



**St. Mary's County Board of Library Trustees Meeting
9:30 AM Friday, December 12, 2025
Lexington Park Library**

The public may attend the meetings but should ask ahead of time if they wish to speak. Email mblackwell@stmalib.org or call 301-304-9048 to request time on the agenda. The public may view the meeting remotely on the Library's YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/c/StMarysCountyLibrary>. If In-person attendees need ADA accommodation, please email mblackwell@stmalib.org or call 301-304-9048.

- I. Call to Order, Establish Quorum
 - a. Robert Donaldson, Sharon Fitzsimmons, Judith Gwynn (Treasurer), John Johnston (Vice Chair), Charles Stein, John Walters, Dorothy Waters.
 - b. Absent: Romana Wauhl (pending Board member)
- II. Approval of agenda
 - a. Discussion:
 - i. 9:45 Bolton joins us
 - ii. Immediately after we will move to the SMRLA report
 - b. Motion
 - i. J Walters-motion to submit document to review how board members nominations
 - 1. Motion denied, to move to next month
 - ii. S Fitzsimmons-motion to save document for January, motion to accept minutes
 - c. Seconded
 - i. C Stein
 - d. Approved
- III. Celebrations:
 - a. Hip Hip Hoorays:
 - i. Staff Day – Amy Ford, Conor Roberson, Liv Smith, Brittany Cornish, Amy Dickinson, Stevie Sanchez, Ziggy Smith, Belinda Lloyd
 - ii. Author Fair – Hannah Bear, Allison Guy
 - b. Anniversaries
 - i. Am Dillon, Grant & Development Coordinator – 10 years
 - c. Appreciation of 5 years of service on the Board to John Walters
- IV. Approval of November 2025 minutes
 - a. Discussion
 - i. Section 2, motion fix J Walters
 - ii. 6a, I, 4, a: 2001 should be 2021
 - b. Motion
 - i. J Walters
 - c. Seconded
 - i. S Fitzsimmons
 - d. Approved
- V. President's Report
 - a. Approval of Monthly Expense Ledger: 11/01/25-11/30/25
 - i. Discussion
 - 1. J Walters-Have we bid the audit recently?
 - a. M Blackwell-We go in with the county and get a significant discount.
 - 2. D Waters-Why Do we have 2 electric bills for Lexi?
 - a. Sometimes they get paid at the beginning and end of the month. Just a matter of when the payment occurs.

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3. J Johnston-Do they always come in at the same time?
 - a. It does come in the same time every month, but sometimes we can pay it that same week and sometimes we might not get to it until the next week. We have 30 days to pay but we usually pay within 10.
- ii. Motion
 1. Chuck Stein
- iii. Seconded
 1. Sharon Fitzsimmons
- iv. Approved

- b. Credit Card Reconciliation
 - i. Questions
 1. D Waters-Did the Amazon fee increase?
 - a. Yes. To \$0.73

VI. Treasurer's Report:

Judith Gwynn

- a. Use of Board funds (list as requested by the Trustees)
 - i. S Fitzsimmons-Last meeting we talked about some other number that would draw down the intern fund eventually. I understand that the \$20,000 would allow for the intern fund to be self sustaining.
 1. Yes. Books and materials has nearly \$72,000. If we draw it down to no less than \$52,000 combine it with the \$8,500 in the summer intern, we would end up with about \$60,000. At a conservative 6% we could fund the intern.
 - ii. J Walters-1 intern per library?
 1. M Blackwell-The board funds one. The Foundation, Friends of the Library, and the Library also fund one each.
 - iii. J Gwynn-We get the bill in August?
 1. B Lloyd-You get the bill in August, but we present the amount to you in the spring and it does not change.
 - iv. M Blackwell-If we get \$4,000 for decodable readers, could the other \$6,000 come from the collections budget? Is that something you'd like to spend money on?
 1. A Ford-We could also consider Friends of the library donations.
 2. M Bowman-I don't think the materials budget can take that hit.
 3. The Foundation provided a donation to cover some of the cost of the PC upgrade, so we could reduce the ask for the PC upgrade to \$10,000 allowing a full funding of the decodable readers
- b. Resolution for Vanguard account
 - i. to move Vanguard original account to the Rudolph fund for Interns
 1. Library wish list
 - a. Proposal to allocate/grant funds to the Library for special projects
 - i. \$10,000 to PC upgrades at LEXI
 - ii. \$10,000 to Decodable readers
 - iii. Motion
 1. C Stein
 - iv. Second
 1. S Fitzsimmons
 - v. Approved
 2. Continue intern funding
 - ii. Resolution approval by the board, signed and added to library record
 - a. Motion
 - i. J Gwynn
 - b. Second
 - i. C Stein
 - c. Approved

