

**HARFORD COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
FY 2023 BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

MEETING MINUTES

January 19, 2023

Present: Dr. William B. Allen, Chair; Carol Wright, Vice Chair; Durbin Vido, Treasurer; Dwayne R. Adams; Terrance Flannery; Shannon G. Gahs; Dr. Monique H. Head; Taryn J. Martin; Colonel Jonas Vogelhut, US Army, Retired; Student Representative David Simberg; Cora Solle, Legislative Aide representing County Council Member Jessica Boyle-Tsottles; Mary L. Hastler, CEO; and Jennifer Button

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Allen, Chair, called the meeting of the Harford County Public Library Board of Trustees to order at 6:30 PM.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Welcome and introduction of Cora Solle, Legislative Aide to Harford County Council Member Jessica Boyle-Tsottles.

PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

Dr. Allen recognized and welcomed Cora Solle, Legislative Aide to Harford Council Member Boyle-Tsottles, present for her first Board meeting representing the Harford County Council Liaison.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the December 12, 2022, meeting were reviewed and Dr. Allen submitted minor edits.

MOTION: Motion by Colonel Vogelhut, US Army Retired, seconded by Ms. Wright, and carried by unanimous vote to approve the Minutes of the December 12, 2022 Board Meeting with Dr. Allen's edits.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget & Finance Committee – Mr. Vido

The committee did not meet.

The Treasurer's Report was prepared by Kathy Cogar, Chief Financial Officer. Operating expenditures for the fiscal period ending December 31, 2022 were within the annual FY2023 budget. Revenues were \$11.7 million and Expenditures were \$10.3 million. Expenditures for Contracted Services were over budget, year to date, as several annual contracts were paid in July/August - Polaris and Envisionware (Library software).

Executive Committee – Dr. Allen

The committee did not meet.

Capital Improvements Committee – Mr. Adams

The committee did not meet.

Human Resources Committee – Ms. Wright

The committee did not meet.

Foundation Board –Ms. Martin

The Foundation Board will meet next week. Additional information is included in the CEO report below.

PUBLIC SERVICES REPORTS

Statistics –Ms. Parry

Ms. Parry reviewed the submitted Monthly Statistical Report.

Professional Librarians and Library Associates provide information and reference question assistance to our customers.

Programming and Events –Ms. LaPenotiere

Ms. LaPenotiere reviewed the Programming Report included in the CEO report below.

Teen Services – Mr. Simberg

Mr. Simberg reviewed the Teen Services Report included in the CEO report below.

CEO REPORT

Building Projects

Administration – The heat exchanger that services the Materials/Technical Services section of the building has been repaired and is fully functioning. Project complete.

Bel Air –Both elevators will be replaced this fiscal year prior to the major renovation project scheduled for FY 2024 and many thanks to the County for “fast-tracking” the elevators replacement. The project was presented to the County Board of Estimates for review on October 11, 2022. A pre-construction kick-off meeting was held November 17, 2022. Once the final paperwork is submitted to the county by the vendor, the notice to proceed (NTP) will be issued. Once the vendor has the NTP, the equipment will be ordered. Lead time to receive the equipment is 12-16 weeks. Both elevators will be replaced simultaneously and reduce the time to in half – one 8-12 week period instead of 16-20 weeks. The Library will close during the construction. The Library has been notified by the county this week that the project may begin in early April through early June. However, this is still very preliminary and we are waiting for confirmation.

Darlington Library –Punchlist items continue to be addressed.

Fallston – A stormwater management maintenance bond inspection was held on October 18 coordinated by the County. Items of work to be completed prior to releasing the bond include filling in groundhog holes and over-seeding the site to achieve minimum required turf grass coverage. In addition, screen trees will be planted in the flat area below the library and the county will notify the library when the work is scheduled. The County is also working with a design engineer concerning dewatering of the facility. No decision has been made on next steps for the dewatering. Any work that may be required would not take place until spring at the earliest.

