



**EASTERN SHORE PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

September 13, 2022 at 1:00 pm

(Meeting held in-person at the Accomack County Airport, Melfa, and electronically)

Present: Joyce Holland (Chair), Jay Davenport (Vice-Chair), Althea Pittman, David Poyer, Carl Rose-Jensen, Frank Russell, Gerry Ryan, James Lilliston, Accomack County Treasurer (virtual).

Absent: Dennis Custis, Gary Heintzelman.

In attendance: Cara Burton, Director, Connor Buyrn (virtual), Tiffany Flores (virtual), Chris Pote (virtual), Charle Ricci (virtual), Richard Berger, CCML Board.

ESPL Foundation: Al McMath, Colette Nelson. **Friends of the ESPL:** Janet Rochester, Margaret Donahue-Lynch.

1. Meeting was called to order by Chair Holland at 1:06 pm.
2. **Public Comments.** Rochester has Friends of the ESPL book bags available for purchase.
3. **Approval of Minutes.** Russell motioned to approve the minutes from the August 9, 2022 meeting. Pittman seconded. Motion approved.
4. **Finance Committee (Davenport)** – Davenport reported that the committee met on September 7th to review and update the budget to more fully include the capital expenses. The committee provided guidance to Burton regarding budget balancing. An issue that needs to be addressed is a shortfall in income compared to expenses. There are currently four staff positions that need to be filled and with current income levels, it is difficult to fund these positions. The current fiscal year's budget will be balanced due to some carryover funds from the previous fiscal year. There will be no carryover funds in the next fiscal year and a substantial funding need will need to be addressed to prepare the next budget. The auditor will be visiting on September 21st to begin the audit work. The financial committee report is included in the board packet. Holland noted that this month's system report lists the positions needing to be filled and Davenport explained that these positions require candidates with skills and experience.
5. **Financial Report.** Burton reinforced Davenport's comments and explained that the library will be in a fiscal crisis moving into the next fiscal year because of the shortfall. Burton also noted that the new library in Parksley will be opening with inadequate staffing levels. Not only is it hard to find qualified staff, but current salaries and compensation are low when compared to similar positions elsewhere. \$5,000 per fulltime staff member could easily be added to make compensation more competitive. Each staff position requires skill and a good deal of training. Burton will need to draft the budget for FY 2023/24 in November for submittal to Accomack County and needs direction now from the Board regarding how to build the budget. Burton explained that it begins with local funding. Increasing local government support results in increased state aid funding. With the library already \$100,000 short this year, Burton can easily see needing \$200,000 – \$300,000 in additional funds moving forward. This is due to the new building, new equipment, maintenance contracts, and the Heritage Center. The strategic plan includes an organizational chart that indicates additional staff

positions needed to bring things up to par. Once things begin to scale up, a human resources person and a technology person would be needed. We are at a tipping point where the new tier of library services require additional library support. Davenport noted that the new library is beautiful, and because of new visitors, there will be a substantial increase of new patrons. Adequate staffing is particularly important at this point because we don't want to lose people who would become regular library users, but who don't because there isn't enough staff to help them. Holland explained that the additional positions needed to complete the goals of the strategic plan would be a local history reference librarian, archives specialist or field archivist, technology librarian, administrative assistant, library specialist, teen librarian, and volunteer and events coordinator. The library is at a crossroads moving into 2023. Davenport inquired as to which positions would be prioritized for filling. Burton responded that right now, the open positions that would need to be filled are Chincoteague Island Library Branch Manager, a part-time courier driver, at least one part-time circulation information specialist, and a Youth Services Librarian. Burton recounted an example of the ramifications of being understaffed. Burton found two babies in car seats last week in the children's room with no parent or guardian in attendance. Burton located the parent across the library on the computer. Burton noted that if the library was fully staffed, there would have been a children's librarian in the children's room. Instead, she was working at NFL that day. Davenport suggests that calculations need to be done to not only fill the vacant positions, but also to fill the additional positions in the strategic plan. These figures will give the scope of what is needed for budgeting, and can be used to create a funding request for the Boards of Supervisors. Burton noted that there are currently enough funds to fill the current vacant positions if they are advertised as planned and as budgeted. In order to increase the pay for the advertised positions and avoid salary compression, bumps in pay will be needed for existing employees in order to raise their pay to a level higher than a new hire would receive. Burton estimates \$75,000 - \$100,000 will be needed to bump existing salaries up to competitive levels, plus \$100,000 to meet budget shortfalls. Adding new staff to build towards the organizational chart in the strategic plan would require an additional \$100,000. Burton asked that trustees provide guidance on which tier of additional support to request in order to get the library to the level of support needed - \$100,000, \$200,000, or \$300,000. Additionally, relocation expenses and new equipment will be needed to address the hiring of the new director. Holland noted that there may be a second board meeting in September on the 27th. Davenport explained that Custis requested that the library look for another attorney to review the lease because his office is so backlogged. Holland suggested that the finance committee meet to decide on a recommendation as to an amount of support to ask for. Ryan noted that if you don't ask for what you need, you won't receive it. Holland pointed out that the rationale for an increase is certainly there, with the new, larger building. Pittman noted that if an organization isn't given what they need, they will be unable to reach the level that they need to function, which can reflect poorly on the organization in the future. The new building is an inflection point to have a chance to make a case to the Supervisors as to why the additional funding is necessary. Poyer noted that three directors back, flat funding requests were submitted for 20 years. Ryan motioned that Burton create a budget that includes the funding needed to run the new library. Davenport seconded. Motion approved. Poyer motioned to approve the financial reports. Pittman seconded. Motion approved.

