

**FREDERICK COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 3, 2021**

The Frederick County Public Libraries Board of Trustees Meeting convened at 7:00 p.m. on February 3, 2021 via a virtual meeting.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: J. D’Agostino, C. Greenway, 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; D. Frank-Rice, IT Coordinator; J. Marshall, Manager – Systems; and L. Taft, Acting Recording Secretary.

CITIZEN REMARKS: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: J. D’Agostino made a motion to approve the Minutes of January 6, 2021; seconded by S. White. No further discussion. VOTE: Unanimous.

CHAIR’S REPORT: M. O’Leary opened his report by saying that we have been functioning in our pandemic mode for close to a year now, things are going along quite well, and this has become the new normal. He then turned over the meeting to J. Kelly for the Director’s Report with the request that Board members hold comments and questions until Mr. Kelly has completed his presentation, as sometimes a question that arises is answered later in his remarks.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

a. FCPL – Update: Mr. Kelly stated that it’s hard to believe that we’re about a year into the pandemic, but we look forward to the day when we can invite the community back into our branches. He said that our customers are making great use of our curbside model, high-quality virtual programming, and expanded digital collections. Mr. Kelly then shared an email in which a customer wrote:

“In reflecting on 2020, my 4th grader wrote that one of the best parts of the year was that he got to read more. He shared that he loved going to the library every Wednesday to pick up his new library books. He knows how to put books on hold himself and he’s really gotten into a couple of series that the library, thankfully, has in their collection. Thank you to all the staff that works to get books into our hands so efficiently through curbside pick-up. I’ve recently heard people from other counties and states bemoaning how difficult it is and how long it takes to get books from the library these days. We have had the exact opposite experience thanks to FCPL. My 5 little

readers and I are so very grateful for the fun of new books every week when many of our typical adventures outside the home are more limited.”

Mr. Kelly said that this message is echoed time and time again in the feedback received from customers, and he is proud of the ways that our team has stayed flexible and adaptable, continually fine tuning our services, and looking for ways to help our community, all while dealing with the very real stresses of providing public service in the midst of a global pandemic. He said he is sure that the Board of Trustees would agree that Frederick County Public Libraries is great because of the commitment of our team working in our libraries every day.

Mr. Kelly then shifted to statistics, advising the Board that they had received three dashboards in their packet this month: (1) a COVID Closure Analysis comparing month-to-month, which he said would probably be the most helpful in spotting trends as we progress through the pandemic; (2) a Fiscal Year-To-Date comparing year-over-year, which is helpful in providing context comparing our pandemic year to a “normal” year; and (3) a Quarterly Overview which specifically highlights e-content use, virtual programs, and curbside service. Mr. Kelly reminded the Board that this last dashboard is a report that gathers figures that Mr. O’Leary was particularly interested in tracking, and Mr. Kelly has agreed to update the Board quarterly on the trends of those particular measures.

Mr. Kelly then shared a few highlights from all of the dashboards. Circulation in December, 2020 was up slightly compared to November, 2020, and there was a 50/50 split between physical and digital borrowings. Curbside and virtual visits were also up month-to-month. Mr. Kelly had noted at the January, 2021 Board of Trustees meeting that wi-fi use was down in November, 2020, and that we would have to wait and see in subsequent months if that was the start of a trend. However, December, 2020 had almost 10,000 wi-fi sessions, which was the highest monthly total FCPL has had since the pandemic began. Mr. Kelly concluded that November, 2020 had been an anomaly in terms of wi-fi use. As a side note, he reminded the Board that FCPL had received grant funding for wi-fi expansion at all branches, and said that the work was underway and would be completed this month. There will then be a marketing push to let everyone know about the expanded wi-fi.

Mr. Kelly noted that social media engagement continues to climb. In December, 2020 program numbers were down, but he pointed out that the September, October, and November 2020 numbers were helped by high-profile author talks by Fredrik Backman, Wes Moore, and Philippa Gregory. Lastly, over a quarter of a million items were picked up curbside in the first half of the year, which is a tremendous number and reflects the hard work of the team.

Mr. Kelly then shifted away from statistics to bring an update on the Lifelong Learners Act, which is a Bill that was first introduced in Annapolis during the 2020 legislative session. The Bill had the votes that were needed but was vetoed by the Governor along with many other bills in the early days of the pandemic, as it required additional funding and it was unclear what the economic impacts of COVID would be. There is a lot of good in the Lifelong Learners Act, such

as increased funding for the State's Library Capital Grant program which provided support of our Walkersville and Middletown branches, and additional funding for the State Library Resource Center at the Enoch Pratt Free Library, which supports libraries across the state. The main part of the Bill would prohibit public libraries from charging overdue fines on any materials checked out on a minor's card. To offset the potential decrease in revenue, this bill includes an increase in the state's per capita funding to libraries.

