

Eastern Shore Regional Library
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2025 3:30pm
Talbot County Free Library – Easton, MD

In Attendance: Kathy Burtman, Kathy Culbertson, Sarah Dahl, Hillary Lindeman, Linda Prochaska, Susan Sherman, Pattie Tingle, Gloria Urban, Ed Goyda, Dana Newman, Lori Milach, Morgan Miller, Amanda Watson

Call to Order: Susan Sherman called the meeting to order at 3:30pm.

June 10, 2025 Minutes: Susan asked if anyone had changes to the June 10th minutes. All were in favor of approving the minutes as written. The June 10, 2025 board meeting minutes were approved.

Financial Report (Lori Milach):

- Statement of Financial Position: Assets are currently under \$900,000.00; our office renovation is complete, and we will be keeping an eye on this going forward. We want to build reserves back up closer to around \$1 million.
- Budget vs Actual: There are a few line items that are at 100% expended. This is normal for the beginning of our fiscal year as many of these items are annual subscriptions that are paid in total in July. Constant Contact is over by 35%; Queen Anne’s County requested use of this product after the original budget and contract were approved. We are expecting to have reduced spending in Subscription Services, which will balance this out by the end of the year. Hoopla is now under a daily user cap and should not go over budget for this fiscal year. SMRLA and Enoch Pratt recently cancelled their Hoopla use and Western Maryland is slowly reducing the amount of Hoopla use while bulking up their audio selections with Blackstone Audio and Libby. We are continuing to monitor when county patrons are reaching the daily cap and discussing this with our directors, but as of right now, there is no budgetary concern. This will cause service impacts though, from limiting usage.

All were in favor of approving the Financial Report for audit.

CEO’s Report (Lori Milach):

- Lori has been working on her SMART goals.
 - Relevant staff have had training on QuickBooks Online. Having QBO access has been a huge help in our every day financial process.
 - Lori has met with most of our staff to determine the best ways to move forward with internal communication for more regular and open dialog.
 - We have Jabbar HR Solutions coming in to provide executive coaching, change management and mediation where necessary. They have been contracted for a six month plan and Lori has already had her first executive session with them.
 - For ESRL’s Strategic Plan, Amanda and her staff have worked hard to develop a comprehensive implementation plan. Also, big thanks to Dr. Sarah Guy for being a huge

help in getting us moving in the right direction! We will now be going through the plan a second time to designate the project leads and determine the best reporting method to share our progress. You will notice that on the handout Advocacy and Communication are front loaded. At this point, we feel that these actions/steps are achievable early in the action plan. We will keep the board informed if we need to push any of these items back.

Library Services (Amanda Watson):

- Amanda handed out an Operations Report to the board, to outline things that ESRL staff has been working on. Predominantly we have been working on the Strategic action plans. We also have several library branches that are either being remodeled or are going through additional integrations such as pick-up lockers and developing new apps for patrons. Over the last quarter, we have had significant damage to some of our network equipment due to electrical surges or things that were more environmental in nature. We have also been working on a SharePoint site for staff and the consortium to access for information like historical documentation, strategic plans, bylaws, and anything else that might serve future administration and boards.
- We have been meeting regularly with Hoopla and our member libraries to see what we can do better and to explore all possible options.

Director Liaison Report (Ed Goyda & Dana Newman):

- Ed talked some about how libraries are trying to navigate a good solution to the Hoopla issue that can keep costs under control and also keep patrons happy.
- Dana shared that Talbot's St. Michaels branch is anticipating completion on their expansion in December, with an opening in February of 2026. Worcester's Pocomoke branch is under construction, also with an anticipated completion in December. Wicomico's Paul Sarbanes branch will be moving to the Ward Museum and are currently in the design phase. Wicomico's Pittsville branch will be relocated to Parsonsburg, with completion in October/November and a formal opening in the spring. All of the libraries are holding fund raiser events and programs.

Maryland State Library Agency Report (Morgan Miller):

- Morgan introduced herself to the board. She has been working in Maryland Libraries for about 20 years. Prior to becoming the State Librarian, she was the Executive Director of the Cecil County Public Library.
- Citizens for Maryland Libraries will be having their annual conference on October 11th at the Michael Bush branch of the Anne Arundell County Public Library.
- Morgan talked about State Legislation over the course of the past year. Maryland has been, and is heading in to, more challenging financial waters. Lat year, we had a successful legislative session and were able to get all of our Capital projects funded and secure the standard increase for both the State and the Counties, as well as the Regionals. We also had two bills passed; one for more funding for our Deaf Culture Digital Library and one to start a partnership pilot through the Family Literacy Program. We are working with the Department of Labor and Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to create a program where people who are incarcerated are able to read and

record stories for their children. We will help get these to their families, which will also connect them more with their local county public library system. This is important because in addition to supporting family literacy and engagement, we will also be doing literacy coaching and support with the inmates. There are four locations for the pilot, one being at the Eastern Correctional Institution on the Eastern shore.

- We are in the process of creating the MSLA's budget. In terms of Legislation, we have been working closely with MAPLA on two key issues this year. One is a funding increase for the State Library Resource Center, who serves not only the public libraries but the school and academic libraries as well, providing databases, training, programs, high speed internet and more. The other issue that we want to focus on is restarting the cycle of increases for state aid per capita. Operating funds for each Library system are supplemented by the state, which increases every year. This is on a cycle, and the current cycle is due to end in FY-2027.
- At the Federal level, we are in pretty good shape right now. Morgan would like to thank all of the directors for their patience when it seemed like Federal funding would disappear in the spring. Federal funds go to support some staff, the help to run the Library for the Blind and Print Disabled, the Library Associate Training Institute and also go directly to Counties for staff development and local competitive grants. We worked with the Maryland Attorney General's office and were able to get all of our federal funding for last year, and we currently have all of the funding for this year as well. This has allowed us to award all of our grants to each county, as well as open up the new cycle of competitive grants.
- We are in the process of moving through the Capital Grants cycle. This is a matching grant program where the General Assembly allocates a set amount of funding for the State Library Agency to administer. Since the program started in 2008, the \$100 million that the GA has given to it has helped to yield more than \$400 million in local matches.
- MSLA is also focused on Board training and support. Morgan is going to put together a team of Library Directors and Board members to develop foundations and best practices for all Maryland Library Boards.

New Business (Susan Sherman):

- FY-26 Officers and Committee discussion and vote:
 - Sarah Dahl nominated Susan Sherman for President and Linda Prochaska for Vice President. The board voted and all were in favor. For FY-2026, Susan Sherman is the board's President and Linda Prochaska is the board's Vice President. Linda will also be in charge of Board Orientation; Hillary Lindeman will help with this.
 - ESRL's Board Finance Committee will consist of Sarah Dahl, Susan Sherman and Gloria Urban. Hillary Lindeman will consider joining. Kathy Burtman nominated Sarah Dahl for Treasurer and Chair for the Finance Committee. All were in favor.
- FY-2026 Meeting Dates- The board discussed future meeting dates and agreed to the second Tuesday of the month, quarterly. Sarah Dahl made motion for the following meeting dates for FY-2026: December 9, 2025, March 10, 2026 and June 9, 2026. Gloria Urban seconded the motion. All were in favor.



Eastern Shore
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Next Meeting: December 9, 2025 at 4:30pm via Zoom

Susan Sherman made motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:00pm. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned.