



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

**Minutes**

**Thursday, September 19, 2024, 4:00 p.m.  
Deale Library  
5940 Deale-Churchton Road, Deale, MD 20751**

Dr. Robert Sapp, presiding.

Trustees Attending:

Ms. Margo Argeles

Mr. Dylan Behler

Ms. Cathy Belcher

Ms. Simmona Simmons

Ms. JanElaine Smith.

Mr. Gerald Starr

Ms. Faith Steele

Ms. Lonni Summers

Mr. Jeremy York

Trustees Attending Virtually: Mr. Noah Comet, Ms. Laura Ellis; Mr. Tim Lemke, Ms. Damita McDonald, Mr. Chris Nelson, and Ms. Ishani Gandhi.

Trustees Unable to Attend: Mr. James Estep and Ms. Sandra Solomon

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:

Ms. Emily Borger, Library Associate, Crofton Library and LATI Student

Ms. Amy Loudon, PTH Circulation Assistant, Deale Library and Staff Association Rep.

Ms. Rosa Ramirez-Lopez, Library Associate I, Discoveries Library, and LATI Student

Ms. Liz Saniga, Branch Manager, Deale Library.

Call to Order

Dr. Rob Sapp called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

### Adoption of Agenda

Dr. Sapp asked for a motion to adopt the agenda. Mr. York made a motion to approve the meeting agenda, and Mr. Starr seconded the motion. All were in favor and the agenda was adopted.

### Welcome to the Deale Library

Dr. Sapp thanked Branch Manager Liz Saniga for hosting the meeting. Ms. Saniga has worked at Deale Library for AACPL for twenty years. She said many Deale residents commute to jobs in Annapolis and Washington, D.C. The Deale Library serves many Spanish speaking customers as well as community schools, including Tracey's Elementary School and Lothian Elementary School. The Deale Library has partnerships with local organizations including the *Captain Avery Museum* in Shady Side; *Arts Lab of South County*, which host classes for art, poetry, and pottery; the *Community of Hope*, and the *Southern Anne Arundel Chamber of Commerce*. She encouraged everyone to return to the southern area of the county soon to enjoy the seasonal colors of South County.

Mr. Auld thanked Dr. Sapp, Second Vice Chair, for chairing the meeting for Mr. Nelson, while he is out of state. Mr. Auld was also pleased to announce that on September 3, Ms. Damita McDonald, First Vice Chair, gave birth to Wesley DeWayne McDonald. Both Mr. Nelson and Ms. McDonald were attending the meeting virtually.

Mr. Auld introduced the following staff members:

- Ms. Emily Borger, Library Associate, Crofton Library and LATI Student
- Ms. Amy Loudon, PTH Circulation Assistant, Deale Library and Staff Association Representative
- Ms. Rosa Ramirez-Lopez, Library Associate I, Discoveries Library, and LATI Student

### Approval of Minutes

Dr. Sapp asked for any additions or corrections to the May 16, 2024, minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting. There were no additions or corrections. Dr. Sapp asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Summers moved to approve the minutes. Ms. Belcher seconded the motion. All were in favor and the minutes were approved.

### Public Comment

There were no public comments.

### Consent Agenda

Dr. Sapp asked if any Trustees wished to remove any of the following consent agenda items previously provided via BoardEffect for additional discussion:

- Motion to Approve Procurement Card Policy
- Motion to Approve Meeting Room Policy
- Motion to Approve Unresolved Returns Policy
- Motion to Approve Lost and Damaged Policy
- Motion to Approve Interlibrary Loan Policy
- Motion to Approve Educator's Card Policy

There were no requests to remove items for discussion and Dr. Sapp asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Nelson moved to approve the consent agenda. Mr. York seconded the motion. All were in favor and the consent agenda was adopted.

### Reports by Officers and Liaisons

#### *The Chair*

Dr. Sapp had no report.

#### *The Treasurer*

Ms. Belcher reported that the FY26 budget process begins this month. The Executive Leadership Team will collaborate with their departments to develop supplemental requests based on critical needs. This process will continue through the end of November until it is submitted for approval to the Finance and Audit Committee in December.

