

Eastern Shore Regional Library
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
March 11, 2025 4:30pm
Zoom

In Attendance: Lori Milach, Amanda Watson, Maida Finch, Gloria Urban, Dana Newman, Susan Sherman, Kathleen Lyons, Sarah Dahl, Ann Smith, Erin Counihan, Sarah Guy, Pat Tomasovic

Call to Order: Maida called the meeting to order at 4:30pm.

December 10, 2024 Minutes: Kathleen Lyons made motion to approve the minutes as written. Ann Smith seconded the motion. All were in favor. The December 10, 2024 board meeting minutes were approved.

Financial Report (Lori Milach):

- **Budget Changes** – Lori handed out the financial reports from the September and December board meetings and explained some changes in our current budget to the board. For account 8010 (Children's and Teen's Programming), the \$10,000 was removed as it was supposed to be under the account for Summer Reading. For account 9220 (Incidentals), the \$10,000 was removed because it was not needed. Account 9730 (Unemployment Insurance) was removed because it was not an approved line item on the budget. The \$8,000 that was in this account was moved to account 9745 (Professional Development). All of this puts us back to where we should have been for FY-25, which was approved in June.
Sarah Dahl made motion to approve the September and December financial documents for the budget changes. Pat Tomasovic seconded the motion. All were in favor. The FY-25 budget changes were accepted.
- Our March financial documents were included in the board handout. The Profit and Loss sheet showed that we profited \$37,515.00 in interest on our MLGIP account. This will likely be reduced in FY-26 due to our renovation costs. On account 9510 (Bookkeeping Services), Lori wanted to point out that this was calculated incorrectly, which shows that we are over budget. We are actually below budget by \$7,500.00. We have gone over budget on 9540.02 (Equipment Maintenance), which is up by \$7,862.00. We needed to replace a transmission in one of our delivery vans. Another area where we have had an increase is in 9750.03 (Mileage Reimbursement), due to the fact that we have been working remote during renovation and employees have been traveling to branches from their homes. Now that we are back in the office, we can make efforts to cut back on usage. Total expenses are still under budget so far for the year.
- **Hoopla Discussion** – We have been keeping an eye on this for some time now. It has a pay per use model and costs are charged as patrons use it, unlike databases like OverDrive, where we can choose and control spending. Hoopla has been on a steady upward trend in usage and cost, with a drastic jump over the holidays. We are now \$5,000 – 7,000 over budget. We allocated \$250,000 for the year and it will continue to go until that amount is expensed. We calculated that we will be about three months short for the end of the year. We found that even if we dropped the number of



checkouts per user, from 8 to 6 a month, would still not have enough impact on saving money. We are talking to the Library Directors to discuss options that will have the least impact on patrons, in order to keep the service going at the same level until the end of the year. Hoopla is not sustainable long term and we will need to look at what to consider for next year. We are going to look into similar products if we remove Hoopla. We are meeting with our Hoopla representative on Friday. Dana Newman shared with the board that in 2017 the cost for Hoopla was \$60,000 and the current cost is \$250,000 which illustrates how we can't keep maintaining it. Lori will get back to the Financial Committee with decisions in order for them to vote on it. In April, she will discuss FY-26 options with the Directors.

Kathleen Lyons made motion to accept the Financial Report with correction to the Bookkeeping line item. Sarah Dahl seconded the motion. All were in favor. The Financial Report was accepted.

CEO's Report (Lori Milach):

- We have been focusing on our internal processes and procedures. Some of the things we have done are launching BambooHR, which is our HR/Timekeeping product. We are currently in the evaluation process to make sure that this is something that will continue to work well. We have also been working on our HR Policy and Employee Handbook, Strategic Plan and FY-26 Budget. We are beginning to look at Polaris, our ILS system; we want to see about other options or if changing makes sense.
- There is a good possibility that we will see a budget increase this year. While this is great news, increases never keep up with expenses. One area that is unsure are our LSTA funds. They were brought back in for this fiscal year, but we aren't guaranteed to get them next year.
- On the State level, there have been conversations around flat funding, LSTA funds, and concerns surrounding DEI. Guidance by state right now is to continue out DEI initiatives as long as they are being funded by state money vs federal.

Library Services (Amanda Watson):

- Operations – Amanda handed out statistics on Hoopla and Overdrive comparisons. The average unique patron usage per month for Hoopla is 3000 to access about 11,000 items, whereas OverDrive/Libby has about 7000 unique patrons with about 32,000 checkouts. Other popular databases are Ancestry (6000 patrons accessed this in December and January), NewsBank (accessed 2000 times in the last two months) and Udemy (accessed 652 times in December and January).
- The Ocean City branch of Worcester County Library had a special project that our staff worked on, which isn't included in their day-to-day job. Ocean City wanted to provide a Romanian Language collection for their growing population and Mira Beaglehole, our Catalog Maintenance Specialist, was able to help catalog more than 50 items that contained the natural Romanian language but was also discoverable in English. In addition, we also do a lot of cataloging for the Library of Things collections for our libraries. These are all nonstandard things like fishing poles or gaming kits. During December and January, Mira was able to hand catalog the 50 plus Romanian books and over 30 items for the Library of Things.