The Fallston Library closed in the afternoon and evening on December 27th. Fumes from the routine exterminator visit created an uncomfortable environment for both staff and customers. Staff were deployed to the Abingdon Library. The County was contacted to follow up with the exterminator company to ensure appropriate future treatments.

Dash Cams – All Library vehicles are being fitted with front and rear dash cams. This was a recommendation made by employees who work on the outreach vehicles. Two cameras have been installed and installation for the remainder of the fleet is underway. Nine vehicles are complete. Two Special Collection vans will have the system installed once the vehicles have returned from getting the after-market shelving installed.

Fines and Fees

Harford County Public Library is currently not charging overdue fines on any materials and will revise procedures to support recent legislation. Notices and bills will resume in February 2023. A media push is underway.

Fiscal Year 2024 Operating & Capital Budgets – The budgets were submitted to the County Executive’s administration this week and a fiscal update has been scheduled for Friday, January 20th, with the County Executive. We are updating our advocacy message in preparation for the County Executive budget hearings beginning next week and encouraging our stakeholders to share their stories as to why the library is a critical resource and service; how they use the library; and to support the library budget request for FY 2024. We have requested wage parity with the county and increases that reflect inflation impact on operations. A 1% wage increase is \$148,679 for library staff and we have not received direction from the county on potential increases for county staff at this point in time. Highlights of our budget increase requests include:

- PEHP funding \$15,700 (3.5% increase)
- Health & Dental - \$316,162 (10% county forecast)
- Utilities - \$55,000 (8.5% increase)
- Materials - \$301,905 (11% increase)

Meetings & Presentations

December 2022

- 12/5 Harford County Executive & County Council Inauguration
- 12/5 Harford County Sheriff Swearing-In Ceremony
- 12/6 HCPL Foundation Gala Committee Wrap-up Meeting
- 12/8 JB Jennings Event
- 12/9 MD Humanities Executive Committee Meeting

- 12/12 MAPLA Inter-Governmental Relations Task Force Meeting
- 12/13 BGE EV Smart Program Meeting
- 12/13 CPWN Holiday and Grant Awards
- 12/14 Presentation to Harford Delegation - Legislation for 2023 Session
- 12/14 Meeting & Tour of Darlington Library with Jen Palinkas, Highlands School Director
- 12/14 Historical Society of Harford County Partnership Meeting
- 12/14 Greater Harford Committee Annual Meeting & Holiday Party
- 12/15 MD Humanities Board Meeting

- 12/20 Harford County Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee Meeting
- 12/20 History Makers Portrait Project Meeting
- 12/21 Interview: Conversations with Rich Bennett

- 12/31 HCPL Programs: Noon Year’s Eve Celebrations

Fairytale, Super Hero & Ninja Festival – 5th Annual – Friday, January 20th, at the Abingdon Library, 9 a.m., to 5 p.m.

Programming and Events

Holiday celebrations abounded. Choirs sang, school bands played, and winter crafts were made, ushering in the December holidays with song, art and merriment. The big programming draw for December was our very popular Noon Year's Eve program on Saturday, December 31. All told over 750 folks participated at all our locations. The branches also participated in collecting for the Empty Stocking Fund and were able to donate a sizeable number of toys to bring cheer to children in need.

Another big draw is the Winter Reading Program – *You are What You Read*. As of January 8th, 1,668 customers have registered for the program, with 2,492 books being read. If you haven't registered yet, you are encouraged to do so!

Each month, our customers share *mostly* wonderful comments with us, and here are two that particularly stood out:

A customer in Abingdon shared, "All the services offered at the libraries in HC are amazing and a wonderful resource of so many services (blessings). I was at Whiteford for Yoga, Darlington to see the new facility and Abingdon where I needed to scan and email info which I don't know how to do. Rian and Emiel were so sweet to guide me through each step to completion. Everyone is so helpful and nice!"

One mom commented that she loves all the children's librarians story times at Havre de Grace so much, she recommends us to all her friends. She said that her daughter is really beginning to learn the concepts and understand the school readiness skills we teach in our program!

