



## Montgomery County Library Board

March 11, 2020

**ATTENDEES:** Angerman (phone), Briskin-Limehouse, Chiu (phone), Christman, Melnick (phone), Negro (phone), Rippeon (phone), Roberts (phone), Villar (phone), Wallace, Williams

**STAFF:** Anita Vassallo, Director, Montgomery County Public Libraries; Regina Holyfield-Jewett, Recording Secretary; Barbara McClayton, Human Resources Manager

**GUESTS:** Jim Montgomery, Friends of the Library, Montgomery County, Inc., Board of Trustees; Jessame Ferguson, Montgomery College

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Williams at 7:05 PM

Board members and staff self-introduced.

The minutes from the February 12, 2020, meeting were approved with one edition.

The following LAC applications were approved:

- Gaithersburg – Jensen, Isaacs, Goldensohn, Khalid, Dentel, Levi

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

- **Personnel** -Staff changes for February 2020:
  - New Hires:
    - Michelle Hwang, Management and Budget Specialist II, Business Office
    - Syed Ali, Library Desk Assistant, Silver Spring
    - Wubit Ababe, Library Desk Assistant, Gaithersburg
    - Yudeisis Beltran, Library Desk Assistant, Olney
    - Suzanna Dickson, Library Desk Assistant, Wheaton
    - Matthew Fowler, Library Desk Assistant, Marilyn Praisner
    - Sumi Lee, Library Desk Assistant, Quince Orchard
    - Vololoniaina Rakotondrabanja, Library Desk Assistant, Quince Orchard
    - Sandra Sauvajot, Library Desk Assistant, Wheaton
    - Shruti Taneja, Library Desk Assistant, Connie Morella
  - Transfer:
    - Kristina Huang, Library Assistant II, from Little Falls to Davis
  - Promotions:
    - Ida Abijomaa, Library Aide (White Oak) to Library Desk Assistant (Wheaton)
    - Gauri Holman, Library Aide to Library Desk Assistant (Rockville Memorial)

- Branch Managers
  - Katrin “Kate” Sweeney, former senior librarian/assistant branch manager for Silver Spring is now the branch manager for Kensington Park.
  - Cedric Clark has accepted the branch manager position at Germantown.
- **Refresh/Construction Projects Update:**
  - Long Branch - Library will close Saturday, March 14, 2020. Construction will start in April 2020.
  - Germantown - Library will close in the fall for its refresh.
  - Potomac Library - An assessment of the building was done in January/February. The Department of General Services began scope of work for the project.
  - Damascus Library - Outside lot and staff entrance ADA work continues.
  - Capital Grants - Angelisa Hawes and Andrea Castrogiovanni will begin grant writing for state capital grants for Potomac and Damascus libraries. Angelisa will attend mandatory state capital grant training on March 20.
- **Budget Update** – The Operating Budget meeting was held with the County Executive. Some of the enhancements requested were approved. Due to what is currently happening in the County, it is uncertain what will happen fiscally. No session has been scheduled with Council yet.
- **Coronavirus (COVID-19)** - The County continues to closely monitor the situation in Maryland and Montgomery County regarding the Coronavirus. All County departments are in contact with the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Office of Public Health. As a Department of County Government, MCPL takes direction and guidance from these agencies.
- **Community Conversation Library Tours** – Councilmember Jawando is putting the library tours on hold for now out of an abundance of caution. He is not cancelling them outright, but until there is a better sense of the scale and scope of COVID-19, they are going to hold off on having public events like this. They will reschedule all of the tours, but do not want to place people at risk unnecessarily in the interim. He is in the process of working on a public statement about this and hopes to have it out soon.
- Volunteers run many programs at MCPL branches. If some of these volunteers do not feel comfortable coming into the branches to run the programs and there are not staff members to run the program, those programs will be cancelled. Some of the local Friends of the Library chapters are in the process of cancelling programs.
- Drag Queen Story Hour has been approved, and Chevy Chase is scheduled to hold one in April.

