

## **ASPEN HILL LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMITTEE - MINUTES**

**November 18, 2024**

**Attendees:** Althea Grey-McKenzie, Chair, Delores McKoy, Secretary, Ariana McKenzie, Lisa Pereire; Moye Stephenson-Fairweather, Hayat Pacquette; MCPL: Adrienne Miles Holderbaum, Regional Manager; Nanyamkah (Nan) Mars, Branch Supervisor; MCLB: Melanye Johnson, Liaison; Sent regrets: Babs Margolies, Elliot Chabot, Chris Swan.

**Call to order:** Chair Althea Grey-McKenzie called the meeting to order at 7:30pm and welcomed everyone with Zoom protocols in place. The meeting commenced with Ariana McKenzie as scribe, introductions were made and an announcement of those members sending regrets.

**Secretary Report:** Secretary Delores McKoy reported that she would join for part of the Meeting. September Minutes were reviewed with only minor changes. Previous minutes were submitted to the Library Department.

The September 2024 meeting minutes were approved. Motion to approve was made by Ariana McKenzie and seconded by Lisa Pereire.

**Chair Report:** Chair Althea Grey-McKenzie reported that the AHLAC has increased its membership to 18 members and reminded everyone to review their membership terms. Some members may be reaching their end dates this year 2024-2025. Chair Grey-McKenzie asked for any reports from the members who attended any of the County Executive Budget meetings, the Joint Meeting on October 9, 2024, or the Thanksgiving Parade.

Hayat Paquette attended the hybrid Joint Meeting and will share her notes as well. Some Board questions posed at the Joint Meeting included, how to effectively reach out to parents and caregivers of children and teens to enhance their involvement with library services. Ideas and answers were shared including, program visits by MCPL staff, best practices, SSL hours, clubs, makerspace areas, bringing back FOL Chapters.

**Library Branch Report:** Adrienne Miles Holderbaum, Regional Manager, reported that the library [AHLIB] is fully staffed (since June), which is a significant improvement. Regional Manager Miles Holderbaum shared that Nan Mars, Branch Supervisor, will present the statistical data/charts. The written Branch Report was distributed and included statistics for October and November covering checkout stats, renewal stats, self-service usage, foot traffic, and the number of active users. Highlighted sections of the report included foot

traffic numbers being off due to the foot tracker being down for a couple of weeks. Branch Supervisor Mars explained that the Library conducted outreach at Back-to-School events at MCPS and the AHLIB Circulation and Children's Librarian went to the schools to share information and conduct sign-ups for library cards.

Programming: The Library has conducted 4 school visits since the beginning of the school year [September and October] with a total attendance of over 300 participants. The adult programming (particularly the book discussion group) has seen increases in attendance over a few months. The Library Parachute Party family programs hosted a movie program and sing-a-long, *Encanto Sing-along!* in October - Rockville High School Band played melodies from *Encanto*. There were over 20 attendees, including County Councilmember Natali Fani-Gonzalez. The Teen Advisory Board (TAB) plays a crucial role in supporting children's programming and organizing events like the *Chess Club/program* and *Teen Movie Time!* program. Teen programming included a pumpkin painting event that was well attended. An Artificial Intelligence (AI) program earlier in November which had 17 attendees. The next and last Book Club meeting for the year is December 9, 2024. AHLIB is coordinating with other libraries to provide winter-themed programming for families during the winter break, including collecting cardboard for a fun gingerbread house decorating activity on December 23, 2024. The library staff is planning to introduce a new variety of programming in the coming year.

Chair Grey-McKenzie expressed a need for earlier information on library community programs to better prepare and involve AHLAC members.

Branch Supervisor Mars mentioned the planning of a book sale event in the Spring, suggesting it as an opportunity to increase community engagement and participation.

