



St. Mary's County Board of Library Trustees Meeting
9:30 AM Thursday, January 8, 2026
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](#). If In-person attendees need ADA accommodation, please email mblackwell@stmalib.org or call 301-304-9048.

Call to Order, Establish Quorum

- I. Bob Donaldson, Sharon Fitzsimmons, Judith Gwynn (Treasurer), John Johnston (Vice Chair), Charles Stein, Dorothy Waters, Ramona Waul.

Approval of agenda

John Johnston

- I. Discussion:
 - a. D Waters- Board meeting dates: Thurs May 7th needs to be updated to May 14th
 - b. S Fitzsimmons-Add discussion about board retreat.
- II. Motion: D Waters; Seconded: S Fitzsimmons; Approved

Approval of December 2025 minutes

- I. Discussion: Correct Ramona Waul's name, 1b
- II. Motion: S Fitzsimmons; Seconded: J Gwynn; Approved

Celebrations:

- I. Congratulations
 - a. Allison Guy – Graduation with a MLIS
 - b. Stevie Sanchez & Ziggy Smith – Completed LATI Early Start Program
- II. Hip Hip Hoorays:
 - a. Emma Rawlinson & Christine Biglin - In recognition of outstanding presentation at Maryland Tech Connect Conference. Through an engaging, and practical presentation, you provided fellow libraries with valuable insight into the Cricut crafting machine, demonstrating how to maximize its impact when working with limited resources.

President's Report

- I. Approval of Monthly Expense Ledger: 12/01/25-12/31/25
 - a. Discussion:
 - i. S Fitzsimmons-Can you tell us about the Playaway Lit grant purchase? B Lloyd-Reimbursed by the Lit grant. Mini audiobooks that can be checked out and play the book.
 - ii. S Fitzsimmons- When do you anticipate seeing the purchases come through for the funds we approved last month? B Lloyd-The check from the board has been deposited. The computers have already been purchased, and the decodable readers will be purchased probably this month or early next month.
 - iii. J Johnston-Where do we stand on pulling the old windows 10 computers? B Lloyd-They have all been pulled. All computers are up to date.
 - iv. D Waters-What are the Mountain Crest Gardens and the Empathy Studios?
 1. B Lloyd-Mountain Crest was a staff day purchase, plants, from FOL funds.
 2. M Bowman-Empathy Studios is a catalog of webinar library trainings by Ryan Dowd. It is a yearly subscription that we pay with Calvert County. The trainings are archived on Niche Academy.
 3. S Fitzsimmons-Is that licensing per seat?
 - a. M Bowman-It's a flat fee based on how many staff we have.
 - a. S Fitzsimmons-Is it available for Board Member? M Bowman-Yes.



- ii. C Stein-What's the escape Room? B Lloyd-Also for staff day. Gift card giveaway. Paid by FOL.
- iii. S Fitzsimmons-What is the Eventbrite?
 - 1. B Lloyd-Eventbrite is a company that is used for conference registrations. We often have these charges for different conferences.
 - 2. M Bowman-This one was for Ready at Five, an Early Literacy organization.
- b. Motion: D Waters; Seconded: S Fitzsimmons; Approved
- II. Credit Card Reconciliation

Treasurer's Report: end of 2nd Qtr

Judith Gwynn

- II. Vanguard is up since the stocks were purchased from Vanguard
- III. C Stein-Is the \$61,000 net of the \$20,000 check?
 - a. J Gwynn-Yes, and that is for the interns
- IV. M Blackwell-With the current figure of \$1,641,385, we have recouped the loss from the pandemic.
- V. J Johnston-Has Vanguard been good to work with?
 - a. J Gwynn-Yes, I can do it on my own or call the helpline. They have been helpful.
- VI. M Blackwell-Has there been any progress getting Belinda on the account?
 - a. J Gwynn-I have not done it yet, still on the list.
- VII. C Stein-The gain was \$115,000
 - a. J Gwynn-On the OPEB fund? Yes, since we bought it last spring.
- VIII. B Donaldson –Significant drop in share price on December 22, 2025. Why?
 - a. J Gwynn-I'm not sure, I'll have to look at it.

