

Board of Library Trustees for Caroline County

January 23, 2024-Meeting Minutes

[Approved April 10, 2024](#)

The meeting was called to order by President Bart Johnson at 6 pm at the Central Library, Denton 2nd Floor meeting room.

Present were Bart Johnson, Sarah Dahl, Tomas Davila, Tamara Kelly-Molock, Holly Trice, Melissa Leonard and Kaleb Hignutt; along with Executive Director Debby Bennett and Assistant Director Jonah Owens.

Citizens' Time

There were no citizens present.

Minutes

Tomas Davila moved to approve the October 11, 2023 meeting minutes as presented. Holly Trice seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Bennett reviewed with the Board both the Balance Sheet and the Treasurer's Report. The reports were accepted to be filed for audit.

Staff progress report

Mr. Owens reviewed some highlights from the staff progress report, including an update on the Central Library renovations and the great feedback staff are receiving regarding the newly renovated first floor of the Central Library. The staff did a "soft opening" of the first floor on December 19.

For Board approval

Sarah Dahl made a motion to approve Ms. Bennett's request to move a recent Barbara Manley donation of \$3860.45 to the Library's Unrestricted Gifts Account. Tamara Kelly-Molock seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously.

Report of the Executive Director

- Ms. Bennett reviewed for the board recent issues with the Central Library's dry sprinkler system for the three "attic" areas of the original part of the facility, which included an emergency purchase of a new air compressor and other parts for the dry sprinkler system.
- A Central Library renovation update included the current schedule for the elevator upgrade and plans for a Library plaque and celebration event.
- Ms. Bennett and Mr. Owens will be working on a FY26 state library capital grant application to replace Central Library's flat roofs and small pitched roof connecting them. Gant Brunnett Architects have been engaged to help create the required documents for the application. The grant application will be due sometime in May.

At 6:29 pm Sarah Dahl made the motion to move into a Closed Session for discussion of the performance and assignment of specific employees. Authority: 2014 Md. Code, State Government 3-305(b) (1). Kaleb Hignutt seconded the motion. It was unanimously approved.

Attendees: Johnson, Dahl, Kelly-Molock, Trice, Davila, Leonard, Hignutt.

At 6:56 pm Tamara Kelly-Molock made the motion to move out of Closed Session and into a second Closed Session for a second discussion of the performance and assignment of specific employees. Authority: 2014 Md. Code, State Government 3-305(b) (1). Kaleb Hignutt seconded the motion. It was unanimously approved.

Attendees: Johnson, Dahl, Kelly-Molock, Trice, Davila, Hignutt, Leonard, Bennett, Owens

At 7:29 pm Tomas Davila made the motion to move back into Open Session. Holly Trice seconded the motion.

First Closed Session discussions included the annual evaluation of the Executive Director, and a report to the board from the Board's Executive Director Search Committee. Second Closed Session discussions including Ms. Bennett and Mr. Owens were regarding performance and assignment of specific employees in relation to the FY24 Operating Budget and proposed FY25 Operating Budget.

Old Business

- **FY24 Operating Budget Review**
Sarah Dahl made the motion to approve the adjustment of one staff position in the FY24 Operating Budget. Kaleb Hignutt seconded the motion. It was unanimously approved.
- A reminder that NCB roof & HVAC issues continue and the lease runs through March 31, 2025. So far the HVAC units are working well enough, even through colder temperatures. Staff are using space heaters to help raise the temperatures to a comfortable level and are dressing warmly during open hours.

New Business

- **Executive Director Search Committee recommendation**
Sarah Dahl was spokesperson for the Committee. She recommended that the Board promote Jonah Owens to Acting Executive Director effective July 1, 2024 for up to one year. Melissa Leonard made a motion that the Board approve the Committee's recommendation. Tomas Davila seconded the motion. It was unanimously approved. The Board will vote within one year on whether to make Mr. Owens Executive Director.
- Ms. Bennett reviewed with the Board the County FY2025 Budget Calendar. Kaleb Hignutt will try to attend the Budget Round Table on February 27 and the May 7 Public Budget Hearing. Holly Trice will try to attend the March 12 Public Budget Hearing.
- Proposed FY25 Operating and Capital budgets are due to the Caroline County Office of Finance by February 5. Ms. Bennett received an email from the State Librarian with the preliminary FY25 state aid amount.
- **Proposed FY2025 Operating budget**
The Board reviewed the proposed budget documents presented by Ms. Bennett and Mr. Owens. Sarah Dahl moved to approve Scenario A as revised by the Board. Melissa Leonard seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously.
- **Proposed FY2025 Capital budget**
Sarah Dahl moved that the Board approve the proposed budget and give Ms. Bennett the authority to revise the amounts to reflect additional estimates from contractors. Melissa Leonard seconded the motion. It was unanimously approved.
- **Board position opening July 1, 2024**
Bart Johnson's second term ends June 30, 2024 and he will have to go off the Board. There is one known candidate interested in applying for a Board position. Ms. Dahl will send the interested party an application. If Board members know of other interested people, please encourage them to apply. The Board will review applications at their April 10 meeting.
- **Additional item added to New Business**
Ms. Bennett and Mr. Hignutt made some recommendations to revise the check signing policy. After discussion, Sarah Dahl moved to add Mr. Owens and the Board President as check signers; and for any check over \$1,000 two signatures are required, one of which must be the Board President or Treasurer. Kaleb Hignutt seconded the motion. It was unanimously approved.

Tomas Davila made the motion to adjourn. Tamara Kelly-Molock seconded the motion. It was unanimously approved. The Board adjourned at 8:06 PM.

Actions Taken

Approved the October 11, 2023 meeting minutes.

Approved moving the Barbara Manley donation to the Unrestricted Gifts Account.

Approved one revision to the FY24 Operating Budget.

Approved promoting Jonah Owens to Acting Executive Director.

Approved a FY25 Operating budget with one Board revision.

Approved the FY25 Capital Budget giving Ms. Bennett permission to revise the estimates.

Approved revisions to the check signing policy.

Dates of Next Meetings: April 10, 2024; June 12, 2024; August 14, 2024; October 9, 2024, January 22, 2025

Meetings are conducted in Open Session unless otherwise indicated. All or part of Library Board's meetings can be held in closed session under the authority of the state open meetings law by vote of the Board.