For the August 2024 financial report, we expect to receive and expend approximately 16% of our budgeted revenues and expenditures, respectively. To date, we have received 16% of total revenues and spent 14% of the budgeted expenditures, with no significant variances noted.

There were no questions for Ms. Belcher. Dr. Sapp thanked her for her report.

### Liaisons to the Foundation Board

Ms. Gandhi reported the following highlights from the Foundation Report, which had been provided to the Trustees via BoardEffect:

- The Foundation Board Annual Meeting was held on May 29, 2024, and their FY24 Year End Board Meeting & Celebration on June 18, 2024. Board actions included: Approved the FY25 Slate of Officers and Executive Committee: Linda Greene, President; Jane Campbell Chambliss, Vice President; Martha Blaxall, Treasurer; Tessie Ballard, Secretary; Don Rau and Katie Prechtl Cooke, Directors at large;

approved three new board members including Betsy Bender, Vanessa Carter, and Anne Hamel; and approved the FY25 Library Grants to authorize \$578,000 for programs, services, and equipment.

- Fiscal Year 2024 ended on a high note with the Foundation raising \$582,000 from 1,368 donors, over double what was raised in FY21 - \$265,000. Donors continue to support the library and the FY25 Revenue goal is \$602,000.
- *For the Love of the Library (FTLOL)* will be held on Friday, September 27, 2024, and as of September 12, we have sold over 335 tickets and expect to sell out.

Dr. Sapp thanked Ms. Gandhi for providing the Foundation Report.

*The Chief Executive Officer & Executive Leadership Team Reports*

Mr. Auld asked Ms. Hollerbach to respond to a question about the recently changed library hours. Ms. Hollerbach reported that beginning September 1, 2024, all branches transitioned to Monday through Thursday 8:00 p.m. closing time. There have been very few customer complaints since then, and she continues to ask branches for any issues related to the new hours.

Mr. Auld encouraged the trustees to purchase tickets to attend the upcoming *For the Love of the Library 10 Year Anniversary Celebration* on September 27.

Mr. Auld also invited the trustees to attend AACPL's annual *General Staff Meeting (GSM)* at the BWI Westin, 1110 Old Eldridge Landing Road, Linthicum Heights, on Thursday, October 17 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon. There will be breakfast and a program where employees are recognized for their years of service and announce both the AACPL team and employee of the year. The AACPL Staff Association plays a role in selecting the nominees for these special awards and Mr. Auld outlined this process. During the afternoon, staff will attend special programs of their choosing. The board committees are also scheduled to meet that afternoon. Mr. Auld added that his friend, Mr. Patrick Losinski, the recently retired CEO of the Columbus Metropolitan Library, will be our keynote speaker.

Mr. Auld reported that letters went out on Monday to all staff about remaining market rate salary adjustments. He expressed thanks for the advocacy work done over the past couple of years by the Board of Trustees, Foundation Directors, community volunteers and staff to increase AACPL staff compensation to market rate. Although we did not receive enough funds to implement the new salary rates on July 1, we will be able to do this on October 1. Mr. Auld added that not every staff member will receive an adjustment. This is because 50-60 staff out of approximately 300 were already at market rate. Approximately 228 staff members will receive an adjustment, ranging from a few hundred to several thousand dollars annually.

Mr. Auld noted that that just several years ago, AACPL's annual budget was \$22 million per year. The county has added \$6 million to that base over the past couple of years. Last year staff received a 5% Merit and a 3% COLA increase. This year, we received another 3% COLA.

Now, our budget is \$36,000,000. He added that in FY26, we will continue working for annual merit and COLA increases from the county.

Mr. Auld reported that on July 1, 2024, he was presented with a petition from the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSME) which was signed by over 50% of staff. A few weeks later, he received another signed petition for a second bargaining unit. There will be a hearing in a few weeks to determine which staff will be members of the two bargaining units.

Dr. Sapp thanked Mr. Auld for his report. He added that fair compensation for staff has always been Mr. Auld's focus and is much appreciated.