Mr. Kelly stated that he has not been shy about his hope for FCPL to become fine-free, as he views fines as a barrier to access for those in our community who could benefit from our resources most, and access is one of the three priorities of FCPL's strategic plan. The move to eliminate fines has been a trend in public libraries nationwide. Montgomery County Public Libraries announced this week that they were going fine-free, joining Howard, Carroll, and Loudoun Counties. However, Mr. Kelly objects to specific language in the Bill which, in his opinion, takes the important Board function of establishing policy and legislates it on the state level. His fear is that this could set precedent and potentially weaken the power of Library Boards. He said that in conversations with his colleagues around the state, this was the minority view. He stated that the bill is going to be reintroduced in the current legislative session, and it is anticipated to have sufficient votes for a veto override this year, therefore, it is almost guaranteed to pass. If it does pass, all Maryland libraries will be prohibited from assessing fines on a minor's card effective July 1, 2021. Mr. Kelly said that in preparation, he and his team will draft the necessary policy language for the Board's consideration to ensure that FCPL is in compliance with the new Maryland Code. We will also be looking at what needs to be done in our catalog to streamline the process.

Mr. Kelly proposed putting the fine-free discussion on the Board of Trustee's agenda for the March, 2021 meeting. He said that he and his team could provide examples of how the fine-free model has worked at peer libraries and what the lessons learned there were, as well as the financial implications of such a decision at FCPL. He also said that the Board might get a sneak peek at that as part of the Fiscal Year 2022 proposed budget presentation later in the meeting, as FCPL has had to conservatively estimate fine revenue this year and establish a plan for coping with that in the near term. In the last year there has been very little fine revenue collected, and FCPL was dealing with that shortfall over the course of Fiscal Year 2021, and we have positioned ourselves to do something similar in Fiscal Year 2022. This discussion would help the Board determine if a move to fine-free for all is something we want to consider now, since it is likely to move forward for all minors in July, 2021. Mr. Kelly stated that he is not pushing the Board one way or another, but would like to add the topic to the March, 2021 agenda so that the Board has all the information and can discuss it. He noted that depending on the Board's decision, FCPL would be able to make the changes needed to accommodate the new Act for minors by July, 2021. Additionally, if the Board wants to move everyone to a fine-free model, we would have sufficient time to make that decision as well. He then asked if there were any questions about the Lifelong Learners Act before he moved into the Budget portion of his report.

S. White said that she was confused about the term “minors”, as she thought FCPL had done away with children’s fines. Mr. Kelly clarified that FCPL and the Board had eliminated fines on materials from the Children’s collection. We were very intentional about taking fines away from materials and not taking fines from a user type. The new law is written in such a way that anything checked out by a minor under 18 would be fine free, no matter what collection it’s from. Mr. Kelly said that he is not objecting to that, but it is a pivot from what we’ve done in the past.

C. Smith asked what controls we, as a local library system, put on preventing an entire family from using a juvenile’s card. Mr. Kelly stated that we can’t and that there is nothing to prevent it now. There is nothing to prohibit a parent from using a child’s card. The only difference now is that any materials that are in the adult collection would carry a fine, but any materials that are children’s materials would not. As the law is written now, it follows the card and patron type. Mr. Kelly said that Ms. Smith was right to point out that if we were not to make it fine-free across the board, it was possible that we could see adults using a child’s card to obtain fine-free materials.

K. Spertzel said that it seems to her that there’s going to be a need for a fair amount of programming changes to the computer system to understand when a child is a minor, when a child turns 18 and all of a sudden isn’t a minor, and asked how much that was going to cost. She also asked if it would be cheaper to go fine-free than to pay for the computer programming. Mr. Kelly responded that our Integrated Library System (ILS) right now is Sirsi, and we hope that it is robust enough to handle some of these changes, particularly if the Board decides to only go fine-free for minors and not across the board. He said that the nature of these systems is such that it should be able to make those distinctions, but since we just received word that this is being changed, our team hasn’t had an opportunity to look at our software to see if it can do that. If we, for some reason, should find out that it’s not capable of that, it would have to be a manual process whereby the fines would accrue and then staff would eliminate those fines from a customer’s card. He said he has to believe that the system is robust enough to be able to handle those distinctions by patron type, which is why they’re established in the catalog that way, so there are different borrowing limits for different patron types.

