscal year and we have received 34.6% of our budgeted revenue.
- On the expense side, we are at 12.3% of our budgeted expenditures.

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

**County Council Representative's Report-** Pete Leshar was not present and did not have a report.

**Easton Town Council Representative's Report** –Robert Rankin was not present and did not have a report.

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

- Board members were encouraged to help promote the brick campaign and the gala.
- Hard hat tours will be conducted of the St. Michaels construction site. A sign up sheet was circulated.
- On October 8<sup>th</sup>, Dana will do a presentation about the updates on the renovations to the St. Michaels Commissioners.

**Diversity and Inclusion Committee-** Charles Yonkers had sent out his report included in these minutes and had nothing in addition to add. The Equity (EDIAJ) Committee reports only that, since last board meeting, no particular activities, continued attention to our values and mission, and support for access and inclusion. Recommend regular viewing of our website to confirm.

**Teen Liaison-** Dana reported that we have two candidates for consideration for being Teen Liaisons. More information to be shared later.

**Nominating Committee:** Robert Forloney reported that he had sent out an email to the board about the need for succession leadership as next year several board members are leaving the board. The number of board members is between 9-12 members. The committee, made up of Alexis Roiter, Becky Amaral and Robert Forloney, have updated board job descriptions. Please send any names of potential board members to the Nominating Committee.

**Friends' Report-** The Friends will have a booksale on Friday, November 7<sup>th</sup> from 9-4pm and Saturday, November 8<sup>th</sup> from 10-3pm.

**Foundation Report-**Sue Regier reported that the Foundation board will have their next meeting in November. We are promoting the big gala event on October 16<sup>th</sup> and have already nearly tripled the amount given by the Foundation to the gala. (\$25,000) Please invite your friends to this big celebration.

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

**Reminder: The next board meeting is Tuesday, November 4, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. at Easton.**

Respectfully submitted, Katie Dodds