



HCLS Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

March 4, 2024 ♦ 10:30 am
Virtual

Board members present were: Kelly Smith, Chair; Sabina Taj, Vice Chair; Elizabeth Banach; Phillip Dodge; Rob Mentz; and Antonia Watts. Also present were staff members/citizens including, Angela Brade, Christie Lassen, and Stephanie Shane.

Kelly called the meeting to order at 11:00 am.

I recapped the County Executive's communications regarding expansion of the Elkridge Branch, starting with his letter dated February 15, 2024, and ending with his second letter dated February 28, 2024, which outlined his plans for the entire Elkridge community. Renovation to the Elkridge Branch would consist of approximately 5K square feet to expand the teen and children's areas. The built-out space would allow for educational, focused activities similar to those added as part of the Glenwood Branch renovation. This project would be across two fiscal years and call for additional staff in the form of two teen instructors and one children's instructor.

Angela shared what the revised capital request would look like and explained that the expansion would cause minimal disruption to existing operations.

In addition to meetings with the County Executive's office on this project, and Councilperson Liz Walsh on activity at the Elkridge Branch and in the Elkridge community, HCLS has also engaged in meetings with the police department to address security at the Elkridge Branch. Sabina suggested looking into roundtables and non-profit collaborations to provide resources to address the Elkridge situation. I explained that we have been addressing security through our current budget and would love a more targeted approach such as roundtables and enhanced collaboration with HCPSS and non-profits.

The next meeting of the Planning Board to present the new capital project is Thursday, March 7. Angela will be attending as I will be participating in the County Executive's second public hearing on his FY 25 budget.

The Board approved the revised capital budget to reflect the County Executive's proposed expansion of the Elkridge Branch, beginning site work on the Southwest Branch, and release of the \$10M in State funds for the Downtown Branch.

Discussion turned to the response letter to send to the County Executive which will include the Board's agreement to an expansion targeted toward teens and children's departments, additional staff to handle the increased space and activity, support for security, and carpet replacement at the Miller Branch.

The Board then discussed activity around the Downtown Central Branch, to include the community meetings. Christie shared a community blog which contained an image of the potential sites and upcoming meetings. I explained that one of my concerns with these meetings is the lack of context given to community members to draw upon when selecting a preferred site, including existing and future development, operational needs and vision, etc. As the community meetings are the County's process at the direction of the County Council, library staff are not attending meetings. In this manner, the meetings are run, and community questions be responded to, by the County and/or their consultant.

Kelly adjourned the meeting at 11:44 am.

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tonya Aikens". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tonya Aikens
President & CEO