**MCLB Liaison Report:** Melanye Johnson, Liaison, reported that the recent Joint Meeting was held in hybrid format, combining both online and in-person participation, with an estimated attendance of 40 to 50 participants. The meeting format was more of a brainstorming session inviting attendees to think of what the Board/MCPS could do better concerning programs, LACs, reporting to County Executive. LACs were encouraged to continue collecting data about library programs and user engagement to support funding requests. The library budget constitutes 2 % of the total County budget and Liaison Johnson highlighted the need for increased advocacy to secure resources. There is also a concern about the library space being more personable and community-centered which may indicate a need for improvements in the system. The Library Board met on November 13, 2024 where new LAC members were approved and the new MCPL Director, Darcell Graham, who started on November 4, was introduced. Director Graham expressed concerns about the budget and indicated that the community conversations for the 2026 budget will be critical. Tim Lighter, MCLB Chair, highlighted a controversy involving the Russian, Bengali

and Farsi collections and the need for early engagement with the County Executive to present these issues. A letter from the MCLB Chair Lighter and Vice-Chair, Grace Manubay to the County Executive was finalized and sent. It also detailed the Library Board's role and collaboration opportunities. The next MCLB meeting is scheduled for December 11, 2024.

Chair Grey-McKenzie explained that the current guidelines (LAC Handbook) restrict data collection which may hinder the ability of LACs to support advocacy for library programs effectively; Discussions continued on the matter. Liaison Johnson mentioned the need to reach out to MCLB Chair Lighter and Vice-Chair Manubay to discuss how to prioritize programs and collect critical data for the library branch.

**AHLAC Landscape Committee Report:** Tabled

**General Comments:** None

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** None

**Adjournment and Next Meeting update:** Ariana McKenzie moved to end the meeting. Meeting ended at 8:50 pm. Next meeting is planned for January 27, 2025.

## Hayat Pacquette - Report on Oct 9, 2024 MCLB Joint Meeting

Hayat attended the Joint meeting and gave a summary at our AHLAC Meeting on November 18, 2024, sharing that the Joint Meeting was interactive, included breakout sessions and questions and ideas below:

### **1) What can our libraries do to have more Montgomery County residents know what our libraries do, and how they can delight and benefit them?**

Ideas:

- Visit other library systems outside of MCPL to get ideas on what they're doing and ideas for best practices;
- Maybe a library foundation for more money;
- Get school librarians involved;
- Civic organization outreach

### **2) What should our libraries do to get more parents and caregivers to participate in their early childhood reading programs that promote kindergarten readiness such as Story Time?**

Ideas:

- Lending library, offer different times, go to daycares and drop of book bundles;
- Offer toys/trinket because they will bug their parents to go if they were getting something when they get there;
- A designated volunteer in the children's section-a little bit more personal collection;
- Partnering with MCPS on a meaningful larger scale

### **3) How can our libraries best reach out to the part of our teen population that does not know what libraries can offer them?**

Ideas:

- Offer them SSL hours, potential lego club;
- Have their own area, makerspace area, homework help and tutoring

### **4) In addition to seeking funds to enhance and update its foreign language collections, what more can the libraries do to let English learners and speakers of a language other than English be aware of the library resources available to them?**

Ideas:

- Take donations from people, conversation clubs, librarians attend conversation clubs, language liaison to find out what people want to read

### **5) What do all of you library supporters need from our two groups(library board and friends of library) to enable you to participate more actively in advocacy activities supporting our libraries?**

Ideas:

- Time to get FOL's back;
- The Palace Project and a link was shared;
- Give LAC members more breathing room;
- Facilitate book clubs; 1x per month free book

# Aspen Hill Branch Report for LAC Meeting Monday, November 18, 2024, 7:30 PM

## Branch Statistics



Montgomery County Public Libraries Dashboard

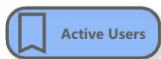
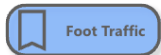
Monday, 18 November, 2024

Branch Name

Aspen Hill



### Key Performance Indicators of Aspen Hill



	Yesterday 11/17/2024	Current week from 11/17/2024	Previous Week from 11/10/2024	Current Month November-2024	Previous Month October-2024	Current Year 2024	FY25
Checkout	0	0	2,507	6,235	11,716	126,681	57,354
Renewal	0	0	2,787	6,303	12,963	127,317	59,301
Self Service %	0.00%	0.00%	69.89%	69.87%	69.61%	69.72%	69.91%
Foot Traffic		470	3,926	10,613	20,430	223,307	92,100
Active Users	88			1,311	1,933	7,887	4,960