Teen Services

Teens throughout the county participated in branch holiday festivities, with holiday Bingo at Aberdeen, playing the sounds of the season in their school bands in multiple locations; teen time crafting at Darlington, and crafting holiday ornamentation at Edgewood, Fallston, Havre de Grace, Jarrettsville, Norrisville and Whiteford.

Keeping in the celebratory mood, at the Havre de Grace branch teens enjoyed playing Christmas Feud and decorating cookies. They also enjoyed playing with the Switch and PS4 and meeting new friends.

Regarding the Teen After Hours program, a parent wrote, "I also wanted to let you know that [my teen] absolutely loves this teen group. As I told you before... [she] is super shy and introverted and doesn't really get excited about much. But she loves this group so much, and actually tells me that she has fun, and looks forward to it. Can't thank you enough for continuing to do this!"

Marketing & Communications

Social Media

The HCPL social media audience & interaction continues to grow.

- Facebook = 28,222 total followers
 - HCPL Main Facebook – 8,706 followers
 - HCPL Choose Civility Facebook – 1,160 followers
 - Branch Facebook combined – 19,516 followers
 - (All 11 branches, Choose Civility, Rolling Reader, Silver Reader)
- Instagram = 7,578 total followers
 - HCPL Main Instagram – 1,547 followers
 - Branch Instagram combined – 6,031 followers
 - (All 11 branches, Rolling Reader, Silver Reader)
- HCPL Main Twitter – 1,884 total followers
 - (10 branches – no ABD)
- HCPL Main LinkedIn – 630 total followers

- HCPL Target emails - sent out 2 targeted emails
 - For Genealogy Week – to past virtual Genealogy program customers
 - For Winter Reading program – to past Winter Reading participants
- HCPL Weekly Newsletter – 37,730 contacts/27,786 subscribers
 - Sent out 2 eNews per week for a total of 9 in December

Programs and Partnerships

Winter Reading 2023: *You Are What You Read*

December 21 is not only the Winter Solstice, but it's also annually the first day of HCPL Winter Reading. This year's theme, "You Are What You Read," is focused on wellness – body, mind, and soul. The program ends March 4.

Registration is open to adults and high school students. Participants who read/listen to at least 5 books for adults, or 3 books for teens, earn your free 2023 Winter Reading collectors' mug that can be picked up at any HCPL location (while supplies last).

For those who want to do more than just read this winter, we're also offering a Passport to Wellness that features a variety of activities, such as visiting local businesses and attending library programs. Passport booklets are available for pick-up at all HCPL locations and participating is easy! Simply complete selected activities and collect at least 8 stamps to earn a free Winter Reading keepsake tote bag (while supplies last).

Winter Reading would not be possible without the generous support of this year's sponsors: APGFCU, Bel Air Friends of HCPL, PK Law, and the Harford County Public Library Foundation.

Current stats through first 2.5 weeks of Winter Reading...

- 1,668 Enrolled
- 219 Completers
- 1,128 Total Community Activities Logged
- 2,492 Total Books Logged

Holiday Celebrations & Open Houses

Several branches hosted special holiday events that included festive crafts, refreshments, and musical performances by their area schools. Featured groups included students from the following schools:

- Forest Lakes, Jarrettsville, Norrisville, North Bend, and Red Pump Elementary Schools
- North Harford and Patterson Mill Middle Schools
- North Harford and Patterson Mill High Schools

Many thanks to the various Friends of HCPL groups for their support of these programs as well as so many others!

LEGO® Fun with Andrew Clark: LEGO® Designer

Teens and adults learned the ins and outs of LEGO® designing from expert Andrew Clark at the Bel Air Library. He's the fan designer responsible for the "Doctor Who" set from a few years ago as well as the 2017 fan favorite "The Flintstones."

