

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the
MidPointe Library System Board of Trustees
Monroe Library, Rothwell Room
Wednesday, April 16, 2025, 1:00 p.m.**

I Call to Order by President

Mrs. Stewart, President, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

II Opening Exercise

III Roll Call

The roll was called, and the following members were present:

Mr. Tim Essex, Mr. Michael Huff, Mr. John James, and Mrs. Eleanor Stewart.

Those absent were: Mr. Andrew Dunn, Mrs. Deborah Houser and Mr. Jay Marlow

Also present were: Mrs. Amy Abernathy, Middletown Branch Manager; Mr. Travis Bautz, Executive Director; Ms. Rebeka Brate, Monroe Branch Manager; Mrs. Emily Foote, Fiscal Officer; Mrs. Candy Heffner, PAC Treasurer; Ms. Cari Hillman, Community Engagement Director; Mr. Steve Mayhugh, Facilities Director; Mrs. Brielle Maynor, Public Services Director; Ms. Kathy Stengel, Human Resources Director.

IV Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Essex motioned, seconded by Mr. James, to approve the agenda as presented.

"Aye" Essex, Huff, James, Stewart

"Nay" None

Motion Approved 25-26

V Public Comment

There was no public comment.

VI Approval of Minutes

Mr. Essex motioned, seconded by Mrs. Stewart, to approve the minutes of the regular board meeting held on March 19, 2025, as presented.

"Aye" Essex, Huff, James, Stewart

"Nay" None

Motion Approved 25-27

VII Fiscal Officer's Report

Financial Report, Investments, and Donations

Mrs. Foote reviewed the March 2025 financial report. Mr. James motioned, seconded by Mr. Essex to approve the March 2025 financial report as presented.

"Aye" Essex, Huff, James, Stewart

"Nay" None

Motion Approved 25-28

(Report on file in Fiscal Officer's office)

Reclassification Project:

Mrs. Foote reported that the accounting unified restructuring project has been completed; that next month's financial report account numbers will be longer than usual due to the new structure and the expenses will be listed by department and not category. Only one account needs reclassifying, so the programming budget needs to be moved from the purchased and contracted category to the other objects category and a formal resolution needs to be approved to move the programming budget. Mr. Essex motioned, seconded by Mr. Huff, to approve an Amended Annual Appropriation Resolution to move \$195,927 from the General Funds Purchased and Contracted category to the Other Objects category.

"Aye" Essex, Huff, James, Stewart

"Nay" None

Motion Approved 25-29

County Budget Update:

Mrs. Foote reported that new budgeting software has been purchased which will streamline the budgeting process and help with budget forecasting. Usually, this time of year we go through a budget process to get an estimate of expenditures which is then brought to the board and the county. Due to the unknown status of the levy and state funding, Mrs. Foote asked to bring an informed budget to the board in May which would mirror the December appropriation and then forward that to the county. The board had no objection to an informed budget.

VIII Credit Card Audit Report

Mrs. Abernathy reported that as our internal credit card auditor, in February she did an inventory and checked the location of all Library owned credit cards and that every person that was issued a credit card, had that credit card. As an audit needs to be done twice a year, she'll report again in August. Mrs. Foote added that due to using credit cards that have rewards for expenditures, in 2024, we received \$16,325.19 in credit card rewards which was receipted into the general revenue account.

VIX Director's Report

Mr. Bautz reviewed the March statistics. Overall, circulation overall was even compared to the same time last year; Liberty was down by 16%; LOW was up by 15%; Middletown was down by 9%; Monroe was down by 14%; Trenton was even; and West Chester was down by 11%. Print was down by 5%; AV was down by 14%; digital items were up by 18%; patron visits were up by 32% which again indicates our services are being used even though circulation is down overall; there were 261 program's offered, with 8,592 in attendance; PC usage was up

by 13%; Wi-Fi usage was up by 50%; meeting room usage was 1,138; there were 174 passports processed for the month; there were 774 new patron registrations for the month, and the call center had 1,873 calls totaling 4,765 minutes.

Fundraising Policy:

Mr. Bautz reviewed the fundraising policy that he introduced last month. The board discussed the policy draft, naming rights, sponsorships, and donation amounts. Mr. James motioned, seconded by Mr. Huff, to approve the fundraising policy as presented.

"Aye" Essex, Huff, James, Stewart

"Nay" None

Motion Approved 25-30

Mr. Bautz mentioned that the development director will be attending next month's meeting to report on his first year of development activities.

Funding Updates:

Mr. Bautz reported that he has been attending community meetings and council trustee meetings and have an established speakers bureau where staff give information about the levy and library; that The Journal News printed a Facebook post where a Middletown seated council member publicized his opposition to our levy and Mr. Bautz contacted the council member asking if he had any concerns or questions about the levy and the council member responded that he is a property owner and can vote how he chooses. Mr. Bautz reviewed a handout he had prepared for a meeting with the Middletown city manager and our city council liaison and communicated to them that if the levy does not pass, which is approximately half of our funding depending on state funding, that we could not continue operations as they currently are; that the Middletown building is an expensive building to operate due to its age and that the city owns the building, that the library just operates it. They were unaware that the city owned the building. Their feedback was that the council person had concerns and thought that we favored services to the south of the county and not Middletown, but they discussed that was not the case. The board discussed our building lease, which no agreement could be found, and the reality of operating an aging building.

