



MINUTES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Eastern Shore of Virginia Public Library System

June 10, 2025 | 1 PM | Eastern Shore Regional Library & Heritage Center
Parksley, VA

Meeting called to order by David Poyer, Chair

ATTENDANCE

Present:

Grayson Chesser, Dennis Custis, Joyce Holland, Janet Justis, James Lilliston (*Zoom*), M.K. Miles, Christopher Pote (*non-voting*), David Poyer, Carl Rose-Jensen, Frank Russell, Maureen Teague

Absent:

In Attendance:

Kate Baird, Tiffany Flores, Jamie Johnson, Luke Kelly, Paul Muhly, Colette Nelson, Charle Ricci

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by David Poyer at 1PM. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Joyce Holland moved. Frank Russell seconded the motion

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Paul Muhly asked questions related to:

- New highway signage. C. Pote indicated that information is in his office until he has the chance to address it, and that he is willing to let the Friends or Foundation take on that project if they choose.
- Library landscaping. C. Pote explained there was back and forth between the Foundation, the County, and the library and no progress made. He is open to assistance with this matter.

Kate Baird, Friends of Eastern Shore Public Library President, shared as a patron and a volunteer that the library, the programming and the staff are thriving under Director Pote's Leadership.

Kasey Grier, Library Foundation President, shared that the Foundation loves working with C. Pote.

Luke Kelly, Heritage Center Archivist, shared that as one of the newest members of staff he can say that C. Pote has created a very welcoming environment for the staff and it's a great place to work. Everyone is happy and works well together and that is due to Chris's leadership.

Charle Ricci, Collections Management Librarian, read a statement on behalf of several of the ESPL staff members (statement added to the report).

Colette Nelson, ESPL Library Foundation member, has been involved with the library since the 1990s, and the work that has taken place under Christopher Pote's leadership is stellar.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES [May 13, 2025]

Maureen Teague moved that the May 13, 2025, meeting minutes be approved. Joyce Holland seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business.

FINANCIAL REPORT [C. Pote]

Christopher Pote provided a snapshot of the System's finances:

- The LGIP account gained \$267.46 in interest for a total balance of \$73,709.94.
- FY25 ending strong and in the black. ESPL will be able to roll over some funds, save some money in contingencies, offset some increase in insurance costs, and issue merit bonuses to deserving staff.
- C. Pote will provide a plan for roll-over funds at the next meeting.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S SYSTEM REPORT [C. Pote]

Building Update

- Accomack County staff met with the Noland and York representatives again on 5/29/25
 - Representatives onsite to verify if the dampers are opening or not.
 - Some of the units weren't set the same as others, so they were not opening or barely opening. Setting changes on these units and appear to be working better at the moment.
 - The York rep changed the settings on those units, and they seem to be working better now.
 - The only remaining issue is that the CO2 sensors might not be fully compatible with the York units. A plan is being created to switch the sensors out at a later date.

FOIA Training

- All Trustees must take VRSA's FOIA training.

- If you have taken it already, please inform Christopher Pote of the date you complete the training.

Summer Fest- June 14th

- Outdoor Summer Reading Kick-off event: 10AM-2PM at the Eastern Shore Community College

C. Pote and David Poyer had a web meeting with representative with HBA Architects who went over the building process to explain the order of operations if ESPL worked with his architect firm.

Discussion ensued about who and how an initial communication should occur between ESPL and Accomack County to inform them of the possibility of the Northampton Free Library building project.

It was recommended that C. Pote reach out to both Accomack County and Northampton County Administrators to have an initial discussion about early planning stages and how ESPL should proceed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee (G. Chesser)

No report

Personnel Committee (C. Rose-Jensen)

No Report

Trustee Training Committee Report (J. Holland)

Joyce Holland shared that next month there will be on-site training for the Trustees with staff from the Library of Virginia. J. Holland encouraged the other Trustees to get their required FOIA training completed as quickly as possible.

Facilities Committee Report (D. Poyer)

On Friday, 6/27 the Facilities Committee is scheduled to conduct a site visit at the Regional Library in Parksley.

BRANCH AND FRIENDS REPORTS

Cape Charles Memorial Library

Included in the written Library Director's System Report.

Chincoteague Island Library

Included in the written Library Director's System Report.

Northampton Free Library

Included in the written Library Director's System Report.

ESPL Friends of the Eastern Shore Public Library

Friends President, Kate Baird shared the update from the Friends. (Report attached).

ESPL FOUNDATION [D. Custis]

Dennis Custis shared that the ticket sale for the e-bike drawing is underway.

NEW BUSINESS

FY 2026 Operating Budget (C. Pote)

C. Pote presented the proposed FY26 ESPL Operating Budget. The goal was to cover the few areas that were under-budgeted in FY25, while conservatively projecting next year's expenses. The proposed budget includes 3% Cost-of-Living Adjustment for all employees, merit raises for deserving staff, as well as the requested additional part-time staff person for Chincoteague Island Library.

C. Pote indicated it was a tricky budget season as the intent was to reward and retain the staff and services ESPL has, allocate funds appropriately, save where we can, all while trying to plan in the midst of a murky financial times.

Maureen Teague moves to approve the budget. Joyce Holland seconded the motion. Motion passes unanimously.

Janet Justis made note that the budget is dependent on all of the approvals and final follow-through from all the partners.

Frank Russell recommends sitting down and going through the budget with a fine-tooth comb, because everyone doesn't get a 3% raise every year.