- December 3
- 22 attendees

HCPL Website – Spanish Language Page

In an effort to extend library services to our Spanish-speaking customers, a new landing page has been added to the HCPL website. Su biblioteca is accessible from the main homepage and includes links to all of the library's popular databases as well as a variety of digital material platforms.

Chesapeake Farm & Bay to Table – Season 3

December 14 “Sweet Treats from Around the World” was cancelled/postponed due to COVID. Program has been re-scheduled for January 25. Carol Wright, Vice-Chairperson for the HCPL Board of Trustees, will be a special guest that evening.

Community Partnership – Crocheting & Knitting Project

HCPL customers and staff donated handmade (or purchased) hats, scarves, and mittens/gloves to benefit Harford Family House. Items included those for women, men, and children.

Noon Year’s Eve

This popular celebration is an annual delight for many families and this year’s multi-formatted offerings did not disappoint! Branch staff were excited to return to an in-person format for this mid-day party that was offered at all branches.

- In-person at the branches on December 31
 - 751 total in-person attendees, combined
- Recorded celebration available virtually on the HCPL website
 - 50 total views

Community Partnership – Harford Community Action Agency (HCAA)

HCAA has programs that support our community and there is an HCAA representative scheduled to visit one HCPL location each week. Customers are invited to learn more about community assistance programs and services that include Maryland Energy Assistance Program; Harford County Fuel Fund; Homeless Prevention; Homeless Services; Community Food Pantry/Food Bank; Financial Services Program; and GED Plus. Took place every Tuesday afternoon at a different branch each week (Aberdeen, Edgewood, Havre de Grace, and Joppa Libraries).

Community Partnership – Lawyer in the Library

This free* brief legal advice clinic, by appointment only, features counsel from the Harford County Bar Foundation (HCBF). They offer legal advice for family issues like divorce and custody; help filling out forms; and more. Took place at the Edgewood Library in December. *A \$5.00 administrative fee is due to the HCBF at time of appointment: cash only.

Community Partnership – Eden Mill Nature Center StoryWalk®

HCPL has an on-going relationship with Eden Mill and each quarter, creates a fun, educational, self-guided StoryWalk® that places the pages of a children's book out in nature! As of December 21, the Winter edition is now available and will be displayed until March 20.

Additional Views for Previously Reported Programs, Events, and Partnerships

- Book Bites, 1-minute videos of “bite-size” book recommendations from Harford County Public Library
 - 679 Dec total views for all age groups
- Previous Episodes of *Chesapeake Farm & Bay to Table*
 - 33 Dec total additional views

Press Releases Distributed

- *HCPL Holds Annual Staff Day, Honors Staff Members for Service Anniversaries* – December 1
- *HCPL Has a Delayed Open at Noon, Today, December 15, 2022* – December 15
- *Winter Reading 2023: You Are What You Read* – December 22

Recent Media Hits and Press Mentions

Print

- “HCPL Holds Annual Staff Day, Honors Team Members” – *Harford County Living, I95 Business* (online), *Harford County Chamber of Commerce, The Patch – Aberdeen, Bel Air, Fallston, Havre de Grace*– December 1 – *Bel Air News & Views* – December 7 – *The Aegis* – October 5 – *Baltimore Fishbowl* – October 7
- “December 14 Chesapeake Farm & Bay to Table” – *Harford County Living eNewsletter* – December 1
- “HCPL Foundation Gala Raises Over 50K” – *Baltimore Business Journal* – December 9
- “Six pages to serve in 2023 Maryland General Assembly from Harford County” – *Bel Air Patch* – December 14
- “Winter Reading 2023: You Are What You Read” – *I95 Business* (online), *The Patch – Aberdeen, Bel Air, Fallston, Havre de Grace* – December 22 – *Harford County Living* – December 23 – *Harford County Chamber of Commerce* – December 26 – *Bel Air News & Views* – December 27

Foundation

The Foundation Board is scheduled to meet on Tuesday, January 24th. Financials are up-to-date and the auditors are working on the 990 for FY 2022. Sponsorships for the Summer Reading Challenge 2023 are being secured and a big thanks to our sponsors for this year’s Winter Reading program for adults and high school teens. Planning for a new Foundation Director is underway and the Foundation is holding a “Dinner and Conversation” on Monday, February 13th, to discuss the future direction of the Foundation.

