

**FREDERICK COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
JANUARY 5, 2022**

The Frederick County Public Libraries Board of Trustees Meeting convened at 7:00 p.m. on January 5, 2022 via a virtual meeting.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: J. D’Agostino, G. Mayfield, M. O’Leary, S. Sheppard, C. Smith, K. Spertzel, S. White and J. Donald, County Liaison

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: J. Kelly, Director; S. McDuff, Associate Director; C. Hall, Associate Director; B. McDermott, Finance Manager; J. Marshall – Systems Manager; D. Frank-Rice, IT Coordinator; A. Whitney, Branch Administrator – Emmitsburg Library and Thurmont Regional Library; L. Branson, Circulation Supervisor – C. Burr Artz Library; S. Yates, Branch Administrator – Urbana Regional Library, K. Houser, Library Associate, A. Kretz, Library Associate, and L. Tibbs, Recording Secretary.

CITIZEN REMARKS: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: J. D’Agostino made a motion to approve the Minutes of November 17, 2021; seconded by S. White. No further discussion.
VOTE: Unanimous.

CHAIR’S REPORT: Mr. O’Leary noted that it has been almost two full years into the COVID-19 period. The COVID positivity rate is high in Frederick County and the County Government has taken certain steps in response to that. He added that throughout these waves the public library has continued to provide robust and highly effective response and service to the community. FCPL has demonstrated what it can do and depending on the circumstances, FCPL will continue to provide service to the community. He further stated that on behalf of the FCPL Board of Trustees, the Board is very proud of the library folks for everything that has been done and will continue to be done.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT:

FCPL – Update: Mr. Kelly welcomed everyone to the January meeting. He noted that historically, November and December are quiet months in public libraries, but as you’ll hear tonight, we did our best to tip the tables on that tradition. Our team has been very busy over the last two months.

Mr. Kelly thereafter introduced, Stephanie Yates. She is the Branch Administrator at Urbana Regional Library. She came to us from Florida. Stephanie was with Palm Beach County Libraries for 8 years, holding a variety of roles during that time. Most recently, she served as Manager of the Glades Road Branch in Boca Raton. Stephanie earned her Master's Degree in Library and Information Science at the University of Pittsburgh and also holds a degree in Elementary Education from Eastern Kentucky University. She is passionate about children's literacy, public service, and staff development. She looks forward to serving the community and we are excited that she is joining the team.

Mr. Kelly then provided an update on a few initiatives FCPL has with the Health Department. First, as everyone may have read in [The Frederick News Post](#), our team has been providing outreach at the County's children's vaccine clinics. They showed up in costume, sharing stories and puppets. Everyone loved seeing our team and we loved helping put kids at ease during a scary time.

Secondly, we've been helping with COVID Test Kit distribution. The Health Department receives test kits from the state and, as they do, FCPL has been helping get them into the hands of folks who need them. To date, we have distributed thousands of kits curbside. Demand exceeds supply and, on the days we have them, they are gone within an hour.

Lastly, we just started serving as a vaccination clinic site. The Health Department is providing vaccines to the community at our Thurmont Regional Library on Monday evenings. He added that other branches may serve as sites in the future. These efforts, in partnership with our Health Department, are another great example of how the work we are doing aligns with the priorities of our strategic plan to simplify access, build bridges, and spark excitement.

Mr. Kelly advised that since our last meeting, FCPL has migrated to a new ILS (integrated library system). One component of the ILS is the online catalog and, later this evening, Levi Branson will walk you through it. In addition to the catalog, our ILS serves as the backbone to our work. It impacts the workflow of every team member and the user experience of every customer, so it was really important that the migration went as smoothly as it did. I want to thank Catie Hall, Associate Director of Support Services, and the entire ILS team who worked hard to shepherd us through the migration process.