- Delivery – Fleet statistics were given with the number of delivery miles traveled and how many items they actually touch in any given time period. Delivery covers all eight county branches on the shore and meet with the delivery from across the bridge.
- IT Helpdesk Stats - In December and January we had 167 helpdesk tickets with 145 resolved. A lot the remaining tickets are ongoing projects or things that need to be followed up on because they are lengthier solutions.
- Information Security – We are trying to educate more of the people on the shore about online attacks and email campaigns. The statistics Amanda shared are low numbers, which show that our accounts through Microsoft 365 are secure. We only had 12 users that showed a one-time suspicious login attempt and 0 multiple attempt/risky users. Also shown were the high number of spam emails that have been blocked.
- Professional Development – Statistics for In-person and Virtual classes sponsored by ESRL were given out. 7 classes were organized with 51 people attending in total. Niche Academy is an online portal we subscribe to, with a version each for staff and the public. Staff access shows 3,518 hits amongst 519 classes that ESRL and the region's staff participated in.

Director Liaison Report (Dana Newman):

- Individual Systems' Budget Updates – Queen Anne's County is submitting 2% over last year's budget. Janet Salazar is meeting with the Commissioners on the 27th and will be asking for a 3% COLA and merit increase. Talbot County submitted a 4% COLA and a 1% merit increase. Wicomico and Worcester Counties have submitted budgets with increases in them, but Dana isn't sure about Caroline, Dorchester or Somerset Counties.
- The picture is kind of mixed on local budgets and state funding; there are rumors of flat funding in Talbot County. Dana is part of the state legislative group and expressed how important advocacy is for libraries on the state and national level. LSTA funds are vital for staff development, so it is scary to potentially lose access to this. The State Library Resource Center is currently looking for additional funding options to support libraries.
- House Bill 1554 "Taxable Services" and a companion bill are in the senate. This is looking at initiating taxes across businesses, which could have an impact on libraries because prices will go up due to the possibility of services being taxed from one business to another. Dana doesn't know the chances of this passing, but her local Chamber of Commerce is very concerned. House Bill 1400 "No Tax on Tips Act" would raise the state minimum wage to \$17.00 an hour. This could impact libraries as far as some of the salaries that they have. House Bill 0593 requires defibrillators in public libraries and has passed its second reading. The "Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library" Bill is to make the Deaf Digital Library a lot more robust. The "Family Literacy Pilot" Bill enables certain incarcerated individuals to be able to record stories for their children.

Old Business:

- ESRL Renovation – The original pressure test in our server room did not pass, which required us to go into talks to extend the project. Willow did take full responsibility, and we did not have to pay any

additional costs for the extension of the project. They had to change the ceiling in our server room so that it could pass the pressure test. Because of this, we are waiting for final billing to pay out once everything is complete. They did give us a temporary Certificate of Occupancy for 30 days, which is why we are currently in our space. We should be able to get the permanent Certificate of Occupancy very shortly as the second pressure test did pass and are currently setting up the fire alarms. All of our furniture is in place with the exception of our meeting room. We will be getting that in shortly so that we can invite you all to come see.

- HR Policy/Handbook (Maida Finch) – Kathleen, Susan and Maida worked with Lori on the red lined and updated version of the Handbook. The final version has been sent to the attorney, and we will wait to see if any revisions are necessary. At our June meeting, the board can do a final discussion and approval. The final version will be sent out to the board for review prior to the June meeting.

New Business:

- Strategic Plan – We have started our Strategic Plan process by doing SWOT analyses with ESRL staff and library directors. We will also be doing a focus group with branch managers. In April, we will come together via Zoom to do a focus group with the trustees with our gathered information. Lori will email out to schedule the April meeting.
- FY-26 Preliminary Budget – Lori will not be adding LSTA income/expense to the FY-26 budget, just in case we do not receive this. Our 2.6% is a projection that we will receive from the State as income. MLGIP interest is conservative, keeping it at around \$10,000 like we did in previous years. Three high-cost areas that we did not have in FY-25 will be our Deep Freeze subscription (7110), a new delivery van (6010) which we are projecting at \$42,000 and server/switch upgrades (6030) at \$15,000 for any new renovation projects for the libraries. We still do not have concrete quotes yet on all of our vendors, so this is a very preliminary budget. We were looking at places that we could save money. Some of those are to potentially cut out ESRL's print services for the libraries, Wowbrary, CreativeBug, Movie Licensing, Collection HQ and Constant Contact. Lori met with the directors about this to get an idea on how they would rank these services on patron or library impact. The big item is Hoopla. If this were removed, we could have a larger conversation with directors about retaining all of these services, as well as other services that offer the same things as Hoopla. The budget will be revisited at our June board meeting for approval.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, June 10th at 4:30pm via Zoom

Maida adjourned the meeting at 5:46pm