6. **Branch and Friend's Reports**

- a. Cape Charles Memorial Library - Included in system report. Berger noted how proud the CCML board have been of all of the wonderful work and programming that Silvey and Doherty have been doing.

- b. Chincoteague Island Library – Included in system report. Ryan shared that attendance was high for the Salisbury Zoo, Barefoot Puppets, and Rob Wescott, the magician, during the summer reading program. Participation in story hours and the summer reading program was also very good.
 - c. Northampton Free Library - Included in system report.
 - d. ESPL Friends Reports – Included in board packet.
7. **Library Director's System Report** – Burton distributed some photos from the Virginia Beach Public Library and noted the similarities between it and the new Parksley library. Burton also recently emailed details regarding educational opportunities for board members.
8. **Personnel Committee (Pittman)** – No updates presented. Rose-Jensen pointed out that the staff is doing everything right and the library is being run well, but more pay is required to hire and retain qualified staff.
9. **Grand Opening Committee (Holland)** – No updates presented. The committee will be meeting on September 19th and plans to continue with a donor's event on a Wednesday and a grand opening event on a Friday. Russell indicated that the Town of Parksley will join in as well. Parksley has been planning a grand opening for the renovated railroad museum and a reveal for the new LOVE sign. There may be a car show and a band. All of these things were put on hold in anticipation of the library opening, but these events may need to occur before the library opens because of the delays in project completion. Russell noted that there is an Old-Fashioned Christmas celebration in Parksley in December, usually the second Saturday in December, and perhaps that could be tied into the library opening. Rochester reported that the Friends will have their annual Santa event on December 3rd in Accomac.
10. **ESPL Foundation (Davenport)**
- a. **Capital Campaign Update** – McMath stated that capital campaign letters were mailed earlier this week to prior donors asking them to bump up to the next level of giving. A second round of letters will go out soon to larger donors. The capital campaign will wrap up on December 31, 2022, at which point the donor amounts will be solidified and the donor wall finalized.
11. **Capital Project Update – Steering Committee (Davenport)** – Addressed in Capital Campaign Update discussion. McMath reported the contractor has created a pre-punch list, which Burton, Davenport, Tom Rakowski, Pote, and Ricci added to after a walkthrough this morning. The architects will also have a punch list. The roofing contractor is still at work and additional thermographic testing will need to be completed. The certification of occupancy will need to be obtained and the sewage system connection will need to be made. Davenport added that internet and phone connections will need to be setup, and there is work needed to be done on the loading ramp at the back of the building. McMath explained that the punch lists will be combined, and then the architects, the County, and the contractor will meet at the end of September. McMath recommended that Grand Opening planning continue, but that no date be set as of right now. Davenport noted that Burton will also need a lead time to plan the move, and at least two weeks' notice to the moving company. The moving cannot take place before the certificate of occupancy is issued. Nelson pointed out that the donors should not attend an event at an empty building, but rather see a furnished and operational space. Davenport emphasized a certificate of occupancy must be received and the trustees must have a final walkthrough before accepting the building and stating that there are no further issues with the building's construction. Davenport noted that the lease between the library and the County will also need to be resolved before the move.
12. **Old Business**
- a. Patron Rights and Responsibility Policy – 2nd reading. After incorporating the trustee's comments and suggestions from the first reading, Burton has provided the trustees with an executive summary about the changes made to the policy. Burton also created a brief, one-page summary of the policy

that will be attached to the full policy. Burton noted that patron rights are covered in the ALA Patron Bill of Rights, which will be posted in the library and is available on the library website. Ryan motioned to approve the Patron Rights and Responsibility Policy. Davenport seconded. Motion approved.

- b. ESRL Lease Agreement with Accomack County – Addressed in earlier Finance Committee discussion.

13. New Business

- a. Library in Accomac to be closed on Mondays starting September 19 – Burton explained that closing for a full day each week will allow staff to prepare for the upcoming move. This will also help to alleviate pressures of understaffing.
- b. Accept the retirement of Cara Burton, Library System Director – Russell motioned to formally accept Burton’s retirement. Rose-Jensen seconded. Motion approved. Holland noted what a vital part of the system Burton is and what wonderful work Burton has done. The board’s acceptance is made with regret. Holland explained that the board has formed a search committee for a new library director. Holland and Davenport will represent the board on the committee, and will be joined by Barbara Coady, Pat Bloxom, Kasey Grier, Kitty Hall, and Colette Nelson. There are resource individuals, such as Burton herself, and Reagan Thalacker from the State Library, who can be accessed. Holland is proposing that the committee will do the preliminary work on job description, posting the advertisement, and contacting potential candidates. Holland will serve as liaison between the search committee and board of trustees. Once the candidates have been narrowed to the few to be interviewed, Holland will ask that members of the board will be included and the interviews would be a part of a closed session of an open meeting.

14. **Closed Session regarding Personnel** - Neither Burton nor any member of the Board felt a closed session was necessary.

15. **Additional Comments** – Davenport noted that Burton’s time with the library has been exceptional and has been amazed at how many things she’s achieved. He expressed sincere thanks for her work. Burton stated that this is a great time to bring in someone new, who will be ready to hit the ground running with the new building. Burton will be available next year to offer assistance to the new director if needed. The September 27th meeting will depend on whether or not the draft lease is ready to be voted on.

16. **Next Meeting:** Tuesday, September 27, 2022 at 1:00 pm, Accomack County Airport. Thursday, October 20, 2022 at 1 pm, Accomack County Airport. The October 11, 2022 meeting is cancelled.

17. **Adjournment** – A motion to adjourn was made by Davenport and seconded by Pittman. Motion approved. Meeting adjourned at 1:50 pm by the Chair.

Respectfully submitted,



Cara Burton, Secretary