F. Russell also requested the cost of running just the Regional Library & Heritage Center.

Officer Elections (Nominating Committee)

M.K. Miles shared the recommendations of the nominating committee:

that Janet Justis be elected Chair;

that Maureen Teague be elected Vice Chair; and that

David Poyer be elected Liaison to the Foundation.

Joyce Holland moves to accept the slate of nominees. Frank Russell seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

FY 2026 Meeting Schedule (C. Pote)

Proposed Meeting schedule shared (attached)

Janet Justis moved to accept the proposed meeting schedule for FY 2026. Joyce Holland seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

CLOSED SESSION pursuant to VA Code § 2.2-3711.1 - Personnel

David Poyer, Chair: "I entertain a motion for a closed session".

Janet Justis moved that the Board enter closed session to discuss personnel matters involving the Library System Director's annual review, as permitted by Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(1): "Public bodies may hold closed sessions only for the following purposes:

1. Discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body; and evaluation of performance of departments or schools of public institutions of higher education where such evaluation will necessarily involve discussion of the performance of specific individuals."

Frank Russell seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

David Poyer, Chair: "We are now in a closed session. The discussion in the session is confidential".

Closed session ended.

Certification of Closed Session:

D. Poyer, Chair: "Do you certify that the matters discussed in the closed session just held were covered in the motion by which the Library Board entered closed session, and were excluded from the open meeting requirements of the Freedom of Information Act?"

Roll call vote.

D. Poyer, Chair: Upon being polled individually by a roll call vote in open meeting, each Board member confirmed that these were the only matters discussed during closed session.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

None.

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 7.8.25 at 1PM | Facility: Eastern Shore of Virginia Regional Library & Heritage Center, 24313 Bennett Street, Parksley, VA 23421

ADJOURNMENT

Frank Russell moved to adjourn the meeting. Janet Justis seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 2:39 by Dave Poyer.

When Miranda Wisor announced that she would be leaving the Eastern Shore and the library system in early 2024, the trustees began a search for a system director, a position that had been held by three different individuals in quick succession during the previous 15 months. After multiple leadership changes in such a short period of time, and after the major transition that staff had experienced related to the library moving from Accomac to Parksley, steady leadership and support were very much needed. Chris stepped up to fill the role of interim director and was then selected to be the system director.

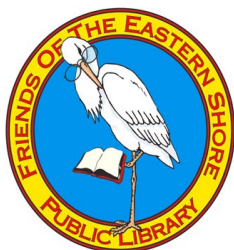
From the very beginning, Chris has been very supportive of staff and took responsibility for our organization in a way that allowed for the smoothest transition we could have hoped for. Instead of coming into the director's position and immediately pushing his own ideas and agenda, he took the time to observe staff roles, the interplay of personalities, and people's strengths. He opened the door to dialog by holding individual meetings to hear staff concerns and kudos about their positions, their wants and needs as people, and their assessment of the library at that moment, as well as their vision for where it might be headed.

He has been very open and encouraging of staff ideas, giving people a chance to try new things, and provides them with the resources they need to accomplish their work and pursue their interests in service of the library's mission. Chris has fostered a great work environment where true teamwork is taking place and goes out of his way to make sure that our needs are met, and problems are addressed quickly and fairly. He is approachable and friendly, but firm, and has a strong, steady presence that instills confidence that we are in very good hands.

Chris M
Stacia Childers
Susannah Shaffer
Megan Tide
Jen Jen
Tina Hall

Tiffany Lutz
Jaggy
Luke Kelly

Joe Saecker
Maria Burns
Wendy K. Jones



FRIENDS OF THE EASTERN SHORE PUBLIC LIBRARY

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June 2025

To: Board of Trustees

Submitted by: Kate Baird – Acting President - Friends of the Eastern Shore Public Library

Greetings from The Friends.

Program Highlight – Children’s Programming

Since 2006 the *Friends* have been supporters of the ESPL’s Summer Reading Program with total contributions exceeding \$22,000. These monies have gone towards materials, reading prizes and special activities. As the programming has grown, so have the contributions from \$150 to our current level of \$3000 and most recently now include our hands on participation at Summer Fest. (Come see us at the bouncy house on 14 June!)

Summer Reading is just one of the children’s activities sponsored by the *Friends*. Santa at the Library is a family favorite holiday activity and includes the gift of a book for each child. (\$4000+ over the years) Our past participation in the Accomac 4th of July parade and library STEM programming have also included book give-a-ways provided by the *Friends*.

Our recent Better World Books grant of \$3000 went towards early childhood literacy materials and our community outreach locations as well as our Bookshop include a collection of children’s books. Our contributions to library collection building, computers and streaming services such as Kanopy and Shelf can also benefit children in our community.

The *Friends* have and will continue to see the value in supporting programming and providing materials that encourage our children to become lifelong readers and learners and to grow in the understanding of the importance of the library to their communities.

Friends Activities for May /June 2025

Better World Books May 2025: 7 boxes, 106 books, gross sales \$272.55,
Commission \$31.65 YTD (July 24-May 25) \$405.31

Participation in the Foundation’s Tea Party, Saturday 7 June: *Friends* table included membership information, bags for purchase and free books for children.

Summer Fest participation: Friends members are signed up for shifts at a variety of activities throughout the day.

Budget for 2025-2026 is being prepared.

Annual Meeting and officer elections are scheduled for 23 July 2025