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VII. SMRLA Report (see agenda item VIII.v.1)

a. SMRLA Update: John Johnston and Ashley Teagle, SMRLA CEO

- i. Regional libraries save costs for individual library systems by providing
 1. Cataloging, online resources, materials processing, inter-library loan delivery, training, library database of customers and materials, summer reading, direct mailings, advocacy support, statistics
- ii. SMRLA provides:
 1. Hotspot/Wifi program funds
 2. Tuition reimbursement
 3. Presenters for summer reading funds
 4. Maryland Library Institute participant funding
 5. Staff development funds for in-person trainings
 6. Advertising
 7. Data analyzing
- iii. SMRLA Board Retreat
 1. April 16, 2026 3-6pm
- iv. State Delegation meeting
 1. January 8, 2026 9am
- v. SMRLA Funding
 1. 501c3 Corporation
 2. Not a state agency, but primarily funded by the state, might apply for grants sometimes
 - a. J Walters-Are you an independent non-profit like Goodwill?
 - i. We are actually considered a corporation. That's why we do the annual meeting for all board members in the region. Because technically, as the bylaws are written, all board members of our 3 partner libraries are members of that corporation who can vote on any changes to our bylaws if those come up.
- vi. St Mary's County has a vacancy for a citizen member of the SMRLA Board
- vii. J Walters-It is my understanding that when SMRLA was formed, it was to provided benefits to under-populated counties; counties with populations under 100,000.
 1. I don't recall having that in the statute of limitations. But I do know that it says we must have at least 3 counties.
 - a. J Walters-If I'm right about the population trigger, have you explored an end-of-life scenario, as the population has grown?
 - i. No. I'm wondering if the 100,000 was a minimum.
 1. J Gwynn-Yes, "A region to be served by regional resources center shall have a population of at least 100,000" The whole region, I think that was to bring in enough counties to make it cost effective.
 2. M Blackwell-The trouble with thinking about an end-of-life with this is that that each county would have to take on all of the resources that SMRLA currently does. So if you look at these figures, we'd need an additional \$1.2 million, additional space, and additional staff. I don't see the county or state funding that for us. There is substantial efficiency by having these operations done for the 3 counties.
 - viii. S Fitzsimmons-Do you look at what is in the other counties collections when making collection selections?
 1. M Blackwell-Yes. We order what we feel will best fit our library system and we see that the different counties have different collection philosophies and that allows for greater selection for patrons.

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- b. John Johnston
 - i. IT vacancies filled
 - ii. Facility Study in process
 - iii. State Librarian coming to tour SMRLA, December 19, 2025
 - iv. Board approved a printer & copier lease
 - v. Approved adjustment of investment strategy
 - vi. Board retreat
 - 1. D Waters-Where will the board retreat be?
 - a. At Charlotte Hall

VIII. Director's Report

Michael Blackwell

a. Informational

- i. Update from Bolton: Retirement Health Care Benefits Fund Options: Tom Vicente
 - 1. 4 plans for the OPEB account for the Board to review.
 - a. 1-Continue at current status. No investments, continue to pay retiree costs from operational funds
 - i. C Stein-What's the benefit of having that trust grow without any payoff? What are we going to use it for?
 - 1. Because it is a trust, you can only use it to pay retiree medical benefits. The reason you might consider category one is because you think it might not be big enough yet to draw from.
 - b. 2-Pay out the fund over 10 years. Pay the retiree costs from the OPEB account until it is exhausted.
 - i. S Fitzsimmons-Is the 10 year cost based on current estimate of healthcare increases or cost of living increases in general?
 - 1. The estimate does have a built in healthcare trend inflation. It is usually higher than general inflation. And it is based on the assumption that the active group of employees and retirees will stay about the same over time.
 - c. 3-Pay \$50,000 each year from OPEB for the retiree costs. Extends life of plan while still accessing some funds.
 - i. C Stein-A 6% return should get us around \$120,000 per year. Why wouldn't we draw down by \$100,000 instead?
 - 1. We could, \$50,000 was just an example of what this scenario could look like and we can run the numbers again with another draw down figure.
 - ii. J Gwynn-Where do you see the number of retirees going in 5 or 10 years?
 - 1. Those that retire with 25+ years of service, we expect most of those will opt in because it is a significant subsidy. And then only about a quarter of people with less than 10 years will elect it.
 - d. 4-Fund the trust at 75% instead of 100% over 25 years. Taking some money out each year.
 - i. J Johnston-Do your figures include how many employees are in different age and experience groups? Calculating if we might experience more retirements in one year vs another?
 - 1. Yes, we used your own library population. The actual birth and service dates of those on your roster.
 - ii. J Gwynn-In Appendix 1, column 2, why do we not show draw down numbers for the years 2026-2035? I thought the idea was to start that immediately?

