

THE TALBOT COUNTY FREE LIBRARY
100 W. Dover St.
Easton, MD 21601
Minutes of the Board Meeting
December 7, 2023

The meeting was called to order by Susan Sherman, President at 5:05 pm. Meeting held in St. Michaels.

Attendees: Susan Sherman, Charles Yonkers, Becky Amaral, Robert Forloney, Marlene Thomas, Sue Regier, Mary Pellicano, Don Abatiello, Town of Easton, Andrew Thaler, Vivi Morris and Van Tran, Student Liaisons to the Board Director, Dana Newman and Scotti Oliver, Assistant Director, Christina Acosta, Communications Manager and Shauna Beulah, St. Michaels Branch Manager, represented the TCFL.

Guest: Leone Tillman, TCFL Security and Circulation Clerk

Excused: Pete Leshner, Talbot County Liaison

Absent: Estela Ramirez

Action Items:

- **Board members voted on and approved the October 19, 2023 minutes.**
- **Board members voted on and approved the Treasurer's Report: Income and Expense Statement and Statement of Activities.**
- **Board members voted on and approved TCFL Holidays and Closings for 2024.**
- **Board members voted on and approved action item: Permission to transfer major gift to library to Foundation.**
- **Board members voted on and approved action item: Board bylaw revision to required minimum transfer amount from TCFL to Foundation.**
- **Board agreed to review the application of a new potential board member and to vote at the January meeting.**

Review of the October 19, 2023, Minutes: Susan Sherman asked the board if there were any changes or corrections. Hearing none, asked for a motion to approve with Becky Amaral moving and Sue Regier seconding. All were in favor so the motion carried.

Guest: Leone Tillman, TCFL Security and Circulation Clerk

Leone explained some of his background and what he does at the library. With over 20 years working at the Department of Corrections, he is now retired and working at the library in security and at the Circulation Desk. He also helps with AV and works with our IT Director, Bob. Leone likes to have a peaceful approach to patrons and to wants them to feel welcomed and in a safe environment. Bringing teachable moments is important when working with the public. Dana and Scotti lifted up additional skills that Leone brings to the library such as completion of an 8-week Certificate Training with County Emergency Services on topics such as fire safety and first aid and is an excellent instructor at trainings held here at the library for staff. He shared that he doesn't see too many challenges at the library and is very happy working here. The board thanked Leone for his service.

Advocacy sharing:

Mary Pellicano shared that she participated in two Zoom classes on Politics and Education where the topic was on the history of book banning. She is hopeful that there is starting to be push back against book banning as there are some laws and legislation being discussed at ACLU to try and push back the laws in Florida about book banning. People are more aware now.

Robert Forloney shared that there have been numerous programming on Native Americans, such as the program with Chief Donna. Several speakers at Salisbury University drew a large crowd.

Susan Sherman shared that she had attended the CML annual conference and got to hear guest presenter, author Ellen Oh. It would be great to invite her to the Easton Shore. A documentary was featured on children speaking about why books shouldn't be banned.

Nominating Committee-Robert Forloney had to leave the meeting early and so reported for the Nominating Committee. The board had voted on changing the board bylaws to have the range of board members serving as between 9-12 members. We have a few board members whose term is up for election and hope will stay but we are also seeking a few new board members as we need at least 9 to vote. The committee has reached out to a few potential members. We also received an application from one prospective member and we will vote on it at our next meeting in January. Robert also reminded the board that we always want to keep a list of prospective members even if they can't serve now, they might wish to help in the future.

Old Business: none

New Business:

Preview of budget:

Dana Newman shared the handout of the FY25 Budget Request-Initial Highlights. Dana shared with the board that this budget is what we have currently and that we might make changes when the County gives the library instructions in January. As in prior years, we submit a flat budget with supplemental requests. Highlights include:

FY25 Operating Supplemental Budget Priorities:

- Provide a 5% salary increase for staff recognizing their outstanding service and cost of living increases.
- Request \$100,000 to start ordering books for opening day collection for the St. Michaels library.
- Request \$45,000 to provide rent, storage and moving costs associated with having to lease a facility and store library materials while the St. Michaels Library is closed.

FY25 Capital Outlay Request:

- Replace 4 staff computers, printers and other computer peripherals for staff at Easton for \$7,000.
- Replace POTS line service at Easton library for \$800.00
- Replace 5 book carts for \$3,000.
- Total for Capital Outlay is \$10,800.

FY25 Capital Request:

- Funding for the construction of the expansion and renovation of the St. Michaels Library. The architect is estimating cost to be close to 5.9 million. This cost does not include costs for opening day collection which is partially included in the FY operating cost. Request from the County is 3.5 million.
- Funding for a construction manager.

Dana wanted the board to know that the library will not hear about how much may be included in the Governor's budget for the library capital grant until late January.

Proposed Holidays and Closings 2024:

Dana Newman explained to the board that the 2024 holidays and closings are pretty much the same as in 2023. Dana noted that Friday, November 29th is the day after Thanksgiving when the library is closed. Staff who work Saturday, November 30th will get a floating holiday. The board was supportive of the proposed closings. Susan Sherman made a motion to accept these dates with Mary Pellicano moving and Andrew Thaler seconded. All approved and the motion carried.