C. Greenway asked if this was a change at the state level, which Mr. Kelly confirmed. Ms. Greenway then asked if it was a law we do not have any control over. Mr. Kelly confirmed that we have no control over it for minors, but he is proposing that the Board consider the whole population as part of this. At the March, 2021 Board of Trustees meeting, he proposes that we present information to the Board about how this would work and what the implications have been for peer libraries who have gone fine-free for everyone. It would then be the decision of the Board whether to only comply with the law that is specific to minors or whether we would extend that to everybody. Ms. Greenway asked if the state law is only with regard to minors. Mr. Kelly said this was correct and that he would be happy to send Ms. Greenway the text of the law as it is written. The Code would be updated to prohibit fines on a minor’s card, but because the Board sets policy, we would still locally have to change our policies that the Board approves so we would be in compliance with the law.

Ms. White asked what the difference was between a fine and when material would be considered lost. Mr. Kelly said that he would have to get specifics from other members of his team, but after it is long overdue, the patron is charged for the item. Part of what would be discussed at the March, 2021 meeting would be internal operational guidelines to set the terms of those dates. Ms. White asked to confirm that the law does not address lost materials, just overdue fines. Mr. Kelly said that it does include some language about replacement fees and related charges, but they give guidance on the window before that can be charged. The fine would be something that couldn't be imposed at all, but the charge for replacement cost could still be incurred by a minor.

Ms. Greenway asked if part of the impetus for this was the fact that libraries spend so much money in trying to recoup those fines. Mr. Kelly disagreed and said that he thinks the Senator who proposed the Bill and her co-signers are coming from a good place, and want to increase access, which is an important part of what we do. His concern has always been with the precedent it sets with regard to Board's setting policy, and is with the language of the bill rather than its intent. He said that he would love for us to be fine-free across the board for our customers statewide, but in his opinion it is a poorly written bill, and it sounds like they're going to have the votes to pass it. Ms. Greenway then asked if he was concerned that a fine is an incentive for people to return their books. Mr. Kelly said that would be part of what we cover when we talk to the full Board about what to consider. While it hasn't been the experience of our peer libraries that fines are a deterrent from keeping items out or not, they do make changes to policy with regards to when an item is set to "lost". When that change happens, it happens sooner so that way cards are blocked and other things can't get checked out until the materials come back. The law is about whether fines can be imposed on children's cards, but the operational piece is how the Integrated Library System works and what guidelines would be put in place before cards are blocked. All of this would be internal discussions. There may be text in the law that gives some guidance, but Mr. Kelly thinks there is some flexibility with regard to how we would implement it.

Ms. White said that some of Mr. Kelly's concern is that the other component of the proposed legislation is more about what a Board is trusted to do and maybe some of the things that we would be discussing that would be more of a locality decision are going to be taken out of the Board's hands. She asked if the legislation passes, would it go to other policy matters besides fines. Mr. Kelly said that there are other components of the Lifelong Learners Act, but they don't involve policy and setting Board policy. They provide additional funding to the State Library Resource Center at the Enoch Pratt Free Library, which provides support for libraries across the state. It also increases the \$5,000,000 earmarked annually for the Library Capital Grant Program, to which libraries submit grants for capital projects up to \$7,500,000. FCPL has been the beneficiary of this program several times over the last few years (for the design of the new Middletown library and for the construction of the Walkersville library). The only piece of the Act that is really about policy and local matters is this matter of not assessing fines to a child's card.

Mr. Kelly then said that before he moves forward, he would like to add this matter to the March, 2021 agenda. This would just be informational, and he would not be asking the Board to make any decisions at that meeting. He requested the opportunity to present information from peer libraries, then the Board could deliberate and call a vote in a subsequent meeting. We would

have enough time between that meeting and the end of the fiscal year to implement any decision that the Board came to.

J. D'Agostino asked Mr. Kelly to let the Board know what the impact would be on FCPL staff and operations. Mr. Kelly said he would definitely include all of that, including the financial implications. Time is a resource as well and he would share what that would save us by making this switch.

