



**ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
PUBLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION OF ANNAPOLIS
AND ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, INC.**

Minutes

**Thursday, May 16, 2024, 4:00 p.m.
Riviera Beach Library
1130 Duvall Highway, Pasadena, MD 21122**

Mr. Chris Nelson, presiding.

Trustees Attending:

Ms. Laura Ellis	Ms. Simmona Simmons
Mr. James Estep	Ms. Sandra Solomon
Ms. Ishani Gandhi	Mr. Gerald Starr
Ms. Linda Gayle	Ms. Faith Steele
Mr. Tim Lemke	Ms. Lonni Summers
Ms. Damita McDonald	Mr. Jeremy York

Trustees Attending Virtually: Mr. Dylan Behler, Ms. Cathy Belcher, Mr. Noah Comet, and Ms. JanElaine Smith.

Trustees Unable to Attend: Dr. Robert Sapp

Support Staff Attending:

Mr. Skip Auld, Chief Executive Officer
Ms. Donna Denny, Executive Assistant
Ms. Christine Feldmann, Director of Marketing and Communications
Mr. Cedric Grant, Chief Financial Officer
Ms. Catherine Hollerbach, Chief Operating Officer
Mr. Rudy Rodela, Chief Technology Officer
Mr. Joey Scalise, Technology and Video Coordinator, Digital Experience

Meeting Guests: AACPL Staff Association Representatives: Ms. Fran Taylor, Severn Library; and Marc Beard, Riviera Beach Library; and Ms. Margot Argeles, Student Trustee Nominee.

Call to Order

Mr. Nelson called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Nelson asked for any additions or corrections to the meeting agenda. There were no additions or corrections, and the agenda was adopted.

Welcome to the Riviera Beach Library

Mr. Nelson welcomed the meeting participants, including Ms. Margo Argeles, the candidate nominated by the Governance, Strategy, and Organization Committee, to be the next student representative on the AACPL Board of Trustees. Mr. Nelson looked forward to learning more about Ms. Argeles from Mr. Estep during his committee report prior to the election.

Mr. Nelson thanked outgoing student representative, Ms. Linda Gayle, for her successfully completed year of service as the first student member on the AACPL Board of Trustees. He also congratulated Ms. Gayle for recently earning a top scholarship award from *Scholarships for Scholars* and noted that she would be heading off to college in the fall. Mr. Nelson added that Ms. Gayle gave the valedictory address at the scholarships award ceremony, and he was pleased to be able to say he knew the recipient of this year's award. Mr. Nelson then presented Ms. Gayle with a thank you gift from the Board of Trustees, a gold AACPL library card.

Mr. Nelson introduced Ms. Johanna Doty, Branch Manager of the Riviera Beach Library. Ms. Doty welcomed the meeting participants. She noted that the new branch had been open for three weeks. Ms. Doty provided her brief background, noting she has been with AACPL for eight years. She began at the Edgewater Library as a Library Associate, then joined the Programming & Outreach staff at Library Headquarters. She next joined the Odenton Library as a Librarian and the Severn Library as an Assistant Branch Manager. She became the Branch Manager at Riviera Beach Library in February.

Ms. Doty noted that in their first three weeks, the Riviera Beach Library had over three thousand visitors and provided over one thousand new library cards. Before early voting transformed it into a polling place, their programming space hosted three hundred participants. In addition, 86 Chromebooks were given away on their patio on April 19.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Nelson asked for additions or corrections to the minutes of the March 21, 2024, Board of Trustees meeting. There were no additions or corrections, and the minutes were approved.

Mr. Nelson introduced two staff members representing the AACPL Staff Association: Ms. Fran Taylor from the Severn Library and Mr. Mark Beard from the Riviera Beach Library.

Public Comment

Mr. Nelson asked if there were any members of the public who wished to address the board of Trustees. There were no public comments.

