



## **Montgomery County Library Board**

March 12, 2025

**ATTENDEES:** Bouie, Brier, Clouse-Radigan, Johnson, Manubay, Mohan, Montgomery, Schiff, Solomon, Spencer, Van Puymbroeck,

**STAFF:** Darcell Graham, Director, Montgomery County Public Libraries; Patrick Fromm, Interim Assistant Director, Programming and Outreach; Regina Holyfield-Jewett, Staff Liaison

**GUESTS:** Gabriela Garcia, Library Associate; Yesvy Gustasp, Wheaton LAC

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Manubay at 7:02 PM.

### **INTRODUCTIONS:**

- Roll call of Board members
- Introduction of guests

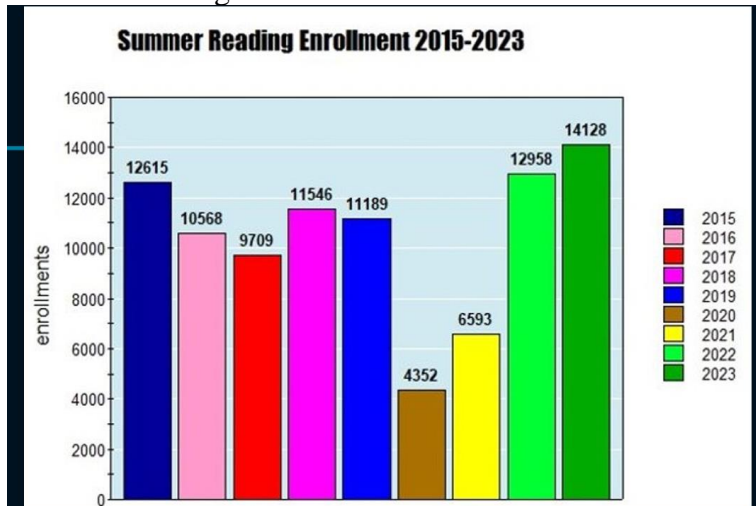
### **MINUTES AND LAC APPLICATION APPROVALS:**

- The minutes from the December 11, 2024, meeting were approved. [Motion to approve made by Wilma Brier, seconded by Marilyn Schiff, and unanimous vote to approve.]
- The following LAC applications were approved. [Motion to approve made by Jim Montgomery, seconded by Marilyn Schiff; unanimous vote to approve.]
  - Brigadier General – Brantley
  - Davis – Juneja, Juneja, Hwang, Sawicki, Taft
  - Germantown – Kim
  - Long Branch – Tursman, Arnett, Schneider
  - Connie Morella – Pettenati
  - Noyes – Dillion, McCarthy
  - Potomac – Starr, Libes
  - Rockville – Brooks, Hanson, Heng, Hurst, Milk, Sutherland, Thirolf, Gentry
  - Twinbrook – Stanley
  - Wheaton – Leacock
  - White Oak – Bloom, Hopps, Le

### **PRESENTATION: Early Literacy - Patrick Fromm, Interim Assistant Director, Programming and Outreach**

- Current stats
  - FY23: Baby, Toddler, Preschool, Kindergarten and Elementary programs: 2,853
    - 135,453 attendees
    - Storytimes: 1,712

- 81,807 attendees
  - FY24: Baby, Toddler, Preschool, Kindergarten & Elementary programs: 4,222
    - 181,996 attendees
    - Storytimes: 2,681
    - 122,296 attendees
- Summer Reading Enrollment 2015-2023