Mr. O'Leary said that all the information Mr. Kelly can provide on this will be valuable as it is operating at different levels. He said that we have a couple of responsibilities that sometimes conflict with each other - one is to get information into as many people's hands as possible, and the other is to make that same information available to as many people as possible, and sometimes they get in each other's way. Mr. O'Leary said that he knows that FCPL has been considering how to proceed with this very carefully for quite so time and he thinks it is a good idea to continue to do so. The Board will welcome information in advance of the next stage of the discussion.

b. Budget/CIP Update: On the operating side of things, Mr. Kelly said that he and his team had had the opportunity to provide a refresher training to the Board's Finance Committee, where they covered the operating budget and the County's budget timeline. We also shared the link with the training to the full Board. Two weeks later, the Fiscal Year 2022 draft operating budget was presented to the Finance Committee, and the Board will vote on that budget later in this meeting. Mr. Kelly said that he understands how stressful the budget process can feel when it is only voted on once a year. It can feel like you have to re-learn the process and what the elements of the budget are every year. This was the first year that we provided a budget training in the lead-up to the Board's consideration and vote, and the feedback received from members of the Board was overwhelmingly positive. Should the Board find it valuable, Mr. Kelly said he is happy to provide that training annually in early January for any new Board members or any member of the existing Board who would like a refresher.

Mr. Kelly then shifted to the capital side of things, saying that S. McDuff is on the agenda later in the meeting to provide an update on the Middletown project. With regard to the CIP budget, FCPL has had a meeting with Frederick County's CIP committee. Thereafter, they contacted Mr. Kelly with some follow-up questions on a couple of proposed projects, and they are now creating a list of priorities for the County Executive's consideration. That list of priorities includes not only libraries, but capital projects for every division and component unit in County government so it's quite a long list. Mr. Kelly stated that he would keep the Board of Trustees informed of any further developments or scheduled public hearings on the operating or capital budgets. He also said the date of the next Board of Trustees meeting would be Wednesday, March 3, 2021 at 7:00 p.m., and it would be a virtual meeting.

Ms. Smith asked if there was any updated data on the need for quarantining items returned via the book drops. She also asked if it was hindering getting books back into circulation or burdensome to staff, and if there was any consideration of dropping the requirement. Mr. Kelly

said that FCPL is still following the latest guidance, which is 48 hours of quarantine before check-in, but the primary method of transmission is airborne particles. Until such time as we receive guidance that that's no longer needed, we're going to continue to quarantine for the near term. That guidance has been reduced over time. At first, a much longer quarantine period was recommended, and that has been scaled back. He added that it is not a burden to staff. It does add extra time and an extra hoop to jump through to quarantine these materials, but he has not heard from anybody that this is an extra burden. Also, when someone returns an item, it's backdated to that date when it's checked in 48 hours later, so people are not penalized for the 48 hour quarantine.

Ms. Smith said she had just wondered if we had received any updated guidance on this, since things have changed along that line of thinking. Mr. Kelly said that we are still following what we received before. There were so many conflicting views on these reports that the State Library actually funded a study with an independent epidemiologist working in partnership with the Maryland Department of Health, and they provided guidance that the 48 hour quarantine was still advisable, so that's where we're sticking for now. Mr. Kelly then concluded his director's report.

Mr. O'Leary said he was pleased to hear that there was positive feedback regarding the new method for presenting information about the proposed budget. This initiative came from the Finance Committee in the interest of having as much information as possible and Mr. Kelly and his staff followed up with a series of informational presentations which Mr. O'Leary attended and found useful. The Board of Trustees deals with the budget in depth once a year, so it's valuable to get a refresher on the details of it and it seems that this is something that can be done from now on. Mr. Kelly said that he would make that part of his early January calendar to schedule with the full Board, so that anyone who'd like to attend can attend.

Mr. O'Leary said that over time, we will have new Board members coming in, and it is a complicated budget. He said that it is valuable for all Board members, not just the Finance Committee, to feel comfortable when they vote on the budget. Ms. Greenway said she thought it was wonderful. She has been on the Board for ten years, and it is the first time anybody has ever reached out to Board members and not made them feel uncomfortable about any questions they wanted to ask. She then said she applauds Mr. Kelly and everybody on staff for accommodating the Board members in this way, and it was very helpful to her. Ms. Smith said she echoed what Ms. Greenway said and that she felt so much better than the previous year. She worked with the budget at her old job and just did not have any understanding, and Mr. Kelly and his staff did a great job making sure that she felt comfortable with all the information.