Cultural Arts Board

Harford County Cultural Arts Advisory Board member Wendy Roberts resigned upon completion of her term on December 5, 2022. All board members have reapplied for board appointment under the new County Executive’s term.

Grant Agreements were executed with the following organizations: Carpe Diem Arts, Inc.; Havre de Grace Colored School Museum and Cultural Center, Inc.

Coordinator Jessica Cleaver was a presenter at the December 10th Harford County Public Schools Professional Development.

A new episode of [Kaleidoscope](#), produced in partnership by Harford County Cultural Arts Board and HarfordTV, has been released. It features

- [Havre de Grace Colored School Museum and Cultural Center](#)'s Langston Hughes Youth Oratorical Contest,
- [Maryland State Arts Council](#)'s Grants for Artists;
- [Harford County 250 Celebration](#), and
- We "Shine A Light" on visual artist, Joan Hodous

ACTION ITEMS

Personnel Changes – January 2023 – Mr. Ross

The following human resources changes are submitted for review and confirmation:

NEW HIRES:

Layla Fuller, Library Assistant I-Circulation, Edgewood Branch, 15 hours per week. Effective Date: January 09, 2023.

Emily Greene, Library Assistant I-Circulation, Whiteford Branch, 15 hours per week. Effective Date: January 23, 2023.

PROMOTIONS:

Colleen Hollinshead, Library Associate I – Children’s Services, Abingdon Branch, 37.5 hours per week has been promoted to the position of Library Associate II – Children’s Services, Abingdon Branch, 37.5 hours per week based upon successful completion of the requirements for the Maryland Library Associate Training Institute program. Effective Date: December 25, 2022.

Nicole Bembenek, Library Assistant I – Circulation, Bel Air Branch, 15 hours per week has been promoted to the position of Library Assistant II – Circulation, Bel Air Branch, 37.5 hours per week. Effective Date: January 8, 2023.

Kaysea Hoover, Library Assistant I-Circulation, Abingdon Branch, 15 hours per week has been promoted to the position of Library Assistant II - Circulation, Abingdon Branch, 30 hours per week. Effective Date: January 22, 2023.

OTHER CHANGES:

None

RETIREMENTS:

Nancy Smith, Library Associate II - Reference, Bel Air Branch with 21 years of service, 37.5 hours per week. Effective April 1, 2023.

RESIGNATIONS/TERMINATIONS:

Emiel Brown, Library Assistant II - Circulation, Abingdon Branch, 37.5 hours per week. Effective December 30, 2022.

Janet Anderson, Library Assistant I – Circulation, Jarrettsville Branch, 15 hours per week. Effective Date: January 7, 2023.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS:

None

LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS:

An employee has requested a leave of absence due to their own personal health situation effective January 12, 2023.

OPEN POSITIONS:

Aberdeen Branch

None

Abingdon Branch

- **Library Assistant II- Circulation, (2 positions)** Abingdon Branch, 37.5 hours per week. Posted internal/external.
- **Library Assistant I- Circulation**, Abingdon Branch, 15 hours per week. Posted internal/external

Administrative Office

- **Finance Director**, Finance Department, Administrative Office, 37.5 hours per week. On hold.
- **Foundation Director**, Foundation Department, Administrative Office, 37.5 hours per week. On hold.
- **Administrative Assistant**, Administration, Administrative Office, 37.5 hours per week. Posted internal/external.

Bel Air Branch

- **Library Associate I/II – Children’s Services**, Bel Air Branch, 20 hours per week. Posted internal/external.
- **Library Associate I/II – Adult Services**, Bel Air Branch, 15 hours per week. Posted internal/external.
- **Library Assistant I – Circulation**, Bel Air Branch, 15 hours per week.

