



HCLS Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

January 15, 2025 ♦ 7 pm
Virtual

Board members present were: Elizabeth Banach, Chair; Kelly Smith, Vice Chair; Phillip Dodge; and Rob Mentz. Also present were staff members/citizens including, Lew Belfont, Tony Blount, Jean Boone, Angela Brade, Mary Brosenne, Aimee Chong, Kelly Clark, Vera Davies, Stacey Fields, Eliana Holgate, Dan Kenney, Kathleen Klebba, Christie Lassen, Jessica Lee, Marcy Leonard, Steve Lewicky, Diane Li, Tanya Malveaux, Brooke McCauley, Lauren McCloskey, Kim Montenyohl, Emma Ostendorp, Nana Owusu, Gabriela Penaloza, Peg Prentice, Sharon Pruitt-Young, Alex Pyryt, Megan Royden, Michele Shade, Stephanie Shane, Marie Sovero, Paige Sullivan, Tiwa Turon, and Ruth Vargas.

Liz Banach called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Dan Kenney and Tiwa Turon from the firm Mitchell Titus presented on the HCLS FY 24 Audit, noting that there were no material weaknesses and no instances of non-compliance.

Nana Owusu presented on behalf of the Friends & Foundation of HCLS. He related that the annual campaign is on target with \$113K in revenue so far this year. The Friends has received an \$11K grant from M&T Foundation and is expecting a \$5K grant from the Community Foundation of Howard County. The Friends Evening in the Stacks fundraising branch raffles are valued at \$8K. There is a plan to mail out postcards in the spring promoting Battle of the Books.

The Board unanimously approved the Board meeting minutes for November 20.

Marcy Leonard introduced Peg Prentice and Sharon Pruitt-Young who gave a presentation on Beyond Words, a program with classes and events aimed at intellectually- and developmentally disabled teens and adults. The classes feature a monthly rotating theme with five stations and are usually full at 25. The program is expanding across HCLS and other libraries in Maryland, which is facilitated by a grant from the Community Foundation of Howard County. There is a holiday dance planned for December 6, 2025. The wish is to have teen and adult special needs educational toys as part of the collection for lending.

Kelly Clark presented on DEIB efforts, noting a refresh of the Equity Resource Center and its collection at the Central Branch with the aim of having regular programming in the space. HCLS has subscribed to a national diversity calendar as well as has enhanced the Brave Voices Brave Choices monthly newsletter. Regarding the Equity Audit, Kelly presented our rankings which scored higher than other library systems. Next up, the equity committee made up of 20 members systemwide and in the community will work with the audit and other assessment data to create an Equity Action Plan by June 2025. Christie explained people may subscribe to the BVBC newsletter on HCLS' website under the "Contact Us" link.

Christie provided an update on the wayfinding/signage project with the first signs to be installed in the Elkridge Branch in May followed by Miller, Savage, East Columbia, and Glenwood. She announced spring signature events, including Evening in the Stacks, the HCLS Spelling Bee, and Battle of the Books.

I highlighted an operational snapshot of the financials through December 2024 which reflects items that have hit the budget.

Angela is serving on the County's Spending Affordability Committee on behalf of HCLS. She related updates on HCLS capital projects. Project planning meetings are underway for Elkridge with construction kicking off in 2027. Site research and identification in the Fulton and Laurel areas for the Southwest Branch is in progress. HCLS is meeting with MEDCO who was brought on by the County to advance the Downtown Columbia project. Redoing the front of Glenwood is planned before June 2025. We are in discussion on Miller Branch facility upgrades.

The Board approved the FY 26 Operating and Capital budget proposals which remain unchanged since the last board meeting.

Liz adjourned the meeting at 8:16 pm to convene in closed session.

Below is a summary of the closed session held on January 15, 2025.

1. Statement of the time, place, and purpose of the closed session:
 - a. Time of closed session: 8:18 pm – 8:55 pm
 - b. Place (location) of closed session: Virtual
 - c. Purpose of the closed session: to discuss legal advice and collective bargaining
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, and Kelly Smith
 - 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) (7) & (9) (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 legal advice and collective bargaining
 - b. Persons present for discussion: Tonya Aikens, Elizabeth Banach, Phillip Dodge, Stacey Fields, Christie Lassen, Rob Mentz, Kelly Smith, Sabina Taj, and Mark Swerdlin.
 - c. Action Taken/Each Recorded: The board discussed personnel matters and collective bargaining. Sabina Taj resigned from the Board and Rob Mentz will now serve as Treasurer.

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for 7 pm on **Wed., March 19, 2025** at the Glenwood Branch.

Respectfully submitted,



Tonya Aikens
President & CEO