



## HCLS Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

March 15, 2023 ♦ 7 pm  
Virtual

Board members present were: Antonia Watts, Chair; Phillip Dodge, Vice Chair; Elizabeth Banach; Julie Parham; Kelly Smith; and Sabina Taj. Also present were leadership team staff members/citizens including Ruba Abukhdeir, Dorna Anderson, Lew Belfont, Angela Brade, Mary Brosenne, Kelly Clark, Stacey Fields, Cari Gast, Rohini Gupta, Eliana Holgate, Kelsey Hughes, Allison Jessing, Kathleen Klebba, Nina Krzysko, Addison Landers, Christie Lassen, Suki Lee, Steve Lewicky, Diane Li, Tanya Malveaux, Brooke McCauley, Lauren McCloskey, Kim Montenyohl, Emma Ostendorp, Nana Owusu, Ben Sfanos, Margaret Smith, Stephanie Shane, and Tracy Yamamoto.

Antonia called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

The Board unanimously approved the Board meeting minutes from January 25, plus the executive sessions on February 17 and 22, with the modification to change the meeting time to 8 am on February 17.

The Operations Update followed, starting with the introduction of Diane Li who reported on DEI activities, including reaching out to the large immigrant workforce of Coastal Sunbelt with participation at an Employee Health and Wellness Fair and English conversation classes, and collaborations with Columbia Association (CA) for World Language Café consisting of monthly conversation clubs at the Miller and East Columbia Branches, and monthly International Grocery Tours, which are promoted on HCLS' web site and CA's newsletters.

I reported on a proposed endowment from Dr. Lillian Bauder in the equity and social justice sphere. The \$55K endowment would go toward annual Bauder Book Talks in perpetuity targeted at teens from four middle schools in Columbia with the lowest percentile ranking on the annual MSDE report card and with high percentages of African American and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) students qualifying for Free and Reduced Meals. The Board approved acceptance of this endowment which will be presented to the Friends Board as the funding would need to be passed through the Friends, a 501(c)3.

With regards to capital projects, work is currently being performed on the scope and parameters of a proposed Downtown Columbia Branch for FY 24. We are anticipating updates on the County revenue projections which will help determine if the project will be funded in FY 24. We are proceeding with a new round of dream sessions with County stakeholders on what they would like to see in a new Downtown Branch.

I presented the financial report where we are on pace with Objects. I noted that we have not moved funds between objects.

Nana Owusu, Chair of the Friends & Foundation of HCLS, summarized recent Friends activities. The Annual Campaign is 95% toward goal for FY 23 and includes a bequest of \$20K. There are 53 new donors. The Friends made \$2K from the Keepsake sale and over \$15K in Branch raffles for Evening in the Stacks. The Friends' Board is actively seeking new members. If the HCLS Board knows of anyone interested in joining, they should send those names to Stephanie who will forward them on to Nana.

Turning to 2023 legislative priorities, I reported that HB 369/SB 348 covers proposed increases to SLRC funding which serves all library systems in Maryland. Work continues on SB 680/HB 65 that addresses collective bargaining with Maryland public library administrators weighing in to craft a bill that supports staff, library systems

and the community. If this passes, this will change legislation for Howard County. SB 501, the Aging Infrastructure Capital Improvement Program, calls for adding an additional \$40M to the program plus changing the wealth match which would benefit HCLS but be detrimental to five of the poorest jurisdictions.

The Board approved the FY 2024 HCLS closings and FY 2024 Board meeting dates.

I walked through the recommended changes to Supplement 3 which address new formats, changes in fines, and changes in how HCLS software operates. The Board agreed to table approval of the proposed changes pending a revision to include limits on ebook borrowing.

The Board approved the nominating committee, consisting of Antonia Watts and Rob Mentz for the FY 2024 slate of officers.

Christie announced that approximately 450 people attended Evening in the Stacks this year, an increase of 100 from last year. She thanked the Board for attending and solicited theme ideas for next year's gala. The Spelling Bee is taking place on Saturday, with Saketh Sundar, a previous HCLS multi-year winner and 2019 national winner (one of the octo-champs), serving as Dictionary Judge. A record 315 teams are participating in this year's Battle of the Books. Christie provided an update on the website redesign project which is in content edits and the visual design phase, as well as the wayfinding/signage project which is in the design development phase. The vendors of both projects are working together to ensure a similar look and feel, such as a common color palette. Christie introduced a new mascot, Booker Owl, that is to debut in the summer reading game.

In response to a question about the Strategic Plan, I relayed that Due East Partners has been selected as the vendor. We are awaiting an updated cost estimate from them with work expected to commence this month.

In response to questions, Antonia explained that chat is disabled on the webinars in response to the Open Meetings Act and I shared that people wishing to volunteer at the library should either contact HCLS Human Resources or their home branch.

Antonia adjourned the meeting at 8:04 pm.

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for 7 pm on **Wed., June 21, 2023**, and will be virtual unless otherwise noticed.

Respectfully submitted,



Tonya Aikens  
President & CEO