



## Montgomery County Library Board

March 10, 2021

**ATTENDEES:** Briskin-Limehouse, Christman, Duval, Lighter, Manubay, Marcum, Melnick, Negro, Rippeon, Roberts, Slade, Spencer, Villar, Watts

**STAFF:** Anita Vassallo, Director, Montgomery County Public Libraries; James Donaldson, Assistant Director, Technology and Collections; Lori Kebetz, Senior Librarian, Correctional Facility Library; Regina Holyfield-Jewett, Recording Secretary

**GUESTS:** Linda Pottern, Chair, Davis Library Advisory Committee

The meeting was called to order by Chair Roberts at 7:00 PM

### **INTRODUCTIONS:**

- Roll call of Board members; guests were introduced.

### **MINUTES AND LAC APPLICATION APPROVALS:**

- The minutes from the December 9, 2020, meeting were approved.
- The following LAC applications were approved:
  - Connie Morella – Evangelista, Hempstone
  - Little Falls – Stodola
  - Silver Spring – Kyrillidou, Wiggins

**PRESENTATION: New Integrated Library System** (James Donaldson, Assistant Director, Technology and Collections)

- MCPL goes open source. MCPL is switching to Koha.
- What is an integrated library system (ILS)?
  - An integrated library system is the library system's core software.
  - It contains the entire database of library users, the database of the library's collection, and provides both a staff and customer interface.
  - Transactions such as a staff member issuing a library card to a customer, checking materials in and out, or a customer searching for a title online, placing a hold, etc. are all made possible by the ILS.
- Where are we now?
  - MCPL has used the SirsiDynix company's Symphony ILS since 1999.
- Where are we going?
  - ByWater Solution's products, Aspen Discovery and Koha.

- What is open source software?
  - Open source software is software with source code that anyone can inspect, modify, and enhance.
  - Source code is the code computer programmers can manipulate to change how a piece of software works.
  - Proprietary software has source code that only the person, team, or organization who created it – and maintains exclusive control over it – can modify.
  - Open source software is different. Its authors make its source code available to others who would like to view that code, copy it, learn from it, alter it, or share it.
- What is Koha?
  - Koha is an open source integrated library system created in 1999 in New Zealand.
  - It is used by 12,520 libraries worldwide and has been translated into 46 languages.
  - There are over 400,000 contributors to the Koha open source project.
- Who is ByWater Solutions?
  - Founded 12 years ago, ByWater Solutions is a privately owned company that provides implementation, hosting, support, consultation, and development services for the Koha ILS.
  - ByWaters Solutions supports more than 2,500 libraries in 47 states and 12 countries.
- What does this change mean for MCPL?
  - MCPL will be the highest circulating public library in the United States to switch to Koha.
  - Customers will see a significant improvement to our public interface.
  - We will gain significant strategic advantages from this platform, including an open database and a high level of customization.
- Questions
  - What is the rollout date?
    - The rollout date is October 4.
  - Do you plan to have the public do any testing before going live?
    - We have not talked about having the public do any testing.
      - Having some testing by the public would be beneficial.
      - The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) would be a good group to do some testing on the new ILS prior to rollout.
      - The ILS is ADA compliant. It would be good to have feedback from the AAC.
  - Is there a cost savings?
    - MCPL will save \$130K per year
  - Does MCPL have the expertise in house to access and interrogate the data?
    - MCPL does have a Data Team, but this is what the entire support contract is about. We can request whatever we need from the vendor.
  - Who is responsible for security?
    - ByWater is responsible for security. MCPL has full hosting. Their security practices were disclosed in the RFP.
  - Is there more flexible access about statistical data analysis? Can it be used for decision making?
    - Yes, to both questions. There is complete and total access to that information, and because it is open source, there are a lot more resources.

- Is the system going to appear transparent to the customer? Will they know intuitively what to do or need training?
  - It will look different. A group is being assembled in-house to create this messaging. The messaging will be in plain language.
- Will there be a short tour feature?
  - Will make a note of this.
- Is there a communication plan?
  - It has not been completed.
  - The message to the LACs: Libraries is embarking on a transition from its current ILS – from Sirsi to Koha.
- Does this ILS have a communication system to reach customers?
  - It does have a notification system.
  - We are also looking at OrangeBoy as a separate piece for this.

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- Highlight of Services during Lockdown.