**PRESENTATION: Staffing at MCPL – Barbara McClayton, Human Resources Manager**

- MCPL is a Department of County Government.
- The Office of Human Resources (OHR) guides our recruitment efforts by:
  - Creating class specifications and/or position descriptions for all jobs
  - Developing policies and procedures for advertising jobs, interviewing and selecting candidates, setting salaries
  - Making all formal job offers to new hires, promotions and status change candidates
  - Advising the Department about laws and regulations concerning ADA, Veterans or other preferences, etc.
  - Onboarding all new employees



- Where we are today:
  - Vacant Positions (effective 3-11-2020) 68
  - Offers in progress: 12
  - Positions filled this fiscal year: 82
    - By promotion/voluntary demotion 21
    - By transfer 34
    - New Hires
      - New hires from temporary positions: 18
      - New hires from outside MCPL: 9
  - Retirements/Resignations this fiscal year: 16
- A word about time to fill:
  - The time it takes to fill most vacancies is too long. Both MCPL and OHR acknowledge this and are working to reduce the time.
  - OHR is using a process to examine their entire workflow and look at ways to make improvements.
  - The process will be incremental. Some changes are being made as they are recommended.
  - MCPL has asked to examine our process at the same time.
- Here are the changes we are implementing:

Effective Date	Change	Expected Impact
Ongoing	List some jobs a “open until filled” Pilot with Librarian I.	Have a ready pool of applicants for a key position.
Summer 2019	OHR will give departments a list within 10 business days of the closing of a recruitment.	Department will know when to convene panels; can anticipate when reference checkers will be needed.
	Advertise some jobs as open until filled.	
March 2020	Wage equity calculations will be completed after contingent offers are made. Departments will be given final information within 30 days of the hire date.	Allow us to hire new staff and resolve inequities for incumbents after new employees start. This is a good way to handle this, because changes cannot be made until the new employee completes probation.

**CHAIR’S REPORT:**

- The April Board meeting, which coincides with spring break, will not be rescheduled.
- Director Vassallo, Chair Roberts, Vice Chair Williams, in conjunction with Mike Wallace, will work via email on the response to the Little Falls LAC.

## **WORKGROUP REPORTS:**

- Library Policy and Practices – Has not met since last Board meeting.
- Legislative and Public Affairs Workgroup – Will wait to see the County Executive’s recommended operating budget, at which time, will edit the op-ed and then publish. Will send the final version to Board Chair.
- LAC and Board Activities
  - Made all of the changes to the LAC Handbook.
  - Laura Briskin-Limehouse and Carrie Villar volunteered to proof the LAC Handbook.
  - The LACs had an opportunity to comment on the LAC Handbook last year, and their suggestions for changes were reviewed carefully.
  - After the handbook has been cleaned up, it will be sent to Library administration for posting to the website.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

- Fines and Fees
  - Research fines and fees across the country and develop recommendations.
    - Eliminating fines and fees removes a barrier for library use. Customers often have to decide whether to pay a library fine or purchase food, gas, etc.
    - Currently, there is a House bill (Building Lifelong Library Learners Act) being considered, that if approved, will require public library systems in Maryland to eliminate fines for those 17 years of age and younger. This bill would also boost funding for county library capital projects, and accelerate increases to the library funding formula. If approved, it would be effective June 31, 2021.
      - MCPL is predicting \$300K in revenue next year from fines. The approval of this bill may cut this revenue in half.
    - Montgomery County Public Schools does not charge for overdue books. There is a charge for lost books. Students can do volunteer work to pay off the cost.
    - Montgomery College does charge fines for overdue books.
  - Toni Negro, Mike Wallace, Dan Melnick, Laura Briskin-Limehouse, and Beth Angerman will convene to research this and draft a recommendation.
    - Vice Chair Williams will invite Bill Duval to join the group.
    - Vice Chair Williams will craft a charge to the group, copying Director Vassallo, including a date for their initial report to be submitted to the full Board. Their final recommendation should be submitted by the end of the year.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

None

## **LIAISON REPORTS:**

- Noyes - Met on February 13; Assistant Director Angelisa Hawes attended. Programming is well received and well attended. Recommendations were made to Angelisa Hawes about programming, including presentations by local authors and local elected officials attending storytimes. The LAC is trying to increase membership and is utilizing community listservs.