Pivoting to a legislative update, Mr. Kelly stated that everyone might remember that he shared news of an awkwardly-titled state bill - "Public Libraries – Electronic Literary Product Licenses – Access" which became law at the end of the last General Assembly session and went into effect on January 1, 2022. This bill requires that publishers who license any e-Books, e-Audiobooks, etc. to individual consumers, must also license these products to Maryland public libraries on "reasonable terms." Each publisher handles this differently. Over the last decade, some publishers have refused to sell to libraries and others do so at hugely inflated rates as compared to "direct to consumer" prices, and still others have tested restrictions, like embargos, so that libraries can only purchase a new title a few months after the "street release date". All of

these strategies limit access to library users. Nationally, organizations like the American Library Association, Public Library Association, Urban Libraries Council, Digital Public Library, and advocacy groups like EveryLibrary, have expressed support for Maryland and this new law. Other states are currently drafting similar legislation. Nevertheless, almost from the time the bill was passed, there has been opposition to it. The latest news is that, in mid-December, the Association of American Publishers sued the State of Maryland and filed a motion for preliminary injunction. The Attorney General's office is currently reviewing everything and has yet to issue a statement, but when they do, it will be shared with everyone.

Mr. Kelly thereafter provided an update on library operations in light of the Omicron variant. The Governor recently announced a 30-day State of Emergency and Frederick Health Hospital has pivoted to "crisis standards of care" and organizations across the county are tightening up operations to weather the latest surge. Currently, all County Divisions are looking at new work schedules that limit staff exposure and minimally effect current service models. FCPL is looking at this, too. Any changes we make will be temporary and we hope they are enough to see us through the next 6-8 weeks of surge. We will, of course, continue to stay flexible and adapt, if that should become necessary.

Pivoting to statistics, Mr. Kelly noted that since we did not meet last month, there are two months of Dashboards to review. Looking at the October numbers first, FCPL saw a slight increase in overall circulation and total visits. FCPL's new card numbers dipped slightly, but are still well above our 3 fiscal year average. Wi-Fi continues to climb with the highest number yet -- 28,156 sessions; a 63% increase from 6 months ago. As for programming, these numbers were helped out by Brunswick staff who had great outreach numbers in October. The Railroad Days and Trunk or Treat events were very popular. Staff at branches across our system continually look for opportunities like this to engage with folks and be more visible in our communities.

Shifting to the November Dashboard, Mr. Kelly noted that historically usage dips in November and that trend followed in 2021. As a reminder, FCPL was closed for a couple of extra days in November as it migrated to its new ILS which impacted visits to the library. He added that it is also important to note that circulation numbers have generally been right at or above the 3-year average this fiscal year. He also highlighted this month's callouts about halfway down the page on the Dashboard. As a reminder, we've started to use these callouts as a way to contextualize our numbers by bridging to the priorities of our strategic plan. Our team *Simplified Access* with a bilingual edition of Bookmarks, they *Built Bridges* by providing outreach at the County's children's vaccine clinics and they *Sparked Excitement* with STEM pop-up events at Green Valley Elementary School.

Budget/CIP Update: Starting on the operating side of things, Mr. Kelly thanked Mr. O'Leary for providing testimony on behalf of the Board at the December 15, 2021 public hearing on the budget. He expressed gratitude for the County's support of libraries, noting that "The last 22 months have been challenging and that FCPL responded with more robust collections and

services” and he highlighted our recent partnership with the Health Department in which staff at every branch distributed thousands of COVID test kits to the community.

The County Executive, Jan Gardner, noted that, in addition, library staff helped with vaccination efforts, food delivery, curbside pickup, virtual programming, and that statistics have been strong and usage of libraries has increased throughout the pandemic. Mr. Kelly noted that County Executive Gardner also included similar comments in her recently-released State of the County video.

Mr. Kelly stated that it’s worth pausing here to note that FCPL is grateful for the support of our Board, the County Executive, and the County Council. They understand the purpose of our libraries, the work that we do for our community, and the exciting direction we are headed. He added that his fellow directors and he understand how rare it is to enjoy the support of a Board, a County Executive, and a Council at the same time. It has not always been that way for FCPL and the future is not certain, so I just want to pause and offer thanks to Councilmember J. Donald and to you, our Board, on behalf of the team.