Reports from Standing Committees

Governance, Strategy, and Organization Committee

- *Election Ms. Margot Argeles, Student Member of the Board of Trustees*

Mr. Estep was pleased to report that the Governance, Strategy, and Organization Committee conducted interviews to identify its student board member for the coming year. He thanked the first and outgoing student board member Ms. Linda Gayle, and noted that she had participated in the selection process for the next student board member. Mr. Estep was delighted to announce that the next student member would be Ms. Margot Argeles. Ms. Argeles is a rising Senior at Severna Park High School. Mr. Estep noted that Ms. Argeles took part in an excellent interview and has an outstanding resume. Mr. Estep was pleased to introduce Ms. Argeles, who was unanimously approved by the Governance, Strategy, and Organization Committee for election to the Board of Trustees for a one-year term as its newest student board member.

Mr. Nelson thanked Mr. Estep and the committee for its recommendation and asked the board to vote. The board voted unanimously to elect Ms. Argeles to the Board of Trustees as its student member for a one-year term.

- *Election of Officers and Directors*

Mr. Estep continued his report to add that the committee recommends Ms. Damita McDonald to be the next 1st Vice-Chair in the coming year. She will replace Ms. Simmona Simmons, who will remain a member on the board.

Mr. Nelson asked the board to vote on this recommendation from the committee. The board voted unanimously to elect Ms. McDonald to be the next 1st Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Mr. Estep reported that all other current board officers agreed to continue in their positions for another year. He noted that replacements for the two Director positions have yet to be determined but will be identified at the next meeting.

Mr. Nelson asked the board to vote on the election of officers as recommended by the committee. The board voted unanimously to elect the officers to continue in their positions next year.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Nelson asked the board if any of the following three consent agenda items, previously approved by board committees, should be removed from the consent agenda for additional discussion. The items included:

- Memorandum of Understanding Between AACPL Foundation Board of Directors and AACPL Board of Trustees - Change in Review Requirements - Mr. Estopp
- Motion to Approve FY2023 IRS 990 - Ms. Belcher
- Approval of Purchases over \$100,000 - Ms. Belcher

None of the consent agenda items were removed for discussion and Mr. Nelson moved for a vote. Mr. Estopp seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the items on the consent agenda were unanimously approved.

Reports of Officers and Liaisons

The Chair

Mr. Nelson reported that he joined Mr. Grant, Mr. Auld, and Ms. Hollerbach to meet with the County Executive, and later the County Council, to present AACPL's FY25 Budget Request. The request included an additional \$300,000 for equity adjustments in salaries. Mr. Nelson thanked everyone who attended and testified at the recent budget town hall meetings to advocate for the budget request. Mr. Nelson added that he has heard more than once that AACPL has better representation at the town hall meetings than the Board of Education.

The Treasurer

Ms. Belcher reported that on May 13, Mr. Auld addressed the County Council concerning the FY25 County Executive recommendations, which included \$992,000 in market rate adjustments, 3% COLA, and funds for the expansion of the Discoveries: Library at the Mall totaling \$673,000. Mr. Auld requested additional market rate adjustments (\$302,000) and several mission-critical staffing needs. The Council will make its final budget decision on June 14.

For the April 2024 financial report, we are expected to receive and expend approximately 83% of our budgeted revenues and expenditures, respectively. To date, we have received 84% of total revenues with no major variances noted. In addition, we have spent 82% of the budgeted expenditures for Fiscal Year 2024. Membership and Dues spending is above budget, but overall spending is expected to be within budgetary funding. No other major variances are noted currently.

There were no questions for Ms. Belcher and Mr. Nelson thanked her for her report.

The Chief Executive Officer & Executive Leadership Team Reports

Mr. Auld and thanked Ms. Simmons for serving for the past several years as 1st Vice Chair for the Board of Trustees. Mr. Auld noted that he has known Ms. Simmons since the 1990s and was thrilled to learn she was on the selection committee when he joined AACPL.

Mr. Nelson added his own thanks to Ms. Simmons, saying that her sense of humor and goodwill makes collaborating with her a pleasure.

Mr. Auld reported that on the previous day, he testified on AACPL's budget request at Linthicum Elementary School. He said that although he had already presented the budget request on Monday to the County Council, it is important for the public to hear our testimony at budget town halls. He thanked everyone who has or is expecting to testify, adding that Ms. Gayle would testify in his place at a town hall next week.