Darlington Branch

None

Edgewood

- **Library Associate I/II**, Edgewood Branch, 15 hours per week. On hold.

Fallston Branch

- **Librarian – Children’s Services**, Fallston Branch, 37.5 hours per week. Position restructured to Library Associate I/II – Children’s Services. Posted internal/external. Interviews scheduled for January 23 & 25, 2023.

Havre de Grace Branch

None

Jarrettsville Branch

- **Library Assistant I – Circulation**, Jarrettsville Branch, 15 hours per week.

Joppa Branch

None

Norrisville Branch

None

Whiteford Branch

- **Library Assistant II-Circulation**, Whiteford Branch, 37.5 hours per week. Interviews schedule for January 26, 2023.

FUTURE VACANCY DUE TO RETIREMENTS:

None

POSITION RECLASSIFIED:

None

HCPL Library Jobs:

<https://www.paycomonline.net/v4/ats/web.php/jobs?clientkey=A80FE008691EC4F03A189014B9C1100A>

The following are examples of some sites that maybe used to recruit for open positions: LinkedIn, Indeed, American Library Association (ALA), Marylib listserv, CareerBuilder, Monster.com, and Facebook.

Dr. Allen requested a motion to approve the Personnel Changes as presented.

MOTION: Motion by Colonel Vogelhut, US Army Retired, seconded by Ms. Wright and carried by unanimous vote to approve the Personnel Changes as presented.

OLD BUSINESS

Dr. Allen shared an update on the customer letter received last month regarding the naming of Darlington Library. A letter was sent on behalf of the Board of Trustees, and having received no further communication, Dr. Allen assumed the customer was satisfied with the response.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

BUSINESS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Dr. Allen facilitated a brief scheduling discussion to identify a date for the planned Board of Trustees work session to review data gathered by staff survey, Meet & Greets with the Trustees, and Coffee with the CEO sessions. A tentative date of February 16th was selected.

BUSINESS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Wright reminded Trustees that the Board Meets & Greets are being scheduled. Trustees are encouraged to visit the branch and be available to staff. Feel free to walk around and observe. The visit is not scripted and it provides an opportunity for staff to meet the Trustees and for the Trustees to learn about that branch and staff. As another reminder, Trustees focus on policy and please forward any policy items to Ms. Wright. Any operational comments or questions should be directed to Ms. Hastler.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Dr. Allen cited the provision in the Maryland Open Meetings Act allowing for closed sessions:

Maryland Open Meetings Act § 3-305

(b) In general – Subject to subsection (d) of this section, a public body may meet in closed session or adjourn an open session to a closed session only to:

(1) discuss:

(I) the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of an appointee, employee, or official over whom it has jurisdiction; or

(ii) any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals;

Dr. Allen requested the Board retire to discuss the FY2023 CEO Work Plan.

MOTION: Motion by Ms. Gahs, seconded by Dr. Head, and approved by unanimous vote to approve the closing of the Public Meeting and go into a closed Executive Session.

The public meeting was closed at 7:00PM and the Executive Session began at 7:01PM.

Present during the Executive Session were: Mr. Adams, Dr. Allen, Mr. Flannery, Ms. Gahs, Dr. Head, Ms. Martin, Mr. Vido, Colonel Vogelhut, US Army Retired, Ms. Wright, Ms. Hastler, and Ms. Button.

The Board reviewed the FY2023 CEO Work Plan.

MOTION: Motion by Dr. Head, seconded by Ms. Gahs and approved by unanimous vote to approve the closing of the Executive Session and resume the Public Meeting.

The Executive Session was closed at 7:52PM and the Public Meeting resumed at 7:52PM.

ADJOURNMENT OF PUBLIC MEETING

There being no further comments or questions, Dr. Allen requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION: Motion by Dr. Head, seconded by Ms. Gahs and approved by unanimous vote to approve the adjournment of the Public Meeting.

The public meeting adjourned at 7:52PM.