- Personnel - The following staff changes took place during the months of December, January, and February:
  - Transfers:
    - Kathryn Gower, Librarian I, from Twinbrook to Quince Orchard
    - Tina Kao, Library Associate, from Silver Spring to Quince Orchard
    - Roman Santillan, Librarian II, from Silver Spring to Germantown
    - Kathryn Spencer-Kociol, Librarian I, from Silver Spring to Rockville Memorial
  - Separated from County service:
    - Stephanie Weiss, Librarian I, Quince Orchard
    - Myles Lane, Library Aide, Wheaton
    - Brigid Spillane, Library Aide, Connie Morella
    - Lisa Reed, Library Assistant I, Germantown
    - Nancy Sillcox, Librarian I, Olney
- Refresh/Construction Updates:
  - Long Branch
    - Punch list completed.
    - Minor exterior clean-up/touch-up work to begin in the next week.
    - Installed vinyl flooring in the second floor mechanical hallway and replaced the linoleum tiles in the storage room.
    - Carpet removed from staff area. Staff area scheduled to be painted week of March 8.
    - New flooring to be installed in the staff area upon completion of the painting.

- Germantown
  - Pushed construction start to late spring/early summer due to service desks.
- Potomac
  - Department of General Services, Division of Building Design and Construction received proposal from an architect which was acceptable and have drafted final Task Order. Hoping to start design before end of March.
- Damascus
  - Anticipate starting Facility Assessment in April.
- New Initiatives/Rollouts
  - Automatic renewals – rollout planned for March 22.
  - Northstar Digital Literacy – MCPL is now an approved Northstar Digital Literacy Center. [Northstar Digital](#) is a digital literacy assessment tool that will help our customers (and staff) acquire and improve basic digital literacy skills through online instructor-guided Northstar training lessons. Once we officially launch Northstar Digital, customers will be able to:
    - Take assessment tests to gauge their basic digital skills level.
    - Study on their own, online -- through instructor-guided Northstar training lessons.
    - Earn digital badges and certificates to add to a resume or show an employer.
  - Brainfuse – Online platform that will provide HelpNow, JobNow, and VetNow tutoring subscriptions for library customers. Scheduled to be launched early April.
  - Spring Clean: Bring Back Those Books – A push to begin April 1 to get customers to bring back overdue materials and re-engage with Libraries.
  - Bookmark contest – Partnering with Bethesda Big Train and Washington Parent to promote their *Slide into a Good Book* [bookmark contest](#) and MCPL’s Summer Reading program.
- Upcoming Events
  - [Women’s History Month](#)
  - FOLMC Book Donation Drop Offs, 10 AM – 3 PM:
    - White Oak, March 12
    - Little Falls, March 26
    - Quince Orchard, April 9
    - Chevy Chase, April 23
  - Middle Eastern and South Asian American Authors Series. March 16, 7 PM, meet Hena Khan author of *Amina’s Voice* and the newly released sequel, *Amina’s Song*.
  - “Constitutional Patriotism, Partisanship and the Future of American Democracy,” with Congressman Jamie Raskin, April 5, 1 PM, in partnership with COFFE and Little Falls Village.
  - Councilmember Jawando Library Tours:
    - Quince Orchard, March 25, 5:30 PM
    - Olney, April 8, 5:30 PM
- Budget Update:
  - FY22 Operating Budget has been approved by the County Executive and will now go to Council.
  - Libraries has a continuity of operations budget with no significant increases or cuts.
- Recovery Plan:
  - MCPL is working on a plan to get some of the libraries open to the public with limited services. There is no set date for reopening.

- The Friends of the Library announced the 2021 B. Parker Hamilton Library Professional of the Year Award recognizing the Digital Strategies team, the Technology Management team, and some members of the Marketing Team.
- Legislation
  - Ebook bill sponsored by Senator King from Montgomery County will require “a publisher who offers to license an electronic literary product to the public to also offer to license the product to public libraries in the State on reasonable terms that would enable public libraries to provide library users with access to the electronic literary product.”
  - Building Lifelong Library Learners Act – The Governor’s veto was overridden by the House and the Senate. This bill boosts funding for county library capital projects, accelerates increases to the library funding formula, and encourages minors to continue to utilize their public libraries by eliminating certain fines.
  - Office of Digital Inclusion has been created within the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development that focuses on bridging the digital divide in suburban and metro areas, in addition to the rural areas of Maryland served by the current Office of Rural Broadband. Libraries are specifically listed as having a significant role in this initiative.
  - For Library Legislative Day, was able to meet with all the State Senators or their senior staff with the exception of Senator Smith. Because it was held virtually, these meetings were scheduled over a few weeks instead of one day.