Mr. Auld reported that after speaking with the County Executive and the budget office, he is confident that AACPL will be able to bring its salaries up to market rate. He reviewed the timeline of the FY24 budget cycle, noting that AACPL was provided with about half of what is needed for all market adjustments. He reported that when PRM reviewed our current salary study last fall, it showed that the COLA (8%), and merit (3%) increases pushed us ahead of our peers. Last year, 237 staff received COLA and merit, as well as market adjustments. This year no merit increases were recommended for AACPL staff, but any remaining market adjustments will be provided, along with a 3% COLA for all staff. Mr. Auld said the result will be that AACPL will not have the highest paid staff among its peer group but will be on the leading edge of where we should be.

Mr. Auld answered questions related to AACPL staff compensation, including the factors considered by PRM related to the market rate increases and the process used by Human Resources within these parameters.

Mr. Auld reported that we recently learned that the new Glen Burnie Library project has an opportunity to be established in a rented facility with a thirty-year lease near the existing branch location. It would expand the library building from a 2-level, 40,000 sq. ft. building to a 1-level, 56,000 sq. ft. building. It would allow the addition of the Headquarters Annex, currently a part of the Millersville Library project. We would keep the 8,000 sq. ft. that is part of the Cultural Resources Archeology Lab. The Headquarters Annex would be about 12,000 sq. ft., and for the new Glen Burnie Library would be 37,000 sq. ft., instead of 32,000 sq. ft.

Currently, the Department of Public Works (DPW) is conducting a feasibility study, with results expected soon. Mr. Auld answered questions and shared the reasons why a 1-level facility has advantages a 2-level facility does not have.

Marketing and Communications Department Report

Ms. Feldmann noted that the new summer edition of *Library Happenings!* was available and she provided copies for all. Its cover photo was taken at last year's General Staff Meeting (GSM) when the AACPL staff musical group, the *Paperback Writers*, performed for all. Ms. Hollerbach, a member of the group, added that next year's GSM will feature three performances by the popular group during the afternoon sessions.

Liaisons to the Foundation Board

Ms. McDonald reported the following:

- The *Foundation Board Annual Meeting* will be on May 29, 2024, and the Board will review the proposed FY25 Slate of Officers to reappoint and appoint new members.
- *Bay Breezes & Books* was a success and raised \$9,660 from ticket sales. Nearly 150 guests filled the new Riviera Beach Library to celebrate its opening. Guests admired the new branch and were checking out books, getting library cards, booking meeting spaces, and mingling with staff.
- Library Giving Week held April 1 -5, raised \$49,864 from 366 donors with 126 new donors. All branches set up tables and wore *Ask Me How to Support the Library* buttons and donor-funded *Literacy & Learning for All* tees. Donations were received from all areas, including Broadneck (shelving replacement project) and Riviera Beach (before the grand opening), which were closed.
- “*Read the Book*” is hosted by our friends at Pherm Brewery, who are creating a summer beer to raise funds for the library. Stop by on June 8 to try “Read the Book,” a new IPA that supports AACPL. Proceeds from sales will go toward enhancing AACPL programs.
- The Foundation Board is hosting a *Year End Celebration and Board Meeting* on June 18, 2024. A formal invitation will be sent via email.
- “*Read Between the Wines*” will be held Sunday, June 30, 2024, at Great Frogs Winery to enjoy charcuterie, wine, live music, and fun. Proceeds benefit the many donor-funded programs at the library! Tickets and details can be found on the AACPL website.
- *For the Love of the Library* will be held on Friday, September 27, 2024. We hope every Trustee will join us for the library’s largest fundraising event! Early bird tickets go on sale in June, and sponsorships are available by contacting Cathleen Sparrow at csparrow@aacpl.net or at 410-222-2509.

Mr. Auld announced that the Riviera Beach Library will host *Community Day* at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 18, to celebrate the opening of the new library with its neighbors. The event will include the County Historian, singing and dancing, airbrush tattoos, facepainting, and snowballs.