Strategic Plan Update:

Dana reviewed the handout showing the strategic plan that was approved by the board in October 2022 and wanted to share a few of the things we have accomplished since creating the plan. A few of the highlights included getting a new AV system installed, met with County maintenance for getting several projects done such as replacing automatic doors, starting the process of the St. Michaels Expansion and Renovation project and crafted a new vision statement. Dana shared that the strategic plan isn't just a piece of paper, but actually shows what the library is doing and is a great tool for when we are asking the County for funding.

Action Item: Board bylaw revision to required minimum transfer amount from TCFL to Foundation:

Dana reviewed with the board the current language in the board bylaws citing the amount of \$2,000 is allowed to be transferred from the library to the Foundation. These entails gifts received for the annual appeal and now we are also ramping up fundraising for the St. Michaels renovation and expansion project. We sometimes receive larger gifts and so Dana explained she would like to ask that we raise the minimum transfer amount to \$10,000. The board agreed that this change makes sense and so a motion was made to have gifts needing to be transferred from the library to the Foundation be revised from \$2,000 to \$10,000 with Sue Regier moving and Marlene Thomas seconding. All approved and the motion carried.

Action Item: Permission to transfer major gift to library to Foundation:

Dana explained that the library has received a generous bequest of \$12,500 which will be the first of two gifts from the same person. The donor loved literacy and reading and so Dana asked the board to approve transferring this gift to the Foundation for the purchasing of children's materials. Susan Sherman asked for a motion to approve this transfer with Mary Pellicano moving and Andrew Thaler seconding. All approved and the motion carried.

President's Report-Susan Sherman had a few highlights:

- Thank you to staff, especially Sabine, for the volunteer party held at Kiln Born. It was a very nice evening.
- The board was encouraged to attend the library staff holiday party on Tuesday, December 12th at 5pm held at the library. It will feature a fun time of good food and trivia.
- Susan reported that her term on the ESRL board will be ending soon, and she will be seeking someone on the board to consider joining. Susan's term as CML President will be ending soon also. You learn a lot about libraries when you belong to these organizations.
- Thanks for all the work on the library annual report. The report shows how much the library is being used.
- Susan suggested to the board that they volunteer a few hours at the library to get a sense of what happens on a daily basis.

Treasurer's Report

Mary Pellicano reviewed the Income and Expense report and the Statement of Activities noting that we are a third of the way through the year with 40% in income and 28% of expense so we are on track. The Statement of Activities shows year to date and the Income and Expense report compares this year with last year. The finance committee has reviewed both documents and accepted them. Susan Sherman made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report with Marlene Thomas moving and Becky Amaral seconding. All approved and the motion carried.

County Council Representative's Report- Pete Lesher was not present and had no report.

Easton Town Council Representative's Report –Don Abatiello reported that in next years budget there are remaining funds for ARPA monies and the library is still on the list. He will know more in the new year. Just FYI for the library is that Easton Utilities requested to approve to go to a State rate increase on electric and gas.

Librarian's Report-Dana Newman highlighted a few key items not covered in her board report:

- Library staff are researching a temporary location for the St. Michaels library. We are looking at several places.
- We have started to partner with the Department of Social Services where a caseworker comes over to the library once a week to meet with anyone who might have questions or needs assistance. If the need is demonstrated, a case worker may visit the library on a regular basis in the future.
- The annual appeal has raised nearly \$38,000 so far and Mid-Shore Gives gave the library \$5,300.

Diversity and Inclusion Committee- Charles Yonkers praised Dana's review of the annual report and the strategic plan as it is a testament to all the work of the library and the work of the EDI committee. The website also shows how much the library is doing in this area. We are meeting our goals and objectives. Partnerships are key and this is one of the libraries key strengths.

Teen Liaison's Report-Van Tran reported that the Hummingbird book club has 10 kids in it. Every few Mondays some of the kids bring their book by and we do crafts with them. Van also was excited to relay that she and Vivi are planning Project Steam Camp for next summer for elementary school kids. They will offer art and other projects that promote environmental activism.

Friends' Report- Sue Regier reviewed her report highlighting that the fall was busy with book sales and promoting the St. Michaels branch expansion. May 2024 marks the 50th Anniversary of the TCFL Friends and so plans are being discussed of how to celebrate that. The Development Work Group has been meeting and Sue and Dana are following up with larger donors. Sue asked the board to let her know if they would like to host a porch party as a fundraiser for the St. Michaels renovation and expansion project.

Foundation Report- Dana Newman reported that the Foundation will meet on January 18, 2024. She shared with the board that Tom Reynolds who was involved with the Foundation for over 20 years has ended his term. We welcomed two new board members, Ralph Alexander and Michael McMillan.

Susan Sherman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 pm with Becky Amaral moving and Charles Yonkers seconded.

Reminder: Our next meeting will be on Thursday, January 18, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. in Easton.

Respectfully submitted, Katie Dodds