As a reminder, Mr. Kelly noted that on Friday, January 7, 2022 at 1:00 pm, he will lead a budget refresher workshop via Zoom for the Board’s Finance Committee members. This workshop is also open to all members of the Board. Just like last year, we’ll walk through the operating and capital budgets, FCPL’s revenue streams and expense lines, and provide an overview of the County budget calendar. The goal is to get the Board comfortable with the elements of the budget ahead of your vote on our proposed operating budget at the February meeting.

On the capital side of things, Mr. Kelly noted that staff met this morning with the County’s CIP Committee. Among the items discussed were library infrastructure improvements like a new firewall, as well as, building projects like funding for the final year of Middletown construction and the proposed West Frederick and East County libraries. As a next step, the committee will make recommendations to the County Executive on proposed projects across all County divisions as well as component units like the library. She will consider these recommendations as she creates her Fiscal Year 2023 Capital Improvement Plan.

Mr. Kelly thereafter noted that the next Board meeting will be on Wednesday, February 2, 2022 at 7pm and it will be virtual.

In closing, Mr. Kelly closed with a word about FCPL’s strategic planning process. Believe it or not, our current 3-year plan sunsets on June 30th of this year. It seems like only yesterday that we were developing the current strategic plan. Mr. Kelly invited everyone to be on the look-out for invitations to contribute input to our next plan. These opportunities will be announced soon and your feedback will help guide the conversation as we set priorities for our next plan.

Mr. Mayfield inquired about some of the changes in services that may be considered over the next 6 – 8 weeks, if needed, due to the recent COVID surge. Mr. Kelly advised that some of the

things that we are considering are internal and will not be apparent to the public. FCPL will be expanding telework opportunities, shifting to N95 masks, in-person meetings will be suspended, as well as staff travel between branches will be suspended. He further added that one of the things that FCPL did initially was have an “A” team and “B” team model for staffing. In the event a staff member becomes positive, we are limiting the amount of folks that may have been exposed while trying to maintain the current levels of service. Further discussion followed regarding FCPL’s efforts dealing with the rising COVID positivity rate.

Mr. O’Leary welcomed S. Yates to FCPL.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Recognition of LATI Graduates: Mr. Kelly noted that he has the honor this evening of recognizing three more members of our team who have successfully completed the Library Associate Training Institute. LATI is a 90-hour program that all Library Associates in the State of Maryland must complete. Through this program, staff gain a greater understanding of the principles and value of public libraries and about the profession in general. They learn about print and online resources, the reference interview and excellent customer service. The program involves online learning sessions, independent work, and coaching sessions. It is an intense program and students balance this 90-hours of coursework on top of their day-to-day responsibilities. Library Associates are critical to our operation providing so much of our reference assistance to the community. They, along with our circulation staff, are the backbone of public service. The LATI program ensures that our Library Associates are trained to a high standard statewide and completing this program is a huge achievement. Thereafter, Mr. Kelly recognized Jean Conte, Keslie Houser and Amy Kretz and thanked each of them for their commitment and hard work.

b. Financial Report: B. McDermott presented the Fiscal Year 2022 financial statement. The data is tentative as of November 30, 2021. The revenue total collected is at 30%. This is a 3% increase over last year. FCPL received revenue from the Maryland State Education Grant in the amount of \$1.2 million. There was also an increase in county in-kind revenue of \$550,000. Passport revenue is at \$3,400. Miscellaneous operating revenue is up \$7,000. Library fees were up by \$174.00.

She thereafter reviewed expenditures. Expenditures are at 38%. She noted there was a slight increase in most of the line items. There was a 15% increase in library material purchases. County Finance posted the in-kind county appropriations, personnel and telephone expenses which is the reason for the majority of the percentage change. Office supply expenditures increased by 18% for general office supplies and merchandise purchases. Other operating expenditures increased by 16% from the previous month. She added that since we are now five months into the fiscal year, it would be expected that expenditures would be approximately 40% but she is happy to report that FCPL is under budget for this period of time in the fiscal year.

Grants awarded are at \$2.4 million. There have been no changes to the grants awarded since the previous month.

Grants submitted are a little over \$1,000,000. Since the last board meeting, two grants were submitted: 1) The Ausherman Family Foundation Grant in the amount of \$2,900.00 and the Star Library Network Grant in the amount of \$1,000.00.