- Collaboration with ReadAbility
  - 175 participants since September 2024.
  - Brings multisensory storytelling to our community.
  - Dozens of neurodivergent children and their families attended the events, and the children loved the stories and sensory props that accompanied them. Volunteers from local chapters across Howard County and high school chapters at Wootton, Winston Churchill, Richard Montgomery, and St. John's College High School joined the initiative by reading stories and supporting our message to inspire children of all abilities to have a lifelong love for books and storytelling.
- Dork Diaries Author Talk/Signing
  - November 2024 with over 230 attendees at Gaithersburg.
- 1000 Books before Kindergarten
  - Focused on children up to Kindergarten age.
  - Has not been updated since 2017
  - Updated sign-up, tracking, and logging.
  - Updated language and incentives
- Hatchlings Relaunch
  - First six workshops are launching in a train-the-trainer model starting in April 2025.
- Preschool Play and Learn – ages 3-5
  - Big success at the pilot branch of Twinbrook.
  - Expanding to three other branches Germantown, Marilyn Praisner, and Long Branch
  - Helps provide essential skills across early learning domains to get preschoolers ready for kindergarten
- Committees
  - Early Childhood and Education Initiative (ECEI) Steering Committee and Workforce/Training Subcommittee
  - Maryland State Library Association Youth Services Committee
  - Judy Center Steering Committee
  - Maryland STEM Festival

- Children's Opportunity Alliance (COA)
- Montgomery Moving Forward
- MCPS
- J-Heads (Children Librarian II)
- HHS

**PRESENTATION: [Children's Opportunity Alliance](#) - James Montgomery, Library Board**

- The County Executive stated during his first term that one of the biggest issues in the county is the lack of kindergarten readiness. He held a press conference in March 2019 to kick off the early childcare and education initiative in response to a several year-effort of Montgomery Moving Forward (a nonprofit impact group).
- Council followed up with a series of hearings. In February 2022 a bill was passed authorizing the creation of a nonprofit, public-private entity to serve as the designated early care and education coordinating entity and to develop recommendations for increasing availability of and access to high quality early care and education with particular care to underrepresented special populations.
- In July, the Council designated the Children's Opportunity Alliance as that entity.
- The COA is a 501(3)(c) public-private entity.
- In August 2022, MCPL issued its [2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#) which stated its first goal as "children 5 and under are ready for kindergarten."
- COA and MCPL on the same playing field regarding early literacy.
- There has been some contact and cooperation between COA and MCPL but has not risen to the level of partnership.
- Recommendation: It would be very useful for MCPL to find a way to work with COA. It could be through the Hatchling program.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

- Upcoming/Ongoing Programs
  - [MoComCon](#) - MoComCon is back. This year will be a two-day event happening on Saturday, March 22 and Sunday March 23 at Germantown Library and BlackRock Center for the Arts. The convention will again feature the art, essay and cosplay contests.
  - **Winter Reading** update: The program kicked off on December 21 and will conclude on March 16. As of Friday, March 7, there were **2,502** participants enrolled: Babies – 254; 4 to 12 – 1.063; Teens – 209; Adults 976. Huge shout out to Central Programming Team and new Marketing and Communication Team.
  - Tax Preparation
    - [Free Tax Prep for those making under 64,000 a year](#) sponsored by VITA, The Equity Center, Cash Campaign of Maryland and Cross Community of Rockville
    - [Tax Aide - In-person - Preparation Services from AARP Tax-Aide Volunteers](#)
    - [Community Tax Aid](#)
- Construction/Renovations - We are currently collaborating with the Department of General Services on several building projects. Huge thanks to Assistant Director Angelisa Hawes and Program Manager Elizabeth Lang for their continued hard work on these projects. Please see the links below for additional information:
  - [Brigadier General Charles E. McGee](#)