Action Items

- I. Possible—*300 Years of Black Cooking*—copyright
 - a. Presentation and request by the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area, Craig Sewell, Lucille Walker
 - i. Maryland is only 1 of 2 states that is also designated a National Heritage Area
 - ii. Comprises Calvert, Charles, St. Mary's, and southern Prince George's
 - iii. Film: *Grandma's Hands*
 - iv. Maryland Heritage Passport Program
 - v. New film: *Long Table* will include the cookbook
 - vi. This book was showcased in the film and on PBS. It's important to the heritage of Maryland
 - vii. Copyright reverts to Library if Heritage fails to complete its plan.
 - b. Discussion
 - i. M Blackwell
 - 1. Current copy is available free online and in our library
 - 2. Recommend a new edition that the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area maintains copyright to.
 - ii. The draft presented is for discussion. Lawyers and the Board should review and adjustments will be made.
 - iii. J Gwynn-Who would be the deciding factor to determine if the Heritage group is not meeting the terms of the agreement?
 - iv. J Gwynn-Will you give the book away or sell it?
 - 1. C Sewell-Yes, they will give some away during some events, and they will be available to buy at some locations that support the Heritage group.
 - v. C Stein-What's the difference between us transferring the copyright and just licensing it to you?
 - 1. C Sewell-The grantor and funders want us to have the full copyright.
 - vi. J Gwynn-The grant is to pay for the printing? C Sewell- Printing and new publisher.
 - vii. Heritage group requests that two clauses that were mentioned can be edited and sent to the group and they will get an updated copyright form.
 - viii. Board will plan to discuss again next month and review the clauses.



- c. Motion to review draft resolution and provide edits to review at next meeting: D Waters; Seconded: S Fitzsimmons; Approved

SMRLA Report

- I. J Johnston-We will be meeting in February, but I will be absent.
- II. M Blackwell- Tri-county and SMRLA met with the Southern Maryland delegation discussing upcoming library legislation; most are not in place yet. We are seeking funding for the coming years. We hope that they continue to vote to have a small increase per capita each year as they have been doing.
- III. S Fitzsimmons-You mentioned per capita and St Mary's population is leveling.
 - a. M Blackwell-Yes, it is based on population. If our population were to drop as other counties have seen, we would receive less state funding.

Director's Report

Michael Blackwell

- I. FY26 Budget
 - a. Lexi health insurance a little high, could go into red, but could balance out.
 - b. Lexi electric is high but should come down over the winter. We will adjust for next year's budget.
 - c. C Stein-Pg 4 67% for furniture and equipment
 - i. M Blackwell-Timing question, most paid upfront. Not recurring costs.
 - d. J Johnston-Is the Lexi hvac still an issue?
 - i. M Blackwell-Yes, but we can't adjust it ourselves. It's a county issue. The system is about 26 years old. There are plans to change out Charlotte Hall and hopefully here too.
 - ii. S Fitzsimmons-Why would we replace the hvac at Charlotte Hall if they are looking to replace the building?
 - 1. B Cornish-It is either very cold or very hot and because we have temp standards to be able to stay open, it would be good to have it fixed.
- II. Statistics: 6 month review
 - a. Circulation up 4%
 - b. Digital up 24%, Kanopy, Comics plus, and Palace keeping us up with Hoopla numbers
 - c. Number of events, Attendance, Mobile stats all up
 - d. Computer use up 6%
 - e. SMCL leading the Tri-county in physical circulation
- III. Update: *Laws of Maryland Relating to Public Libraries*
 - a. New edition, comes out every 3-4 year.
 - i. Maryland Freedom to Read Act added.
- IV. Dec 2025 Highlights
 - a. Douron selected for Lexi Makerspace.
 - b. New furniture in Longfellow Room
 - c. County laptops distributed to Veteran's Home and St Mary's Caring
 - d. Closing Literacy Gaps grant. Preparing volunteers to help tutor.
- V. Action Item: Approval of revised FY2027 Budget Request to the County
 - a. Discussion:
 - i. C Stein-It is about a 10% salary increase, do you think they're going to approve that? M Blackwell-That's what they say they want to do, but we don't know what will happen in the final budget.
 - ii. C Stein-OPEB \$90,000 is money we budget to take from operations to put into the fund? M Blackwell-It is money that the library budgets to pay for retiree health benefits instead of using the OPEB fund. We would like you to wait until we get the final budget from the county to decide how/if to withdraw from the OPEB.
 - iii. C Stein-If we took money out of the fund, is that \$90,000 fungible? J Gwynn-They only thing that is not fungible is what we put in the OPEB.