*Motion to Adopt the Statement on Equitable Access to E-Books, published by the Urban Libraries Council (ULC) in 2019, updated in July 2024*

Mr. Auld reviewed the information on the current crisis related to E-books provided via BoardEffect. E-books are costly for libraries, and we have complained for years about how expensive it is to license them. Some states are trying to change this, and several are considering legislation to bring the cost down. Print books can be loaned out a million times, but this is not true with E-books. There are different models with different publishers who protect them fiercely. The statement says we are looking for a fairer deal.

Mr. Rodela added that the problem is that we are good customers, and we want the same model we have for printed books, but the premium that publishers demand for E-books is unreasonable.

Mr. Auld said he hopes more movement on the statement helps libraries get more fair pricing. Legislation has been discussed with the Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators (MAPLA), but there is no bill yet.

Ms. Steele asked how they would move forward. Mr. Auld said the more libraries who support the statement, the better. We are just lending our support.

Ms. Summers asked how the public could be made aware of this issue. A discussion ensued about helping to raise awareness of the problem.

Mr. Auld asked for a motion to adopt the ULC statement on Equitable Access to E-Books. Ms. Smith moved to adopt the statement. Mr. Lemke seconded the motion. All were in favor and the ULC statement on Equitable Access to E-Books was unanimously adopted. Mr. Auld thanked the Trustees for their vote to adopt the statement and AACPL will work on strategies to overcome these issues with the library community.

Reports from Standing Committees

*Finance and Audit Committee Report*

Ms. Belcher reported that the Finance and Audit Committee discussed the FY24 year-end Financial Report.

*Governance, Strategy, and Organization Committee*

Mr. Lemke reported that the Governance, Strategy, and Organization Committee discussed a resolution to designate AACPL a *Book Sanctuary* and voted to recommend that the full board adopt the resolution statement as well as the *Freedom to Read Statement*, which is in line with AACPL's mission statement.

Mr. Auld reviewed the background previously provided on BoardEffect on these two related items. He stated that in celebration of Banned Books Week (September 22-28), the Trustees are asked to adopt a resolution declaring AACPL a Book Sanctuary. This means we are a library that supports the freedom to read and a place where books are safe from attacks and banning. Book Sanctuaries were started by Chicago Public Library as a place where "stories are safe." This designation aligns fully with our policy on collection development.

Mr. Auld reviewed the language of the resolution and noted that we will be the first library in Maryland to become a book sanctuary.

We want to bring attention to the many challenges that libraries are facing across the country and let our customers, and the community know that we are standing up for intellectual freedom and the right to read. Additionally, many of the books that are targeted for banning are about the LGBTQIA+ community, or marginalized populations whose stories need to be told. This initiative aligns with AACPL's commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging.

Our county's leadership supports this initiative, and they will be issuing their own resolution at the launch event to announce AACPL as a new book sanctuary during Banned Book Week. The event is scheduled for September 25 at 10 am at Discoveries: The Library at the Mall. It will also be a press conference, and its attendees will include Anne Arundel County Executive Stuart Pittman as well as Ms. Jennie Pu, Executive Director of the Hoboken Public Library, a champion of Book Sanctuaries.

Dr. Sapp called for a vote. All were in favor, and none were opposed. The board unanimously adopted the *Freedom to Read Statement* and designated AACPL as a *Book Sanctuary*.

Ms. Feldman encouraged the trustees to attend the press conference and launch event at Discoveries: The Library at the Mall on Wednesday, September 25, at 10:00 a.m. with parking on the mall's green second-level lot.

*Human Resources and Diversity Committee*

Ms. Hollerbach reported that the Human Resources and Diversity Committee discussed the consent agenda items just approved earlier in the meeting. These items were existing policies that required only minor editing.

MOTION to Convene in Closed Session

Dr. Sapp noted that the board would go into closed session for several reasons as allowed by law and after the closed session, the meeting would return to open session.

Dr. Sapp 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.*

Ms. Simmons moved to close the meeting. Ms. McDonald seconded the motion. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned to closed session at 4:55 p.m.

The open meeting was reconvened at 5:35 p.m. Dr. Sapp reported that in closed session, the board had completed Mr. Auld's FY24 evaluation and made a decision regarding an employee disciplinary hearing.

Adjournment

Dr. Sapp asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Smith moved to adjourn, all were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 5:38 p.m.