- [Clarksburg Library](#) - also has the link to the latest community meeting with the architect's presentation on February 13, 2025
- [Damascus Library Refresh](#)
- [Noyes Library for Children](#)
- [Shady Grove](#) - Shady Grove is a new project for which there is currently very little information.
- Resources for Workers Impacted by Federal Government Workforce Reductions – In response to recent reductions in the Federal workforce, MCPL has joined other departments/agencies in providing various resources to support those affected.
  - The County's [webpage](#) offers information to assist with employment, health services and basic needs.
  - MCPL's [webpage](#) provides information on various career resources including workshops on job searching and preparing for interviews, free online classes, access to public computers or laptops and wireless printing services.
- Operating Budget Schedule
  - The Department received spending affordability guidelines for FY26.
  - A budget was developed based on the guidelines and submitted to the County Executive.
  - The Department leadership met with the CE to discuss the budget submission.
  - The County Executive's proposed operating budget will be submitted to the County Council by March 15.
  - The Council holds public hearings and deliberates on the spending and revenue proposals. By June 1, the Council must take final action on the budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1.
- [National Library Week](#) 2025 is April 6-12. April 8 is National Library Worker Day. Planning to hold activities to celebrate library workers. Next year, staff day will be moved to the week of National Library Week.

## **CHAIR'S REPORT:**

- Has not met as a board since December. The Joint Meeting was in January, and there was a great showing of County Council members.
  - With information from the Joint Meeting, the Public Affairs and Legislative Workgroup drafted a letter that was forwarded to the County Executive on behalf of Tim Lighter and Frances Frost, President, Friends of the Library Board of Trustees.
- Chair Lighter asked via email for different ideas for presentations to be shared during future Board meetings. Keep ideas coming.
- Please complete a volunteer time log electronically or a physical copy.
- Candice Will will no longer serve as the liaison to Rockville Memorial Library. Marilyn Schiff will take over as liaison.

## **WORKGROUP REPORTS:**

- Library Policy and Practices (Lighter, Will, Clouse-Radigan)
  - Reviewing MCPL's policies regarding:
    - Behavior policy – ensure it meets the director's concerns about library safety for customers and employees
      - very straight forward; does not outline the degree of enforcement

- Circulation policy - ensure they encourage usage
- Marketing and Social Media

Everything looks to be up to date and in order. Main take away, since there are 16 MCPL public facing policies, is that the workgroup should discuss implementing a plan to review a certain number of policies each month. Involve the executive staff in the conversations. Have as a regular Board agenda item.

Suggestion to get feedback from customers via the LACs.

- Candice Will was working on updating the Board Manual. Vice Chair Manubay will send the draft via email. Questions and revisions can be submitted via email.
- Legislative and Public Affairs Workgroup (Bouie, Montgomery, Schiff, Solomon)
  - The history of Noyes CIP amendment; watched the committee session in which it was approved.
  - Drafted the letter to the County Executive advocating for what Libraries needs.
  - Meet after the CE's budget recommendation is announced to discuss next steps.
  - Council listening session in early April – testimonies from Board members and LAC members.
  - Discussed other ways to advocate such as partnering with groups and attending community organizations' meetings.
- LAC and Board Activities (Manubay, Brier, Mohan)
  - LACs low on volunteers; coordinated recruitment effort during Library Lovers Month (LLM). Hope to get feedback and data from LACs.
  - Discussed holding a networking event for LACs with a panel discussion on the evening of May 1 or an evening on a weekend. Determine which chairs would be good for a panel. Information on leadership positions.
    - The weekend would be best and not too far into June.
    - A weekend in May; see if there is a LAC who will host.
  - Updating the LAC Handbook – done annually. Send any changes to Wilma Brier by April 22. Seek feedback from LACs. Hope to be completed by June 1.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

- None

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

- Meet and greet with Library Board and FOLMC Executive Director Ari Brooks. Prior to next meeting.
- Ari Brooks would like to hold a meet and greet prior to the April Board meeting. Members are encouraged to come earlier than 7 PM.

## **LIAISON REPORTS:**

- Gaithersburg – no meeting due to RM being on leave.
- Germantown – no meeting due to RM being on leave.
- White Oak – Met on March 4. A lot of new programs; especially excited about the programs to assist displace federal employees. Two new members. Very cold in the basement. Excited about the rollout of the outreach van.
- Little Falls – Will hold a garden party in April to pay homage to the chestnut tree.