Mr. Bautz also reported that the levy signs are out; a mailer is ready to be sent out; and we will be asking for volunteers to canvas polling locations and help with election day signs. He reported that the state is in the middle of a two-year biennial budget process. The board discussed that the governor proposed his budget, and it then goes to the house and senate and they each propose their versions; that we won't know what the final budget will be for several months; that the governor proposed more for libraries; the house proposed funding similar to current funding but funding could change every two years since it would be a budget line item; the house and now senate is looking at the funding formula; and that news agencies are reporting frequent budget changes.

X Facilities Report — Liberty/Yankee Road Construction

Mr. Mayhugh reviewed the monthly contingency report which shows a remaining balance of \$28,113, which has not changed since last month. The temporary occupancy certificate was received today so once furniture and book shelves are delivered and installed, the books can be put on the shelves and staff can work in the building. Facilities staff and the branch manager will be receiving HVAC training on the geo thermal system, lighting and the PC controls; the final work punch list is being worked on; the landscaping is done.

Mr. Mayhugh discussed how we remove any obsolete and old equipment by seeing if another branch or location can use the item and if not put it on GovDeals, an auction website for government entities, and sell the items. By selling the items we recoup some of the original costs.

XI Public Services Report

Mrs. Maynor reported that the secret shopper services have resumed, and we are using CustomerOptix to provide us with this service; we will receive 1 report per month at Liberty, Monroe and Trenton and 2 reports per month at Middletown and West Chester. At Liberty, the items that we are taking to the new building have been packed and are ready for the move. At LOW, the manager, staff trainer, and the entire facilities team received driver training from RV Driving School on driving the 40' bookmobile. At Middletown, the branch is planning for the last Middletown City Schools' Personalized Learning Day of this school year, and the Shoes 4 the Shoeless March visits resulted in 860 students receiving a book of their choice to keep. Ms. Brate reported that at Monroe the nicer weather is resulting in more patrons in the building; she is meeting with Mt. Pleasant to see what services the Library can offer; they are reusing some of the furniture the new Liberty branch will not be using; attended a live stream, hosted by Ohio Living's executive director, to residents and spoke about library services; new outdoor furniture for the deck was purchased; and the Monroe schools contacted her with a possible donation of school books. At Trenton the roof leaks, due to the very rainy spring, are being repaired as they occur. At West Chester, the AARP tax aide help is wrapping up for the year; the township farmers market will begin this season in the parking lot; and the patron services leads are test piloting a personalized readers' advisory service called Shelf Help.

XII Community Engagement Report

Ms. Hillman reported that a record 18,682 minutes of virtual programming was watched in March, which is a 55% increase from last month; one virtual storytime has been very popular with over 3,370 views on YouTube; and we had 18,388 social media engagements during March which is a 55% increase from last month; and we have recently been posting more frequently to LinkedIn and have 346 followers on that platform. In-Library information sharing for the levy is going very well, with large scale graphics installed in West Chester and exterior banners at all locations as well as digital marketing, a speaker's bureau and bookmark distribution. April's eNewsletter to patrons "Save some change for a rainy day" was opened

by 27,000 patrons; and April's database feature is "Consumer Reports" which is free access to unbiased product reviews and ratings on cars, appliances, electronics and more.

Community events and partnerships include MidPointe Library books being on the April cover of the "West Chester + Liberty Lifestyle" magazine to highlight financial literacy resources available at the Library; The statue in front of the West Chester building, long attributed to an anonymous donor, has been recognized by the daughters of the donor, Jo Deluse, with a new plaque near the statue; a partnership with Three Valley Conservation Trust is resulting in seed libraries in all library locations and they will replenish and refill the seeds through a grant they received; and many community events will be held in the spring.

XIII Human Resources Report:

Staffing and HR Updates:

Mrs. Stewart motioned, seconded by Mr. Huff, to approve the following human resources report as presented by Ms. Stengel:

Approve the employment of Gail Nixon; effective 3/23/2025; non-exempt; part-time; West Chester; library associate; public services; at pay level one;

Approve the employment of Brittany Butler; effective 3/23/2025; non-exempt; part-time; Middletown; library associate; public services; at pay level one; and

Approve the employment of Hannah Bennett; effective 4/6/2025; non-exempt; part-time; West Chester; library associate; public services; at pay level one.

"Aye" Essex, Huff, James, Stewart

"Nay" None

Motion Approved 25-31

Ms. Stengel reported that turnover for March was 0% and year to date is 3.9216%; that we have 108 employees and are actively recruiting and interviewing for two open positions.

XIV Board Comments

Mrs. Stewart invited everyone to join the library's Instagram page where she saw the newest marketing video featuring Mr. Mayhugh.

XV Adjournment

Mrs. Stewart adjourned the meeting at 2:02 p.m.

25-32

President

Secretary