



## HCLS Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

September 18, 2024 ♦ 7 pm  
Virtual

Board members present were: Elizabeth Banach, Chair; Kelly Smith, Vice Chair; Phillip Dodge; Rob Mentz; Julie Parham; and Antonia Watts. Also present were staff members/citizens including, Amanda Barrett, Angela Best, Angela Brade, Mary Brosenne, Kelly Clark, Stacey Fields, Cari Gast, Rohini Gupta, Rita Hamlet, Eliana Holgate, Katie Klebba, Christie Lassen, Jessica Lee, Marcy Leonard, Steve Lewicky, Diane Li, Tanya Malveaux, Lauren McCloskey, Kim Montenyohl, Emma Ostendorp, Nana Owusu, Gabriela Penaloza, Megan Royden, Ben Sfanos, Michele Shade, Stephanie Shane, and Ruth Vargas.

Liz Banach called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

The Board unanimously approved the Board meeting minutes for June 12 and August 12.

I presented two operational highlights, the Makerspace Feasibility Study and Libraries, AI and You. The former is a Phase II grant funded by TEDCO and could be at either the Downtown Columbia Branch or the Elkridge expansion. The latter is partially funded through an LSTA grant and involves working with consultants and the community to position HCLS as a leader in AI education.

I welcomed Marcy Leonard, HCLS' new COO of Public Services.

The Board reviewed the financial report through August 31, 2024.

Angela Brade presented an update on capital projects. There are upcoming meetings scheduled for the Elkridge Branch Expansion in addition to a kickoff for the Southwest site assessment and feasibility study to determine what land is available. We are awaiting a report from the County's Owner Rep regarding the Downtown Columbia Branch. Additional projects in this fiscal year are modifying the Glenwood entrance to make the second set of double doors automatic which the county is paying for and will take six to seven months. The County will also be installing a shared campus sign at the East Columbia Branch to denote the library, senior center and Rec and Parks facility.

I turned to a discussion of the operating budget, referencing the FY 2026 Curriculum Focus which was in the Board packet. The preliminary proposal of increases in Object 1 includes 3% merit, 4% COLA, 7% in medical benefits, a compensation study (\$35K) and security costs (\$450K). The last involves piloting a community monitoring program for security at branches. I pointed out that we are currently aligned with AFCSME units in the county for COLA and merit at 5% COLA and merit, while it may not be until FY 26/27 where it will be a true merit. The Board asked for a history of merit and COLA increases for the past five years.

Board Discussion turned to security and locations for security. Kelly Clark pointed out that some guards have created trusting relationships with teens. The Board would like to see information on the community mentor monitor program which would involve a phase-in process to remove guards.

There are no proposed increases to Object 2 (Contracts) and Object 5 (Equipment), while there are increases in Object 3 (Curriculum) at \$225K to meet customer demand for materials, and in Object 4 (Professional Development) at \$60K to fund continued training of staff.

With regards to the FY 26 Capital Budget, I asked that this vote be delayed until clarification on the projects is received from the County Executive on the Downtown Columbia Branch and Elkridge expansion. I referenced the Budget Process Timeline which was contained in the Board packet. The Board approved the FY 26 budget items.

Nana Owusu gave an update on Friends & Foundation of HCLS activities. Friends has exceeded their goal for the annual campaign, noting a 20% increase from the previous year. Grants are bringing in a lot of revenue. HCLS staff are doing great at Branch raffles. The Reis Foundation made a \$10K donation in honor of Board member Sabina Taj. Regarding Board membership, the Friends is looking to add additional members, specifically those with a background in legal, education and fundraising areas.

The Board reviewed the proposed changes to Supplement 3, approving adoption of changes with the amendment to change a section heading from “Library Customer Responsibilities and Norms” to just “Library customer Responsibilities.” The Board also approved the no changes proposed to the Policies and Supplement 1 sections.

The Board discussed upcoming meeting locations, agreeing that they would like to have in person meetings at various branches throughout the HCLS system alternated with virtual meetings. HCLS will explore whether Elkridge is available for the November Board meeting.

Liz adjourned the meeting at 8:12 pm to convene in closed session.

Below is a summary of the closed session held on September 18, 2024.

1. Statement of the time, place, and purpose of the closed session:
  - a. Time of closed session: 8:13 pm – 8:50 pm
  - b. Place (location) of closed session: Virtual via zoom
  - c. Purpose of the closed session: to discuss personnel matters
2. Record of the vote of each member as to closing the session:
  - a. Names of members voting aye: Elizabeth Banach, Phillip Dodge, Rob Mentz, Julie Parham, Kelly Smith, Antonia Watts
  - b. Members opposed: none
  - c. Members Abstaining: none
3. Statutory authority to close session: This meeting was closed under the following provisions of General Provisions Art. § 3-305(b): Topic #7: § 3-305(b) (1) (add others as needed)
4. Listing of each topic actually discussed, persons present, and each action taken in the session:
  - a. Topic description: To discuss personnel matters
  - b. Persons present for discussion: Tonya Aikens, Elizabeth Banach, Phillip Dodge, Steve Lewicky, Rob Mentz, July Parham, Kelly Smith, and Antonia Watts
  - c. Action Taken/Each Recorded: The board discussed personnel matters.

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for 7 pm on **Wed., November 20, 2024**, where it will look to be held at the Elkridge Branch.

Respectfully submitted,



Tonya Aikens  
President & CEO