Mr. O'Leary thanked the Finance Committee for initiating this, and thanked Mr. Kelly, B. McDermott, and all their folks for conducting this augmented information presentation. He said that in previous years, he has felt the same situation, but the Finance Committee took it up and suggested ways to improve it, and he thinks that we have that ready to go for the next time, going

into the next cycle in the fall. We will have a part of the improved information flow take place in the fall and leading into where we are today.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Financial Report: B. McDermott presented the Fiscal Year 2021 financial statement for February, 2021. The data is of December 31, 2020 and was pulled on January 14, 2021. FCPL revenues are at 46%, which is right where we should be as we end the second quarter of the fiscal year. The library received a transfer from Frederick County to the general fund of \$2.6 million, and a transfer of \$400,000 to the County in-kind revenue line. There was also a slight increase to miscellaneous operating revenue of \$1,582, which is a reimbursement for wellness and safety supplies. Expenditures are at 45%. There was a slight increase in most line items. Ms. McDermott pointed out that library material purchases continue to increase due to the increasing demand for e-content. There was also an increase in equipment and other operating expenditures for expenses related to direct mail appeals, Bookmarks magazine design and printing, and purchased barcode scanners. The increase in the in-kind county appropriation and personnel are for quarterly expenditures that were recorded and posted by Frederick County. FCPL is halfway through the year, and revenue and expenditures are right within the current projected budget at this time.

Ms. McDermott stated that Grants Awarded are at \$332,000, and there are currently no new grants awarded at this time. Grants Submitted are at \$1,000,000. This includes the Ausherman Family Foundation General Grant, which will support the renewal of subscriptions for the Foundation Center Network and Grant-Seeker Resource Center. We also have the Fiscal Year 2022 Middletown construction grant, which will support the construction of the new Middletown Library branch. Donations are at \$42,000, which is a \$1,893, or a 1%, increase from the previous month. Other Endowment Revenue is at \$666, which is no change from the previous month. Ms. McDermott mentioned that FCPL did receive an award from the Thomas Foundation, which will go towards Children's materials. The Glassman Trust interest payment is for the designated purpose of materials. The revenue for both of these payments will be reflected on the next monthly financial statement. This brings the total for Grants and Contributions to \$375,000.

b. Middletown Construction Update: S. McDuff gave an update on the design for the new Middletown library, which is a new 15,000 square foot branch. Design kicked off in July, 2020, and the timeline is for design to finish by the end of the 2021 calendar year, construction to start early in calendar year 2022, and doors to open in late summer or early fall of 2023. FCPL applied for a \$1,000,000 construction grant from the Public Library Capital Grant fund and it was recommended in the Governor's budget for Fiscal Year 2022, so it is all but certain that we will be receiving \$1,000,000 for construction of the Middletown branch next fiscal year.

Ms. McDuff said that in August, 2020, we held two online meetings and shared a survey with the community to gather feedback. There were 22 attendees at the two virtual meetings and 129 respondents to the online survey, which is incredible participation from the community. Highlights of that community input were shared on our website and in one of our newsletters. Ms. McDuff shared some of the most popular images, the first of which was the most popular exterior image of the library, which will help to shape the design of the new library. She said that most people

responded very strongly about the need for a convenient drive-up book drop. Another popular photo showed an open and bright interior with easy directional signage. Additional photos showed the tall windows with a lot of light and seating provided and a separate children's area with really bright colors with a lot of light and windows. The next photo showed the meeting room space with tall ceilings and lots of light and open space. She also displayed a photo of the multi-purpose room where staff could do STEM programming and other activities, with easy to clean flooring and flexible space. Thereafter, Ms. McDuff shared images of study nooks built into the library interior, in addition to traditional study rooms. Popular images for the exterior were a children's garden and a porch or patio where people could relax and read outside. A lot of references were made by the community to the deck at the Thurmont library branch, which people absolutely love.

Ms. McDuff then moved on to the architect's presentation and showed images that they were considering as they started working on the design of the building. The architects were trying to take inspiration from old and new buildings and elements in Middletown. This includes the subdivision the library is going to be in front of, which is traditional and classic with lots of stone and neutral siding colors. Ms. McDuff said that we want the library to stand out, but at the same time we want it to mesh well with its surroundings. She then shared some images of the preliminary design, saying that the Town of Middletown has considerably more regulations than other towns that FCPL has built libraries in. The Town of Middletown has approval over site design, exterior finishes, and colors. The first time FCPL met with the Town staff it was to present some ideas for parking, as they have a code that would have required 150 spots for parking, which is way too much for a building this size. The architect also went to this meeting to show the town images of where the design was progressing to see if we were on the right page. Ms. McDuff then shared an image of the main entrance, which would face not the street but the parking lot. The next image was the side that faces Green Street which will take advantage of the west-facing views of the mountains and try to get as much light into the library as possible. An undulating porch roof was paying respect to the mountains and hills, and the use of stone and siding is similar to what is seen in that Middletown community. Another image shows the low profile and height of the building in relation to everything around it, as we are trying not to infringe on everyone's views of the mountains from their homes. She displayed additional images that showed the side of the building where the staff entrance and drive-up book drop would be and the back of the building with the west-facing view that faces the mountains.

