



Eastern Shore Regional Library
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
September 10, 2024 3:30pm
Talbot County Free Library, Easton MD

In Attendance: Lori Milach, Amanda Watson, Seth Hershberger, Kathleen Lyons, Kathy Burtman, Linda Prochaska, Dana Newman, Sarah Dahl, Sarah Guy, Ann Smith, Pat Tomasovic, Susan Sherman

Call to Order: Kathleen Lyons called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm.

June 11, 2024 Minutes: Sarah Dahl made motion to approve the June meeting minutes. Susan Sherman seconded. All were in favor. The June 11, 2024 board meeting minutes were approved.

Financial Report (Lori Milach): Since she has started with ESRL a month ago, Lori has been studying the budget and learning the ins and outs. She will be meeting this week with our accountant to get even more acquainted with the financials.

- Our interest income from MLGIP is up 165%.
- Some budget items are at 100%. These are our one-time annual expenses that are paid at the beginning of the new fiscal year. Most of these fall under electronic resources (9100's).
- Payroll expenses (6560) are at 145% due to an accounting error. Lori will be talking with the accountant to get this straightened out.
- Hoopla expenses (9120) are being closely watched for rising costs. Every year, we are budgeting a little bit more. We are meeting with a Hoopla representative at the end of September to look at options available in case costs start going over budget.

Pat Tomasovic made motion to file the Financial Report for audit. Ann Smith seconded the motion. All were in favor. The Financial Report was filed.

CEO's Report (Lori Milach): Most of Lori's time has been spent getting to know the regional directors and library staff. She is focusing on what we are doing well and where we can improve.

- Lori has been enjoying touring the shore libraries and seeing all of the different services that each library provides for its community. She wants to make sure that the directors, who make up ESRL's advisory board, have a chance to meet and talk about what their needs are; as well as be in touch with them independently to cover unique needs to that particular system. We are now meeting monthly as a group.
- Areas of focus: (Where do we need to be within the organization)
 - Hoopla has been an ongoing discussion. The service is wonderful for our libraries, but the cost of use is something we need to watch.
 - Polaris is another place we are focusing on currently. Staff and directors agree that this isn't the best product for us. We have been having issues with the product and support and will be looking at ILS options going forward.

- Printing: Queen Anne’s County is having some issues with our current printing vendor; dealing with delays on their print orders being delivered. We will investigate this, even though it is an isolated incident.
- Internally, we are finishing up an update to our HR policies and Employee Handbook. We also need to update our time and attendance procedures.
- Our Strategic Plan was up in 2024, we Lori will be focusing on updating this over the next year.

Library Services (Amanda Watson):

- Construction Progress Update – We are nearing completion on our renovation. Things that have been put in in the past few weeks have included the fire alarm system and back-end mechanicals for the office and server room. The ceiling inspection has been finished and it all passed. This Thursday, we have a walk through and potentially a final punch list, if everyone is happy where things are at; We only have one time with a punch list. Amanda included pictures of the office so far for the board.
- Product Update –
 - Our Collection HQ diversity audit shows that all of our libraries exceeding the national average.
 - As for Polaris, in order to move forward from our current problems, we need to sit down and discuss our options for the future with our member libraries.
 - Princh wireless printing was deployed. Typically, ESRL offers this service to one library per county, and it was up to the county if it wanted to pay for their extra branches. With this new company, we are offering it out to all branches of each county; and were able to budget this out prior.
- Project Update –
 - Network upgrades are going well. We are about a third of the way through all 24 branches so far with Firewalls, switches and access points. This enhances service speeds and gives ESRL IT more remote management capabilities.
 - All of our subscriptions have been renewed. As reported at the end of last fiscal year, all of the same subscriptions are in place and we have been able to offer them the same as we had last year, as well as enhancing the Hoopla budget line.
 - Statistics – our final 2024 electronic resources statistics are delayed; we still have an issue with Newsbank, our historical newspaper provider. They lost access to a lot of their back-end technology about two months ago, including the statistical portal. Amanda will contact the directors and see if they want her to put out all of the other stats for now, excluding Newsbank.
 - Technology – most of our staff are working remote right now but are doing really well with helpdesk tickets and getting out into the branches for upgrades, deployments, etc. In the future, we are looking to expand our initiatives for cyber security. Amanda is feeling out what that looks like with our member libraries.
 - Amanda handed out an infographic with various library stats.

New Business:

- **Finance Committee:** We need to appoint a new board finance committee for FY-25. They would be reviewing the annual budget for the coming year and submitting it to the board for approval, as well as the annual audit. The CEO is an ex officio member. Article five, section one of the Bylaws describes all the committee's duties. Susan Sherman, Sarah Dahl and Gloria Urban all volunteered to be on this year's committee.
Linda Prochaska made motion to approve the new Finance Committee. Kathy Burtman seconded the motion. All were in favor.
- **Strategic Plan Extension:** Our current Strategic Plan has run out. Since Lori has just come on as CEO, the board would like to give her some time to devise a new plan. Kathleen suggested that we extend the deadline for a year and be in place for fiscal year 2026 (July 1, 2025). ESRL will follow the 2024 Annual Plan in the meantime and will adopt the new Strategic Plan at our last meeting of this fiscal year.
Ann Smith made motion to extend the Strategic Plan until FY 2026. Sarah Guy seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Director Liaison Report (Seth Hershberger): The directors recently met in person and planned out meetings in the future. We also talked about the directors' advisory roles. Since there is a rotation, this is Seth's last time as Director Liaison and Dana Newman will take on this position. Other areas that the directors touched on were the current ILS, Hoopla and plans for what will work better in the future.

Maryland State Library Agency (Morgan Miller):

- Moran gave an overview on what the Maryland State Library Agency does. About seven years ago, the MSLA separated from the Department of Education to become independent. Our main mission is to strengthen and empower libraries and staff across the state by giving direction, development and funding support, largely through state aid, as well as federal grants. Our budget is about \$100 million and the key areas that we fund are through annual state aid, supporting our Regional Libraries, our State Library Resource Center and the Library for the Blind and Print Disabled. We also have a few programs, including the Young Readers Program (the Dolly Parton Imagination Library) as well as the State Library Construction Grant Program.
- It looks like it will be a challenging fiscal year for the state as far as our budget, according to the Department of Budget and Management and the Governor. Right now, Morgan doesn't see any significant concerns for libraries since we have a lot of strong support across Maryland departments, Legislature and citizens. The Governor asks that every budget item and request use data to convey impact and be tied to his State Plan, which are ten areas that are his priorities.
- **Capital Grant Program:** We submitted the MSLA's recommendations to DBM. We are advocating strongly for all of those, but we will have to wait until the Governor introduces his budget in January for the status. Since the program's inception in 2008, we have given \$108 million to counties for renovations and new builds.
- We have recently announced funding through our Competitive Grant Program, where we use federal funds for a wide range of initiatives and projects.



- The Freedom to Read Act has passed, and we now have standards for both school and public library collections. This also protects libraries and library workers from being harassed or penalized for following these policies. The Act was passed as emergency legislation when the bill was signed in April. Next, the MSLA writes a regulation that guides the Act. Our board has approved that regulation, and we are working with the Department of Education to craft their regulation. It looks like we are on track to publish the regulation in about a month and it should start to take effect at the same time in schools and libraries in Maryland at that time.

FY-24 Meetings:

- Tuesday, December 10, 2024 at 4:30pm via Zoom
- Tuesday, March 11, 2025 at 4:30pm via Zoom
- Tuesday, June 10, 2025 at 4:30pm via Zoom

Sarah Dahl made motion to adjourn the meeting. Sarah Guy seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.