Donations are at \$75,000, which is an increase of \$26,000 from the previous update. This includes several generous donations to the Greatest Need Fund, the branches and youth services. The Maryland Room also received its annual endowment fund of \$19,000. These funds are received each year and are solely to support the yearly operation of The Maryland Room.

Other endowment revenue is at \$142,000. There was an increase of \$50,000 from the previous month. The funds were received from the C. Burr Artz Trust which are for the sole benefit of the C. Burr Artz Library. This brings the total to \$2.6 million.

c. ILS Demo: L. Branson, Circulation Supervisor at the C. Burr Artz Library, provided an update on FCPL's new integrated library system (ILS). The new ILS system is called CARL and is built and designed by The Library Company. CARL comes with two platforms for staff and two online catalogs for customers. He added that he will be providing some of the highlights of the online catalog, which is an improvement for our customers.

In order to Simplify Access to our customers, he noted that our customers can quickly access the FCPL homepage, ILL homepage, kids catalog and more, all in one place with one click. The online catalog has a more user-friendly layout. The catalog site is responsive, meaning the layout will be adjusted for easier viewing on any mobile device, phone or tablet. The online catalog now presents search results in a FRBR (Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records) display of materials. In short, this groups all material types for one title under one record, offering customers a one-click experience to uncover the material type they prefer. The title information now includes an item hold count to better help customers estimate their wait period.

In Building Bridges, the new catalog also provides ways to reach different audiences. FCPL now has its own kid's catalog. This is the same catalog experience that Frederick County Public School students have for the school collections. The online catalog provides a language choice. It offers content in English or Spanish, offering basic informational text in a preferred language.

L. Branson thereafter noted that there are a couple of features to help Spark Excitement about FCPL's material offerings and collection. A promotional carousel display now greets customers when they access the online catalog. The title records include connections to further information and related suggestions by connecting customers to material that is related to a title of interest.

L. Branson noted that these are just a few highlights of the new and improved online catalog. It was further noted that the staff side of the new ILS is an improvement for how staff manages library resources and allows staff to better serve our community of library users

General questions from the Board were addressed regarding the new ILS system.

d. Thurmont/Emmitsburg Branch Presentation: A. Whitney, Branch Administrator at the Emmitsburg Library and Thurmont Regional Library provided an overview of services provided at the North County Libraries. She noted that staff provides service to the entire Northern part of Frederick County at Thurmont Regional Library and Emmitsburg Branch Library. As you know, due to the pandemic, we adapted many of our resources and programs to ensure continued service to our communities.

She noted that while FCPL was closed as a result of the pandemic, FCPL also took the opportunity to refresh many of our interior spaces to make them more welcoming and accessible. At the Emmitsburg branch, the need for new flooring and a new HVAC system led to a snowball effect of renovations: 1) an accessible service desk with an ADA section for anyone using a wheelchair was added; 2) new staff and public computers were installed; 3) new tile flooring in the lobby, hall and workroom was installed as well as some fresh paint; 4) new cabinets and counters in the workroom were installed and 5) roller window shades to replace the vertical blinds were also installed. She added that happily, all of the construction took place while the library was closed. And when the library reopened in 2021, the community was so very happy with the fresh new look.

Ms. Whitney noted that at the Thurmont Regional Library, we moved to a single service desk model where customers know they can receive assistance with any question—a one stop service point with easy access to friendly staff, check-out kiosks, a copier and computers. We repurposed spaces to create welcoming seating and gathering areas. We intentionally chose furniture arrangements that could be moved around easily to accommodate different uses. Tile flooring was also installed in the Thurmont lobby area and some areas of carpet were replaced in the children's and adult areas of the library. A Family Comfort Room was created in the Children's Room, where caregivers can feed a baby or comfort a tired toddler in a soothing, quiet space.