Program #	20	35	388	165
Attendance	307	844	7,729	3,326

### Past Popular Programs (September and October 2024)

- **Kids & Family:** 4 School Visits (9/10, 911, 918, & 10/16) – 309 total attendees
- **Adults:** Aspen Hill Book Discussion (Hybrid): *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison on Monday, 9/9 – 14 total attendee
- **Kids & Family:** Parachute Party Family Storytime on Saturday, 9/14 – 61 total attendees
- **Kids & Family:** Movie: *Encanto Sing-a-Long!* on Saturday, 10/5 – 29 total attendees
  - Including Councilmember Natali Fani-González and featuring a live performance of an Encanto medley by Rockville High School band students)
- **Teens:** TeenTober Pumpkin Painting (presented by the AH TAB) on Saturday, 10/5 – 25 total attendees
- **Adults:** Understanding your Medicare Options on Wednesday, 10/9 – 15 total attendees
- **Kids & Family:** Parachute Party Family Storytime on Saturday, 10/12 – 46 total attendees
- **Teens:** Teen Movie Time!: *Spider-man: Across the Spider-Verse* on Saturday, 10/13 – 14 total attendees
- **Kids & Family:** School's Out STEM Stations - A Maryland STEM Festival Program on Friday, 10/18 – 36 total attendees
- **Adults:** Aspen Hill Book Discussion (Hybrid): *Lucy by the Sea* by Elizabeth Strout on Monday, 10/21 – 18 total attendees

### Upcoming Programming

#### Kids & Family

- Preschool Storytime – Mondays at 10:30am
- Baby Storytime – Fridays at 10:30am
- Read to a Dog – Saturdays at 11am
- Parachute Party Family Storytime – Saturday, 11/23 at 10:30am
- Movie: *Detective Pikachu* – Saturday, 12/14 at 10:30am
- Kids Crafts! - Birch Trees – Sunday, 12/15 at 12:00pm

- Decorate a Gingerbread House – Monday, 12/23 at 2:00pm

### Teens

- Teen Art Club – Tuesday, 11/19 and 12/3 at 4:00pm
- Anime Club – Friday, 12/6 at 4:00pm
- Chess Club (presented by the AH TAB) – Saturday, 12/7 and 12/21 at 3:00pm
- Teen Advisory Board (TAB) Meeting – Saturday, 12/14 at 2:30pm (Free pizza!)

### Adults

- English Conversation Club – Thursdays at 10:00am
- Adult Community Craft Club: DIY Basket Weaving – Sunday, 11/24 at 3:00pm
- Introduction to Selling Online (presented by Senior Planet) – Monday, 10/2 at 2:00pm
- Aspen Hill Book Discussion (Hybrid): *Notes of a Native Son* by James Baldwin – Monday, 12/9
- Adult Community Craft Club: Paper Crafts - Hanging Stars – Sunday, 12/29 at 3:00pm



## MONTGOMERY COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD

November 1, 2024

The Honorable Marc Elrich  
Montgomery County Executive  
101 Monroe Street  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear County Executive Elrich:

On behalf of the Montgomery County Library Board, we want to reaffirm our role in advising you and the Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL) Director on matters involving the organization and management of our libraries. We are here to support you and your staff and the incoming Library Director Darcell Graham and her team by bringing forward the concerns and suggestions of the library community. We also strive to be actively involved in ensuring the library community is aware of changes or improvements to MCPL policies and processes. As liaisons, we take seriously the responsibility for encouraging and maintaining open communication between all parties with a vested interest in our libraries.

We are aware of the recent controversy involving MCPL's Russian, Bengali, and Farsi collections raised at your September 30<sup>th</sup> Community Conversation at the BlackRock Center for the Arts by an affected library customer. While this decision adhered to best practices for library collection management and was governed by fiscal constraints and MCPL's Strategic Plan, we understand the disappointment of the affected library customers and residents and do not minimize their feelings or concerns. We believe the issue and the resulting dissatisfaction might have been avoided, however, with adequate involvement by the Library Board beforehand.

Our position as a conduit between your government and the patrons of MCPL puts us in an ideal spot to provide input and feedback to you and Director Graham while also informing your constituents of upcoming plans and changes. Increased transparency is the key to making this potentially symbiotic process work better. It will enable us to meet our goal of helping MCPL provide the best possible service. We are the Library Board you appointed to assume this responsibility and are ready to work together to make this a reality.

Respectfully,

Tim Lighter  
Grace Manubay

Tim Lighter, Chair, Montgomery County Library Board  
Grace Manubay, Vice Chair, Montgomery County Library Board

cc: Darcell Graham, Director, Montgomery County Library System