Wants guidance on promoting Noyes using digital signage. The Noyes Foundation Ball was very successful. The Foundation would like to have a New Year's Eve ball drop event in the Noyes area.

- Davis – Bill Duval attended the meeting in Dan Melnick's stead. They were expecting Mr. Jawando to come, but it was announced that the visit was postponed.
- Marilyn Praisner – First meeting of the new group is scheduled for March 26.
- Silver Spring – Scheduled to meet on Monday, March 16.
- Olney – Met on February 19. They are very happy that vacancies are being filled. They are happy with Branch Manager Jan Baird-Adams. Excited about Mr. Jawando's visit.
- Damascus – Was not able to attend the last meeting.
- Germantown – A meeting is being scheduled for March.
- White Oak – Met last week. Concerned about the number of people who block the entrance way and use of cell phones in the library.
- Aspen Hill – Unable to attend the last meeting. At the next meeting, will help them understand their role in advising the branch manager.
- Wheaton – It was a very interesting meeting. They were upset about the parking garage not being accessible for a number of days due to work that was done not drying as anticipated. They would like the County to use Alert Montgomery to notify residents about issues like this.
- Gaithersburg - Jane Williams attended in Brandon Rippeon's stead. Six members were present. Branch manager gave run-down of current and planned programs and "helpdesks" staffed by professionals volunteering their time, on topics like immigration and tax aid. There was much discussion about shortage of parking and the situation with parking in next-door office building's lot; there's no formal agreement on use of the lot. One LAC member complained about poor lighting at the steps to/from that parking lot at night (the stairs actually have two lights aimed directly at them). The LAC members were interested in comparative circulation and door-count data for Gaithersburg and Germantown. The next meeting is June 2.
- Potomac - Seven members were present. Branch manager reported that, with upcoming assessment prior to refresh, changes in the meeting room, such as blinds, will not be made. However, based on an LAC suggestion, there is a new microphone. Library users have expressed appreciation for the new signs advertising that the library has free wi-fi. The signage was an LAC suggestion, The LAC is very interested in programming and the role of the library in educating and promoting the importance of climate change.
- Accessibility Advisory Committee - Eight members were present, plus one on the phone, and one guest. MCPL's staff training officer Kate Tavakolian described the Adult Services Ad Hoc Committee's recent pilot of online training for about 35 people via Blackboard, on "Adults with Autism." The session was also recorded for future screening. Elizabeth Lang and Kate proposed that AAC members create videos as part of Blackboard-based training modules, with AAC members presenting how they wish/need library staff to interact with and help them, based on their disabilities. Elizabeth said the AACs tipsheets "have become a frustration for her," though she will use them as basis from which to build videos. Kate and Elizabeth will figure out a structure for the videos and then let AAC know what they need. The other major meeting topic was AAC members' (Betty Thompson, Debbie Brown and Cindy Buddington) report on their "very positive" two-hour meeting with Director Vassallo, who assured them she wants AAC's continuing input regarding collections, programming, facilities, staffing and training. A big discussion point was Anita's concern about adults with cognitive disabilities who are brought to the libraries and then left unsupervised by care-

givers. The AAC brainstormed various approaches to help library staff with this situation. A small group may carry this discussion forward via email. The next AAC meeting is June 3.

- MCPS – Has a website on Coronavirus. A decision about schools being closed will be made; neither the superintendent or individual principals will make that decision. There was an issue with students pranking that they have the virus. Out of state field trips and athletic events have been canceled.
- Montgomery College – The MC libraries has a new director, Suzette Spencer. Ms. Spencer is from Broward College in Florida. She will begin the week of April 6<sup>th</sup>. MC is going to close for the rest of the week and transfer to emergency remote classes. Staff will work remotely during spring break week. Libraries will reopen and work on a rotating basis.
- Chevy Chase – The LAC is revitalizing itself. They will work more closely with branch manager.
- Little Falls – They will be disappointed that Mr. Jawando’s visit will be postponed.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.