Thereafter, Ms. Whitney noted that everyone may have seen the article in The Frederick News-Post about Thurmont's Library Nature Trail. Right before the pandemic, community members came together to construct a trail through the woods adjacent to the library. This turned out to be perfect timing since we were able to use this outdoor resource as a safer programming location while we were closed, and it continues to be an excellent space for story paths, nature studies and environmental programming. An official ribbon cutting ceremony took place in November, 2021, and we were able to recognize all those community partners who helped build the trail. There were over 100 people in attendance. The Library Nature Trail connects to the Library Loop and Thurmont Trolley Trails, giving greater walking access to the library from all over town.

Ms. Whitney added that while FCPL was closed, the North County staff led the way in taking our programming virtual, and very quickly, all FCPL staff were tapping into their creativity to make FCPL's virtual programming a model for the state. We also worked with Ft. Detrick to offer STEM kits that families could pick up at curbside and assemble while watching Detrick

staff demonstrate the experiments online. Once the library reopened, we were able to begin offering a modified slate of programming outdoors. Thurmont is fortunate to have a lovely covered deck, which allowed us to offer story times and other programming safely even when it rained. Emmitsburg staff were able to offer story times at a covered picnic pavilion in the town's Memorial Park. Staff also worked with community partner, The Seton Center, to offer some virtual programming.

Ms. Whitney noted that this past year staff worked with local north county businesses to offer the community a fun Halloween event, Trunk or Treat. Our Friends of the Library contacted area businesses. The businesses could rent a parking spot at the library, set up a spooky Halloween trunk display, promote their businesses to the adults, and hand out goodies to the kids. We also invited the kids to walk the "not so spooky nature trail" where we had a story path set up and some fun, interactive games. This was a very successful fundraiser for our Friends group.

Thereafter, Ms. Whitney noted that staff are now busy planning for the next few months. This past Monday evening, the Frederick County Health Department began offering free vaccination clinics at Thurmont Regional Library and 98 people received their shots. The health department was very happy with the space in our building and the large parking lot. Like all FCPL branches, we have also been distributing free Covid Home Test Kits, when we have them available.

In March, she noted that they will be celebrating St. Patrick's Day with the annual Celtic Concert at St. Mary's Knott Auditorium, courtesy of the C. Burr Artz Trust. And, April brings the annual Thurmont Greenfest in partnership with the Thurmont Green Team and Town of Thurmont. The community can come out and learn about all things green, from apiary how-to(s), to solar panels, to worm composting. And finally, in May, the libraries participate in the Maryland Iron Festival with our friends at Catocin Furnace Historical Society and Cunningham Falls State Park.

She added that staff would love to get back to having our summer concerts on the deck. Time and the pandemic will tell how we're able to proceed with all of our plans in the coming months.

Mr. O'Leary stated that he attended the nature trail event and it was very well attended by folks in the community. Comments and discussion followed regarding renovations at the various library branches. Mr. Kelly thanked DPW staff for their help with the renovations.

BOARD QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS: Mr. O'Leary noted K. Spertzel reminded him that there will be a vacancy on the Library Board at the end of this fiscal year so we need to anticipate that and get that process underway. Ms. Spertzel added that we are awaiting a response from J. Grossnickle as to when the vacancy will be posted in The Frederick News Post. Mr. O'Leary added that once the applications are received and interviews are conducted, he recommended that the recommendation of a new board member be made to members of the FCPL Board of Trustees at the June, 2022 meeting to give us time for the two-level approval process by the County Executive and the County Council so the candidate will be ready to go at the September, 2022 meeting.

Mr. Donald inquired about the status on the Middletown Library and when will the groundbreaking take place. Ms. McDuff advised that we are at the end of design. The construction documents should be received shortly and then it will go out to bid. She estimated that groundbreaking will take place in April but she will advise everyone of the date as soon as she knows.

Mr. O'Leary inquired about the results of the survey that members of the FCPL Board of Trustees took last year. Mr. Kelly stated that the results, when available, will include what additional training may need to be provided to Library Boards.

OTHER CITIZEN REMARKS: None.

The next FCPL Board of Trustees meeting will be held virtually on February 2, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

S. White made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by C. Smith. No further discussion.
VOTE: Unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. O'Leary', is written over a horizontal line.

M. O'Leary, Chair
Frederick County Public Libraries Board of Trustees