



HCLS Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

January 17, 2024 ♦ 7 pm
Virtual

Board members present were: Kelly Smith, Chair; Elizabeth Banach; Phillip Dodge; Rob Mentz; Julie Parham; and Antonia Watts. Also present were staff members/citizens including, Dorna Anderson, Amanda Barrett, Lew Belfont, Angela Brade, Mary Brosenne, Stacey Fields, Cari Gast, Rita Hamlet, Kelsey Hughes, Allison Jessing, Kathleen Klebba, Christie Lassen, Steve Lewicky, Diane Li, Erin Lukas, Tanya Malveaux, Brooke McCauley, Lauren McCloskey, Kim Montenyohl, Blakely Mooney, Stevia Morales, Nana Owusu, Samary Ramirez, Jereme Scott, Ben Sfanos, Stephanie Shane, and Sheng Wu.

Kelly called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, wishing everyone a Happy New Year.

The Board unanimously approved the November 15 Board meeting minutes.

Lew Belfont introduced Adult Art Curriculum Specialist Jereme Scott who presented information on art classes he has taught at HCLS Branches. He showcased examples of portrait painting, linocut printmaking, stencils printmaking, and plaster sculptures. He explained that the art classroom accommodates 12 people and on average 9-12 people attend the classes, repeat customers bring friends with them, and the age range of attendees is 23-85.

I referenced the financial report through the end of December, noting expenditure year-to-date, pacing across the objects, and that no funds have been moved between objects.

Christie updated the Board on the website redesign project, which is in the content migration and development stage. Launch is set for April/May with testing to take place between now and March. An RFP for fabrication and installation of wayfinding/signage has gone out for the ElkrIDGE Branch. Christie gave Save the Date reminders for upcoming events, Evening in the Stacks (Feb 24), HCLS Spelling Bee (Mar 15), and Battle of the Books (Apr 19). It was recommended that messages go out to Bee coordinators that the Friday, March 15 HCLS Spelling Bee may run late.

I presented the proposed FY 25 Operating budget which calls for increases in Salaries & Benefits (Object 1), Curriculum (Object 3) to meet heavy demand on materials, and Professional Development (Object 4). There is no requested increase for Contracts (Object 2) or Equipment (Object 5). We have not heard from the County Executive yet regarding the operating budget. This typically happens in March. The Board approved the proposed FY 25 Operating budget.

Angela provided an update on the capital projects, specifically the Downtown Columbia Branch. Arcadis, the owner operator is the selected vendor who is providing a “best and final” offer based on an expanded scope of work which calls for seeking feedback on five proposed sites for the branch. These include the proposed Lakefront site, the vacant Lord & Taylor space at the mall, the Merriweather District location, the existing Branch site, and a property owned by Mr. David Costello. Arcadis will also lead stakeholder meetings. Tonya has explained to County Administration that MD Code states that Library Boards make decisions on site choice.

Regarding the FY 25 Capital Budget, there is no ask for funding. \$10 Million from the previous year remains in contingency. In answer to a question from the Board, we don't know if the state could take back the \$10M if it is not spent. The Board approved the proposed FY 25 Capital budget which reflects no funding for FY 25 and the release of the \$10 Million (\$5M in contingency and \$5M in project L0020) to advance the project.

Nana Owusu gave an update on Friends & Foundation of HCLS activities. \$140K has been raised so far for the annual campaign, which is well on its way to the \$163K goal. There are 70 new donors. Grants that have come in include the Community Foundation of Howard County at \$5K, the Reis Foundation at \$10K, and M&T Foundation at \$11K. Nana thanked library staff for their fundraising support. He highlighted revenues for Friends fundraising week, keepsake sales and branch raffles for Evening in the Stacks, which have just started up. He closed by announcing that the Friends are engaging in strategic planning which is expected to be completed by April. Raffle tickets can be purchased online.

I provided an update on collective bargaining and shared that we are waiting on arbitrator selection and rescheduled voting dates.

Kelly adjourned the meeting at 7:40 pm.

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for 7 pm on **Wed., March 20, 2024**, and will be virtual unless otherwise noticed.

Respectfully submitted,



Tonya Aikens
President & CEO