Ms. Greenway asked how many square feet the building would be in total. Ms. McDuff said that it would be 15,000 square feet, the same as the Brunswick and Walkersville library branches. She said that one of the things that we've done is put the mechanical/electrical in the basement. She added that due to the sloping of the site, they're able to have a basement level for that so it doesn't need to be accommodated into the main 15,000 square feet of public space. This design is very preliminary and was really to get some feedback from the Town. The Town felt that it was too modern for Middletown. Based on this, the architect and the design teams have been working on some ways to make it look a little bit more traditional. FCPL plans to go back to the Town for the official site review and approval in March. As soon as there are updated images, Ms. McDuff will share them with the Board but FCPL wants to make sure that the Town loves the library and that we are combining our vision with what they were envisioning when they were thinking about their brand-new library. She said that she thinks this library is going to have a lot of really neat features,

and we are constantly looking at what's new and exciting in libraries and want to incorporate some amenities that we haven't had before. She then asked for questions.

J. Donald said he had a couple of questions. He asked who in the Town was approving it. Ms. McDuff replied that it was the Middletown Planning Commission. Mr. Donald's second question was if Ms. McDuff thinks that we will be able to break ground in early 2022. Ms. McDuff said "yes". Mr. Donald said he wanted to make sure that FCPL has a \$1 million construction grant from the State. He also said that he knows they are still working on a theme for the library – Walkersville has a farming theme and Myersville has a trolley theme – and asked if they would have the theme finished in the next month or two. Ms. McDuff said that she has been meeting with the Friends of the Library to get some input and we have a good idea of some of the things we could do for themes. We want to get input from the community, so in two weeks we are hoping to have a better idea and will be able to move forward with that piece as well. Mr. Donald's last question was what happens to the old library once we move to the new library. Ms. McDuff answered that the building belongs to the County and they will decide how they want to repurpose it.

Mr. O'Leary asked how the discussion with respect to the number of parking spaces went. Ms. McDuff said that it went well, and we know from experience that we don't have enough parking at most of our libraries - the Walkersville branch being a really good example. Over 100 people attend story time at Walkersville and there are only 40 parking spaces, which is not enough. We originally were trying to get Middletown to approve not doing 150 spaces, and we quickly realized that what they wanted was even less than what we were proposing, so we had a lot of conversations about how much we need. At this point, we have 85 spots in the design, and it is not final yet. The planned meeting room is going to accommodate 150 people, so we want to make sure that if the meeting room is full and we have other people in the library, people can still park at the library. There is not adequate parking on Green Street and the school's complex is a little bit far for people to walk in bad weather or if they have mobility issues so we're trying to get all of the parking on site at this branch.

S. Sheppard asked if there was ever any discussion on a possible podcast studio. Ms. McDuff said that we have talked about the potential for a sound studio in a library, but she is not sure if we're going to be able to do it in Middletown. She said that the East County Regional Library would be a better candidate for that. She said that she thinks there are a lot of libraries that have sound studios that people use for various reasons, including podcasts, and it is something we would consider. She said she appreciated Ms. Sheppard bringing it up.

Mr. O'Leary stated that last month, Hood College had an inaugural event for their repurposed library building and identified it as a Learning Commons. The original Hood College library building was built in the mid-1990's, and over the last several years they began to perceive a lot of major opportunities for changing the entire physical layout to accommodate a more modern learning environment. The Frederick Community College Library had undergone the very same process in the first part of the decade, and if you look at the layout and the design principles of the Middletown design, as well as the other recent branch constructions in Myersville and Walkersville, some very welcome common themes can be seen. He stated that one of the principle themes is a highly welcoming environment with lots of light, easy transition from one usage to another, and flexibility so that something can be repurposed easily. He said that at Frederick

Community College, the student body was highly receptive to the physical changes. The physical environment should enhance and support the learning, exploratory, and discovery activities. You can see these themes at Frederick Community College, Hood College, and the Myersville, Walkersville, Brunswick, Thurmont, and Urbana FCPL branches. It is a very important thing in bringing people in and making them feel comfortable, and he is happy to see these same design themes carried forth in the Middletown branch design. He then asked Ms. Sheppard if he was correct about the Frederick Community College Learning Commons.