**CHAIR’S REPORT:**

- Friends of the Library, Montgomery County, will host their Library After Dark event on April 10. This is a free virtual event. This year’s theme is “Libraries are Instrumental.”
- Thank you to Dan Melnick, Toni Negro and Bill Duval for their letters and communication put together to advocate for Libraries.

**WORKGROUP REPORTS:**

- Library Policy and Practices (Duval, Briskin-Limehouse)
  - No updates.
  - Bill Duval will transition as the chair from this workgroup. If anyone is interested in chairing the workgroup, please email Bill.
- Legislative and Public Affairs Workgroup (Rippeon, Melnick, Negro)
  - Very strong support from legislative representatives both on the Council and in the Congress.
  - Send videos to Council in support of Libraries. Dan Melnick sent instructions by email that can be shared with LACs.
  - Have a preprinted index card that has County Executive and Council contact information. These cards can be distributed with the Holds to Go.
    - Libraries as a County department cannot directly advocate.
    - FOLMC has provided index cards each February for customers to complete and these are shared with Council.
    - The FOLMC can be contacted regarding conducting an index card campaign
- LAC and Board Activities (Roberts, Villar)
  - No report

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

- Robyn Watts shared a tweet from a library user and her daughter who were appreciative of the diversity and inclusiveness in MCPL's collection.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

- None

## **LIAISON REPORTS:**

- Quince Orchard – Meets on March 16.
- Noyes – Meets on March 18.
- Twinbrook – Is still on hiatus.
- Rockville Memorial – Due to a conflict could not attend the last meeting, but the small group is doing well. They continue to look for ways that Libraries can reach the public during these times.
- Silver Spring – Meets on March 15.
- Marilyn Praisner – Will double check the date for the next meeting.
- White Oak – Doing well, had no drop in attendance.
- Aspen Hill – Had no drop off in attendance.
- Maggie Nightingale – Met on March 8. The outdoor Wi-Fi is incredible. They are anxious to get the library open again. There was a question regarding the date for the refresh.
  - The refresh is still going forward. Director Vassallo will invite the assistant director for facilities to an upcoming Board meeting to discuss the refresh projects.
- Gaithersburg – Met on March 9. It was a great meeting. A lot of customers are taking advantage of the Holds to Go service.
- Davis – Met on February 23. The LAC members are concerned about a large crack/crevice that has developed in the parking lot. April 20 is the next meeting. It was really great to have Councilmember Jawando there as a part of his Library Tours.
- Little Falls – Met on February 2. There was a guest speaker from Little Falls Village who talked about their partnership with the library and the speakers' series. Discussion was held about the relationship between the LF LAC and the LF FOL chapter- clarification of roles and responsibilities.
  - Director Vassallo and the LF liaison will discuss this more in detail.
- Olney – Met on February 16; the next meeting is on March 16. They are very proud of the Virtual Writers' Workshop; it is a great program with writers sharing their work.
- Accessibility Advisory – Meets once a quarter. During the last meeting on March 2, Elizabeth Lang was there. Interested in her role and how to support her. There is some concern about the meeting format. The group has created talking points for MCPL staff regarding how to interact with customers with impairments. Kate Tavakolian, Staff Development and Training Coordinator, was in attendance and discussed creating training videos using the talking points. There was mention of the new ILS. Concern was expressed about information being sent out by FOLMC that is not accessible. They discussed the Outreach team sharing with the community what Libraries has to offer. A questions was raised about how long before an overdue item is marked lost.
  - Director Vassallo will get back to the AAC liaison regarding Ms. Lang's role and the meeting format.
  - Director Vassallo will address the accessibility issue with FOLMC executive director.
  - The discussion regarding how long before an item is marked lost is still ongoing.
- Kensington Park – Lost a number of members and is trying to recruit.

- Chevy Chase – Focused on construction of the building. There is a lot of overlap with the CC LAC and CC FOL chapter. Had a virtual walkthrough of the library.
  - Director Vassallo and CC liaison will meet to discuss the construction.
- Damascus – They are excited about the Holds to Go service and the virtual programming.
- Germantown - Has not had any meetings recently. Still trying to determine the date for the next meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- None

**ADJOURNMENT:**

- The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