Reports from Standing Committees

Finance and Audit Committee Report

Ms. Belcher reported that the Finance and Audit Committee approved the three consent agenda items just approved by the full board at the current meeting. There were no questions.

Human Resources and Diversity Committee

Ms. Hollerbach reported for Ms. Solomon that beginning September 1, 2024, all branch libraries will close at 8:00 p.m. instead of 9:00 p.m. She explained that between 8:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. customer traffic at all branches is noticeably down. When branches were closed during the

Covid-19 pandemic, we were afraid to implement any changes in hours since the impact of the end of the pandemic was yet unknown. Data shows that the hour between 8:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. represents only one percent of customer traffic. Currently, Discoveries: The Library at the Mall closes at 8:00 p.m. because that is when the Mall closes. Our peer library systems, except for Howard County and D.C.'s Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, also close at 8:00 p.m. AACPL programs will not be affected by this change. By moving staff hours from 12:00 noon to 8:00 p.m. instead of 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. we provide an extra hour of overlap. Staff and their hours would not be cut, but the cost of hourly staff from 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. is \$46,000, so this is also the best use of our resources as well.

Mr. Auld added that they are considering which branches could accommodate a meeting that lasts until after staff have gone home. They think there are about six or seven branches where customers could use a meeting room without access to other parts of the building and leave when done with door locking behind them.

Ms. Hollerbach said Queen Anne's County libraries allow for this scenario and added that Mr. Rodela recalls it from he worked for Fairfax County. We could only provide this at libraries where you can close off the meeting room and its restrooms from the other parts of the building. Ms. Hollerbach added that they are working with AACO Risk Management and the Fire Marshal to review each facility in terms of security, lighting, and other factors to see if it could work. The branches considered for this currently include Broadneck, Crofton, Edgewater, Odenton, Riviera Beach, and Severna Park. This change would be on a trial basis and will be evaluated after six months. She noted that Sunday hours, 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., at eight branches will return in the fall. Ms. Hollerbach answered questions and addressed concerns about the optics and potential outcomes of this change to the satisfaction of the board.

MOTION to Convene in Closed Session

Mr. Nelson noted that the board would go into closed session for several reasons: to discuss the hiring of a labor relations attorney; to set the hourly rate of pay for Jay Creech, Esq., General Counsel; and to review Mr. Auld's annual FY25 workplan. Mr. Nelson said related materials were provided to the board online, but hard copies were available for members needing them.

Mr. Nelson added that, after the closed session, he would like to return to the open session for a presentation: *Leading with Compassion: How to Build and Maintain a Library Culture of Teamwork, Respect and Trust*, which was prepared for and provided by Ms. Feldmann and Ms. Hollerbach to the Public Library Association (PLA) at its annual conference in Columbus, Ohio.

Mr. Nelson asked for a motion to transition to a closed meeting in accordance with the *Maryland Open Meetings Act, General Provisions Article § 3-305(b)(1) to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of an appointee, employee, or official over whom this public body has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affect one or more specific individuals.*

Mr. Estep seconded the motion. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned to closed session at 4:50 p.m.

The open meeting reconvened at 5:53 p.m. Mr. Nelson reported that in closed session, the board had: appointed Robin Burroughs, Esq., as AACPL's labor relations attorney; determined the hourly rate of pay for Jay Creech, General Counsel; and approved the FY25 Workplan for Mr. Auld, pending further revisions to be presented in September.

Ms. Hollerbach and Ms. Feldman gave an abbreviated PowerPoint Presentation of *Leading with Compassion: How to Build and Maintain a Library Culture of Teamwork, Respect and Trust*, which they shared at PLA in April. They noted there were over 1000 attendees at their session and the program was also shared virtually to a worldwide audience. After the conference, they were pleased to learn that the reviews were good. The current meeting attendees agreed the reviews were well-deserved, and Ms. Hollerbach and Ms. Feldman answered questions.

Adjournment

Mr. Nelson moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Simmons seconded the motion, and all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 6:11 p.m.