Ms. Sheppard agreed that he was and one of the things she really likes about the library at Frederick Community College is that students giving a presentation can go in one of these rooms, connect their laptops, and give practice presentations. She said she thinks that is a really good idea and wondered if the Middletown library has it now or if they are planning on it. Mr. O'Leary also asked if there were study rooms or enclosed places for an individual or group to work together. Ms. McDuff said that there will absolutely be study rooms as well as a larger meeting room, which we are trying to make flexible so it can be divided into two smaller rooms. We are also trying to incorporate a multi-use room, so there should be a lot of different spaces, all of which will have the ability for people to plug in and use technology. Mr. O'Leary said that one thing we found in researching this was that there is a desire to have space for different sizes of groups, starting with a single individual who wants to work alone, to groups of a couple of people coming together in a study session, to a larger group working on a presentation.

Ms. Smith asked if the design objections were going to be a stumbling block to keeping us on track. Ms. McDuff said that there was a slight delay, but she doesn't anticipate it causing any major issues. They gave us a lot of feedback, and we are doing our best to incorporate as much of that into the design as possible, and she thinks that once they see a revised design we'll be able to move forward. Ms. Smith said that sometimes these things can be pretty rigid and hard to work through and she hopes that is not the case. Mr. Donald asked Ms. McDuff to let him know if it becomes a real issue. He added that he will talk to people if it becomes a real problem although he can't promise anything. He said he loves Middletown, but some people want everything to look like the 1920s forever even though there are other possibilities in life. Ms. McDuff said she appreciated that.

Mr. O'Leary thanked Ms. McDuff and said he remembered when the original Middletown branch was opened. We loved it but thought it was a little bit small. So here we are a few years later with the prospect of a much larger one, and, of course, Middletown itself has grown enormously over that time. He said he thinks it looks like it's going to be a wonderful facility.

c. Budget Presentation: Mr. Kelly began the budget presentation by saying he was happy to answer any questions and reminded the Board that there was a much more detailed presentation made to the Finance Committee a few weeks ago. He said he would walk the rest of the Board through an abbreviated presentation, and then we will hear the recommendation of the Finance Committee for a vote. He first pointed out the revenue sources for the Fiscal Year 2022 proposed budget. Frederick County contributes \$10.4 million, all of which, with the exception of about \$340,000, is staff salaries. The State contribution of \$2.4 million is based on a wealth formula, which takes into account population, wealth, and other factors, and then they come up with a per capita contribution from the State. About \$1 million of that \$2.4 million are retirement benefits

that the State provides coverage for. The County in-kind is \$2.4 million. This number is provided to us by Frederick County and is determined by what it costs for maintenance and utilities for County library buildings, some of the infrastructure for technology, and our property insurance. The ending fund balance is \$507,866, and that number is provided as part of our audit of the previous year. Last year, the ending fund balance was \$207,000 and because it is so low, we were able to take \$300,000 from the current year's budget and push it forward because we knew we would need it next year. We had a shortfall in revenue of over \$250,000 from library fines and passport revenues due to COVID-19 and the closure of our branches. We did what we could this year to absorb that loss of revenue, and we've taken that into account as we've determined what these revenue lines would be moving forward.

Mr. Kelly then moved on to a breakdown of Fines, Gifts, and Miscellaneous, which totaled \$268,100. Since we had a revenue shortfall in excess of a quarter of a million dollars this year, we have been very conservative in our estimates for revenue of library fines and passport revenue. We have included \$5,000 in library fines and \$25,000 in passport service fees. We don't know when we'll reopen to the public, so we couldn't anticipate having a full year's worth of revenue for those lines, and we have projected very conservatively. Mr. Kelly stated that the hope is that we will come in above those numbers, but as we were developing our budget and projecting revenues, we thought it was best to keep those numbers conservative and budget accordingly in the hopes that maybe they will be higher later. Contributions and Donations are up slightly as compared to the previous year's approved budget, and the reason for that is because we took a disbursement from one of our community foundation funds for various needs. That disbursement was not the whole \$171,100, but it was a piece of it.