- iv. S Fitzsimmons-You don't anticipate professional services and mobile expenses changing? B Lloyd-Yes, we discussed with Sandy and we think that we still look good based on this year's expenses. Professional services may change but this is based on just this first 5 months of this year.
 - v. S Fitzsimmons-IT contract services are cut in half? B Lloyd-This year, we had some contracts that are multi-year contracts that all renew at once. The budget was increased this year, and I anticipate it going down next year because I track which contracts will need to be renewed.
- b. Motion: S Fitzsimmons; Seconded: C Stein; Approved

Old Trustee Business

John Johnston

- I. Update on Charlotte Hall renovation
 - a. SMRLA has hired their company that will do a facilities study
 - i. SMRLA will use the information to determine what their future options are whether it is renovation, new space or some shared space with the library
 - ii. Commissioners have requested an update on this issue. M Blackwell updated based on last month's Board meeting. Indicating that the Board is willing to work with the Commissioner's and SMRLA on options for the future of Charlotte Hall
 - iii. Will request that the architect selected will provide three options
 - 1. Entire building is the library
 - 2. Library has increased shared space
 - 3. Library space will stay as is and renovation will occur with those options
 - iv. J Gwynn – What if we ask them to push our funding for one year (FY29) so there is more time for SMRLA to make a decision based on their facilities study?
 - 1. M Blackwell-We would wait to apply for the grant until we are ready. If we are granted the money and things get delayed, the money will stay until we can use it.
 - v. S Fitzsimmons-What about moving the library like we mentioned last month.
 - 1. M Blackwell-We can add that as an option, but we would have to consider finding an existing space and incur rental costs.
 - 2. B Lloyd-The current 3 options are for the architect to review the building we have now, we can't ask them to draw plans for a building we don't have available to reference.
 - 3. J Gwynn-We will also have to consider warning the commissioners that if we want to move to our own building that we will need additional funding for more staff and cost to run a independent building.
 - vi. J Johnston-We have a good sense of what our facilities' needs are? M Balckwell-Yes, our facilities master plan is available to the public on our website. They recommended Charlotte Hall as the first library that we change.
 - b. Delay signing resolution until next month.

New Trustee Business

John Johnston

- I. Officer Election for 2026
 - a. President
 - i. Nominees: Sharon Fitzsimmons
 - b. Vice President
 - i. Nominees: John Johnston
 - c. Treasurer
 - i. Nominees: Judith Gwynn
 - d. Move to accept the Board: C Stein; Seconded: R Waul; Approved
- II. Board Retreat
 - a. Hold retreat to discuss how we operate and what the purpose of the Board is.
 - b. Hold at C Stein's home
 - c. S Fitzsimmons will send a poll for a date



- III. Student Member delegate for Board's
 - a. Legislation to elect a student board member by the county
 - b. Many public libraries have disagreed with the legislation
 - c. Discussion next month about the student board member

Next Meeting:

Thursday, February 12, 3:00 PM, Leonardtown

Dates to remember:

Delegation Invite: Budget submission due to County: January 12; Library Legislative Day: February 10, Annapolis