



## HCLS Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

November 18, 2020 ♦ 7 pm  
Virtual

Board members present were: Robert Mentz, Chair; Andy Dalal, Vice Chair; Phillip Dodge; Anne Markus; Kelly Smith; and Antonia Watts. Also present were staff members/citizens Dorna Anderson, Lew Belfont, Angela Brade, Vera Davies, Stacey Fields, Christie Lassen, Steve Lewicky, Michelle Marks-Osborne, Ben Sfanos, Stephanie Shane, and other members of staff and the public who dialed in.

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

The Board unanimously approved the September 16, 2020 Board meeting general and executive session minutes. I introduced Dr. Holly Sun, Howard County Budget Administrator who presented on the County's current fiscal situation and future outlook. She highlighted the fact that FY 20 has fared better do to a delayed one-time reconciliation plus federal stimulus package, noting that these funds are not sustainable going forward. She further noted the challenges in the fiscal outlook, including the pandemic's impact on revenues, known obligations and ongoing needs and cost increases. There is uncertainty in the economic outlook as the duration and severity of the pandemic continues. Dr. Sun related that the State Comptroller's office hired consultants who predicted that it would take a minimum of two years to get Maryland employment back to pre-pandemic levels. In light of the above challenges, the need for additional Federal stimulus funding, current obligations such as construction of the new Courthouse, and the challenge of future revenue development revenue due to APFO, the County is asking its departments to present two different budget scenarios for FY 2022; 1) the same budget from FY 2021; and 2) a 3% reduction.

I opened discussion of the Racial Equity RFP, noting that the Board will meet on December 16 to discuss the recommended consultant and hear additional testimony. I described the RFP process and scope of work desired from the contractor, pointed to the written testimony included in the Board packet, and introduced Howard County citizen Michelle Marks-Osborne who delivered oral testimony as to HCLS' importance as a lead organization in the racial equity movement. Discussion followed on how HCLS was promoting the opportunity to deliver testimony. In addition to the website, HCLS will promote on social media and in the customer eblast.

Discussion turned to HCLS' impressive operations during COVID-19. Lew provided statistics on contactless pickup, plus, in consort with Angela, introduced the new Bundle Bag initiative. Brooke McCauley provided details on the digital inclusion initiative that provides Chromebooks and Hotspots to customers. Brooke explained that efforts are focused on utilizing partners to reach the most vulnerable in Howard County to facilitate loaning devices to this target audience prior to opening up lending to all Howard County residents. In response to Board questions, Lew explained that customer returns of materials has not been negatively impacted by going fine free, and Christie described how the Bundle Bag initiative is being promoted. Angela delivered a presentation on the virtual HiTech Carnival, sharing photos of participants and giving examples of curriculum in some of the educational tracks. Christie followed up on the Longest Table, which featured a portrait of James Baldwin painted by staff member Jereme Scott and a presentation by Daryl Davis, plus breakout rooms to discuss local racial equity concerns and opportunities. There are classes and events scheduled as follow up to continue the dialogue. She further reported that approximately 270 teams have registered for the 2021 Battle of the Books, and shared that the theme for this year's Evening in the Stacks is Italy. Stacks will be held on February 27, featuring authors and potentially a tour and cooking demonstration. She asked for Board support in promoting this event and soliciting sponsors. Stephanie will send links to the Board of the above initiatives along with the minutes from this meeting.

I next reported on the fiscal year budget, while Angela addressed the current capital projects. The Glenwood project is scheduled to begin in December. She shared a picture of the layout of the renovation, which allows for better flow and increased classroom and meeting space. The completion date for renovation is slated for June 2021. She related that future meetings are planned to discuss the Downtown Columbia Branch.

The Board approved the change to Supplement 2 and all Board members on the call agreed to serve on the interview committee for the upcoming District 4 replacement. Rob welcomed Kelly to the Board and congratulated Antonia on her appointment to the Board of Education. I provided further clarification on the RFP and testimony which will be reviewed at the December 16 Board meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:23 pm with Rob thanking all for attending.

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for 7 pm on **Wed., December 16, 2020** via zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Tonya Aikens  
President & CEO