Mr. Kelly then shifted to Expenditures, saying that a much more in-depth review was provided to the Finance Committee, but the three lines provided to the full Board are the ones in which there was the most fluctuation. The slide showed three columns: the Fiscal Year 2021 Adopted Budget, the Fiscal Year 2021 Amended Budget, and the Fiscal Year 2022 Proposed Budget. The proposed amount in Fiscal Year 2022 for Equipment Maintenance and Repair is higher at \$233,219. The reason for this is we are migrating to a new Integrated Library System and we had to make our best guess at what the maintenance cost would be. We are also replacing our self-check stations, which will also have ongoing maintenance requests. He said that we purposely estimated what we think is a high number for that. There is a likelihood that we will come in below the number, but in year one we wanted to allow a little bit more room so that we know it could cover it and not face a shortfall. In subsequent years, we'll have a much better picture of what the actuals are for maintenance of the Integrated Library System and self-check stations. The Advertising number is reduced from \$43,000 down to \$22,800 next year because of a shift we made internally. In our digital marketing strategy and communications plan, we are opting for free advertising or even media coverage in place of paid advertising and paid marketing. The last line was System-Wide Programs. The approved budget for this in Fiscal Year 2021 was \$163,150 and was amended down to \$64,933. In Fiscal Year 2022, this number has gone back up to \$100,000 because we know that even when we open our doors – hopefully in the next few months – it will still be several more months after that when we're able to gather in large groups

for programming. We knew we could reduce that budget line a bit from \$163,150 to \$100,000, but we wanted to be optimistic and make sure the money is still there in case we can have large-scale programs within the next fiscal year.

Mr. Kelly then moved on to Library Collections, which is our biggest non-salary line in terms of expense and we always like to highlight this for the Board. The slide he presented showed actual spending in Fiscal Years 2019 and 2020, the Fiscal Year 2021 Adopted and Amended Budgets, and the Fiscal Year 2022 Proposed Budget. The Fiscal Year 2021 Amended Budget reflects what we had to do to deal with revenue shortfall and increases in some lines. For example, it shows that money was moved around to increase e-content as there was a demand for that when our doors closed. Some of the big trends Mr. Kelly highlighted were the doubling of e-content expense over time, the decline in periodical spending as a function of industry trends as a lot of print publications are going out of business or going to digital-only, and the slow reduction of AV spending. So not only are the circulation of AV materials like DVDs going down, but there are industry trends like the fact that over the last year studios were releasing fewer things due to the pandemic, and, as a result, there was a reduction in AV expenses.

Mr. Kelly then wanted to highlight some of the things that FCPL is committed to in 2022 that we're excited about. One is that we increased our e-content during the pandemic, and we thought it was important to preserve that funding at current levels which we're doing as part of this new budget. We also want to keep our virtualization project on track. We had a presentation on that previously where all of our public workstations are being virtualized, and that's going to save money in the long run in terms of hardware and staff time as it makes it easier to service those machines, if they're all working on a virtualized desktop. Next is the launch of the new Integrated Library System, as FCPL is migrating to a new company. Mr. Kelly said that he was hoping he'd be able to share the name of that company at this meeting, but as there is not yet a signed agreement, Purchasing has requested he not share any information until it's official. He hopes he'll be able to share the name of that vendor at our next meeting. The last item was breaking ground on the new Middletown branch as was discussed earlier in the meeting, and this will happen in the next fiscal year.

Ms. White thanked Mr. Kelly for a great presentation and said that he really helped the Finance Committee understand what they were looking at. Mr. O'Leary asked to see the Collections slide again, and said that much of the budget doesn't change drastically from year-to-year and that's perfectly normal, but if you look at the trends over the period represented on the slide you do see some significant transitions. He said he thinks this is quite appropriate in response to changes in the information environment, user preferences, and the facilities and capabilities that people have from home, and this is responding to the way things change and the way people use and enjoy information year to year. He said he thinks the adaptation and transition of these budgets is very much in response to the way people use information, even over that fairly short period of time. Mr. Kelly said those matters were considered almost daily by Library Collections Manager, Sharon Lauchner, and her staff, so all credit is due to her to make sure that these allocations are responsive to community need and usage patterns. Mr. O'Leary said that this year the use of

digital content and programming has multiplied due to the circumstances, and the library has been quite attentive to the changing situation. Mr. O'Leary thereafter asked for a motion to approve the proposed budget.

S. White made a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2022 Proposed Budget, seconded by S. Sheppard. No further discussion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Mr. O'Leary thanked the Board and said that the development and presentation of the budget was better this year than before. He thinks it is a significant improvement and if Mr. Kelly feels the Board wants to do so, and it seems that they do, they will keep doing it in this better way.

BOARD QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS: None.

OTHER CITIZEN REMARKS: None.

The next meeting will be held virtually on March 3, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:19 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