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1. Appendix 1 is showing what the library is paying out of operations. So in column 2, you are taking all the money from the trust until 2036.
- iii. J Walters-At trust of this type is considered fully funded at 75%-85%? Is that why you used that figure for scenario 4?
 1. Yes, some employers may be more comfortable with different percentages. But we think that for this trust, 75% is sufficiently large that you have material assets that can provide aid in providing these benefits to the library in the future.
- iv. S Fitzsimmons-This employer contributions in Appendix 1 is in addition to the paygo?
 1. No, instead of.
- v. J Johnston-Do this assume that for the first year we will contribute \$53,000 over the \$90,000 we have already budgeted?
 1. We are essentially saying in scenario 4 that for the first year you would take \$10,000 out of the trust and it would vary each year. The \$153,000 is that estimate that he's creating based on the assumption that if everyone who is eligible to be retired right now actually was, that's what we would be paying. The numbers won't match our budget because they're doing an estimate.
- vi. J Walters-What is the current percentage of funding?
 1. 38.5%
- vii. C Stein-What did we actually pay out from library budget this year?
 - About \$46,000 so far and about \$90,000 for the year.
- viii. J Gwynn-We don't do \$153,000, we do \$90,000. How does that affect that \$143,000? In this scenario we'd pay an additional \$10,000. Would we pay anything? Would we pay the same percentage?
 1. If you had \$143,000 budgeted for 2026 but only paid out \$100,000, that year you would add \$43,000 to the trust. If would help to build the trust up. Other years, you may have more people retire than expected and you would draw down.

- ii. FY26 Budget
 1. Lexi electric running high, but last 2 bills were lower so may even out. We will probably end up paying more than budgeted.
- iii. What's Happening in Your Library? (including upcoming signature library events)
 1. Author visit from Raina Telgemeier.
 2. KPOP Demon Hunters
 3. American revolution program
 4. Family Law-Free law advice
 5. Noon Year's Eve
- iv. Embrace Innovation
 1. Brief Customer Survey update
 - a. 1,179 people completed the whole the survey most of them power-users
 - b. They rate our employees and high levels of customer service at the top
 - c. Want more study spaces and more collection expansions
 - i. J Gwynn-Do you have a goal of how much you want to build the collection? 5%, 10%?
 1. M Blackwell-I think as much I we can.
 - d. Like our programs maybe experimenting with different times
 - e. Want homework help centers
 - i. J. Gwynn-What's our relationship with the school board on homework help centers?

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1. M Blackwell-We are not currently talking with them about it. It would be a good thing to discuss.
2. B Lloyd-We are currently working with the schools on the Closing the Gap Literacy Grant. Finding tutors for afterschool literacy programs in the schools run by volunteers.
- ii. J Gwynn-Do you think it's on the library to provide homework help?
 1. M Bowman-We don't have the capacity to have homework centers. We are understaffed already. And there is not enough space in the branches.

v. Community Gathering:

1. Charlotte Hall Renovation Update
 - a. County RFP
2. Lexington Park Makerspace Update
 - a. 2 realistic bids came in and we will be deciding between them.

b. Action Items

- i. Choice of option for Retirement Health Care Benefits Fund Option
 1. Board discussed waiting till later in the year to make a decision on what funding options they wish to use, but will be reviewing these options.
- ii. Approval of FY2027 Budget Request to the County
 1. Discussion
 - a. Asking for 1 mobile librarian position
 - i. J Gwynn-Does that fall under Leonardtown salaries?
 1. B Lloyd-No, under admin.
 - b. J Walters-What is the overall dollar increase over last year.
 - i. B Lloyd-\$598,000 more asked from the county.
 - c. J Walters-What is the percentage increase over last year?
 - i. J Gwynn-About 13% increase.
 - d. J Gwynn-Would you cut back the mobile library hours if you don't get the full amount for the new staff
 - i. B Lloyd-We will work out what to do once we get the numbers. They are already making it work but we are trying to make a system that is sustainable.
 1. J Gwynn-Is it better to reduce their workload?
 - B Lloyd-We would make that decision in the next fiscal year.
 - e. J Gwynn-What is the limit that we said we wouldn't go below in the fund balance?
 - i. M Blackwell-It had to be at least one month's expenses.
 2. Motion
 - a. J Walters
 3. Seconded
 - a. D Waters
 4. Approved

IX. Old Trustee Business John Johnston

X. New Trustee Business John Johnston

- a. J Gwynn – SMRLA space, Does the Board want the County to approach the State to get more space at SMRLA?
 - i. M Blackwell-Charlotte Hall/SMRLA building was built primarily with state funds and then turned over to the county. Per the contract, the county must buy out the building from SMRLA. I've asked

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the county to have the architect draw up 3 different plans. 1 Library use all space, 1 SMRLA sharing slightly more space, and 1 library uses current space.

- ii. S Fitzsimmons-Could we move the library instead of SMRLA?
 - a. M Blackwell-Yes, but more funds will be needed. The funds allocated and expected for renovation will not cover a new library. It might cover renovating an existing space.
- iii. M Blackwell-Could we open a dialogue with Commissioners to discuss all these options?
- iv. J Gwynn-Is that in the RFP, expanding parking?
 - 1. M Blackwell-That's not something that has been discussed yet with the architect. The issue with parking is the trail.
 - 2. M Bowman-That parking lot was already expanded around 15 years ago and parking is actually not really an issue anymore because the market is gone. But when they expanded previously, they went as far as they could at that time.

- b. Move Board Elections to January
- c. Board Retreat – discuss in the future how and who will attend.

Next Meeting:
Thursday, January 8, 3:00 PM, Lexington Park

Dates to remember:

Delegation Invite: January 8, 9 A.M. (virtual); Budget submission due to County: January 12

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