- Long Branch – Has not met since November. They are scheduled to meet on March 18. Every other month schedule – meet one week and participate in a volunteer activity the next week. Staffing recruitment tables across three Saturday afternoons during LLM was the volunteer activity in February. Very nice event.
- Brigadier General – Participated the recruitment during LLM for five days with four volunteers. Didn't recruit any members. Met on February 24. Regional Manager reported on the condition of building, staffing and programming. The chair talked about succession planning; no volunteers to run for chair. A lot of talk about the library's refresh; asked about input on the refresh. Discussed the Purple Line and how it might change library usage. Concerned about damage from the vibration from the Purple Line.
- Wheaton – Meets monthly. Met in January. Discussed increasing adult programs/classes and heat imbalance issues. Unable to attend the meeting in February, however, they had a robust discussion about Hoopla and programming. Ongoing concern about the yoga program not having enough space.
- Kensington Park - Met in January. They are a small group and still getting settled. They are interested in a meet and greet event to connect with other LACs. Unable to attend in February, but will get the information regarding participation in the LLM tabling event.
- Potomac – Missed this meeting and has not received the report yet.
- Connie Morella – Met on March 11. Discussed what LACs can do and can't do. Very pleased that another storytime session will be starting on Thursday.
- Damascus – Met on March 11; did not have quorum. Want books on hold available. Has a non-voting member who is a member of the Gaithersburg LAC, wants to know if they can have an exception to become a voting member.
- Noyes – Met on January 9; scheduled to meet on March 13. Have new LAC applicants. Now have officers. Excited about the renovation. Could not table for LLM because of the size of the facility.
- Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) – During the Damascus refresh, Baker Middle School is supporting some programs. Still in talks about a unified library card; the goal is April 1. Connected with Felicity Brown about meeting regarding benchmarking with MCPL concerning certain policies and procedures. Also meeting with Ari Brooks in the very near future on a partnership.
- Montgomery College – Takoma Park Library opening on January 27; unfortunately it opened without any books due to a delay on shelving. Next week shelving will be arriving. Rockville Library is scheduled to close in the fall of 2025 for renovation. It will be a two-year project. Focusing on expanding dual enrollment reach to junior high and high school students. The early college will be launching two cybersecurity cohorts at the East County Education Center. The Middle College, another dual enrollment program, is focused on pathways in teaching – early education degrees at the Clarksburg High School. There is Jumpstart to College program that initiative is called Project Elevate, which supports justice involved youth to take college courses or earn a GED. Next week during Spring Break, a WOW event, The World of Work, will welcome 6,700 MCPS 8<sup>th</sup> graders. The purpose is to provide the students with hands-on experiences, give them campus tours, valuable interactions with industry professionals, and to help prepare them for future academic and career paths, and an introduction to the various programs at Montgomery College.
- Marilyn Praisner – Could not attend the February 19 meeting. They are scheduled to meet on March 19. They want to put on a meet the Marilyn Praisner staff part one.
- Aspen Hill – Meets every other month. Met on January 27 and are scheduled to meet on March 17. Participated in the tabling during LLM. Questions about the Noyes Library funding memo

that the Board remitted. There will be a speaker at the next LAC meeting. Outstanding work requests – wobbly bench, leaky closet and curbs.

- Maggie Nightingale – Met on February 19. Steve Warrick, Regional Manager, gave a report on staffing and programming. There are a lot of well attended programs. Concern about conversation club having lower attendance. Recently contacted by Fair Access, advocates for public services for upcounty communities. They want to see how they can work with Maggie Nightingale Library. Will attend the Fair Access meeting in April.
- Quince Orchard – Met on February 19. Regional Manager provided update on staffing – also benefiting from the Damascus closing. Highlighted very well attended programs. Some issues during after school hours, brought in security guard, which has helped the situation. Looking at creating a dedicated children’s space. Discussed Hoopla at length. Next meeting April 16.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- None

**ADJOURNMENT:**

- The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m.