



**Library Board of Trustees**  
**Library Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**Via Zoom**  
**Monday, December 21, 2020, 4:00pm – 5:30pm**

**Trustees Present**

Jennifer Appleby  
Ailen Arreaza  
Rob Harrington  
Joe Helweg, Chair  
Gloria Kelley  
Dr. Kimmy Martin  
Brandon Neal  
Amy Hawn Nelson  
Charles Thomas  
Ed Williams  
Dr. Ricky Woods

**Absent**

**Staff Present**

Elyse Berrier  
Kevin Bittle  
Shelley Book  
Barbara Cantisano  
David Dillard  
Michael Engelbrecht  
Seth Ervin  
Jenni Gaisbauer  
Lea Glaze  
Saul Hernandez  
Jesse Isley  
Lee Keesler  
Meryle Leonard  
Pamela McCarter  
Caitlin Moen  
Angie Myers  
Emily Nanney  
Chantez Neymoss  
Kiesha Portis  
John O'Connor  
Amy Richard  
Kathy Scott  
Ann Stawski  
Tony Tallent

**Others Present**

Mark Kutny

Joe Helweg welcomed everyone and thanked them for their time.

**Minutes**

Mr. Helweg requested a motion to approve the minutes from the Board of Trustees meeting held on November 16, 2020. On a motion by Ed Williams and seconded by Jennifer Appleby, the Trustees unanimously approved the November 16, 2020 meeting minutes.

## Chair Report

### Library Area of Impact

Mr. Helweg turned it over to Angie Myers to begin the budget priorities and advocacy plan discussion.

Ms. Myers presented the following:

- Budget Timeline
  - 12/21/2020 – Library BOT Prioritization - Round 1
  - 1/5/2021 – BOCC Budget Public Hearing
  - 1/27/2021 - 1/29/2021 – BOCC Budget Retreat
  - 2/5/2021 – FY2022 County Budget Kick-off (County/Library Staff)
  - 2/18/2021 – Library FY 2022 Budget and Performance Meeting
  - March 2021 – Library Presentation to County Executive Team
  - May 2021 – County Manager Presents Recommended FY 2022 Budget
  - June 2021 – BOCC adopts FY 2022 Budget
  
- Top 5 FY 2020 Budget Priorities

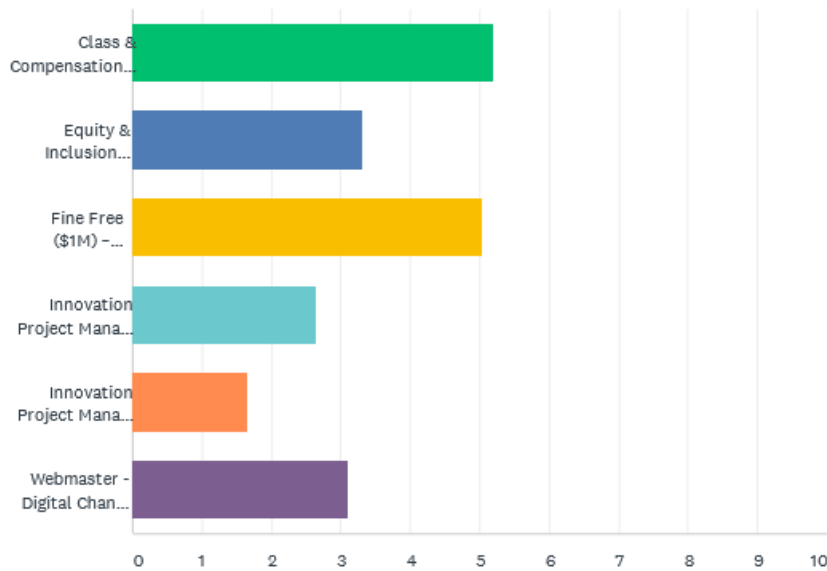
BUDGET PRIORITY	DESCRIPTION	CATEGORY
Class and Compensation Adjustments	Financial impact of recommendations coming out of Mecklenburg County's two-year study on <u>all</u> job titles, job descriptions, and compensation levels.	A
Fine Free	Critical equity initiative to remove the barrier of overdue late fines and restore full access to all Library services to approximately 40,000 residents of Mecklenburg County. The permanent removal of overdue fines creates an equitable system of borrowing and that encourages use without punitive measures, which particularly impacts communities marginalized by existing policies and practices. The funding required to do this stabilizes the impact to critical Library operations in Marketing & Communication, Employee Learning & Development, Library Collections, and Facilities Maintenance and Equipment.	B
Three Critical Positions	Equity & Inclusion Leader Innovation Project Manager (Digital Divide Focus) Webmaster (Digital Channel)	C

- The Equity & Inclusion Leader is a critical position responsible for the development and implementation of the diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and strategy to build a more inclusive culture and embrace a widely diverse workforce. This position will have organization-wide responsibility and authority to promote the awareness of diversity, equity and inclusion issues.
- The Innovation Project Manager is also a critical position needed in the Innovation Bundle. This role will support the following Innovation priorities with heavy focus on reducing the Digital Divide. Position will also have responsibility for Makerspaces; "Data Storytelling" and Data Literacy; New Technology Systems and workflows; and Support of Main Library Development.

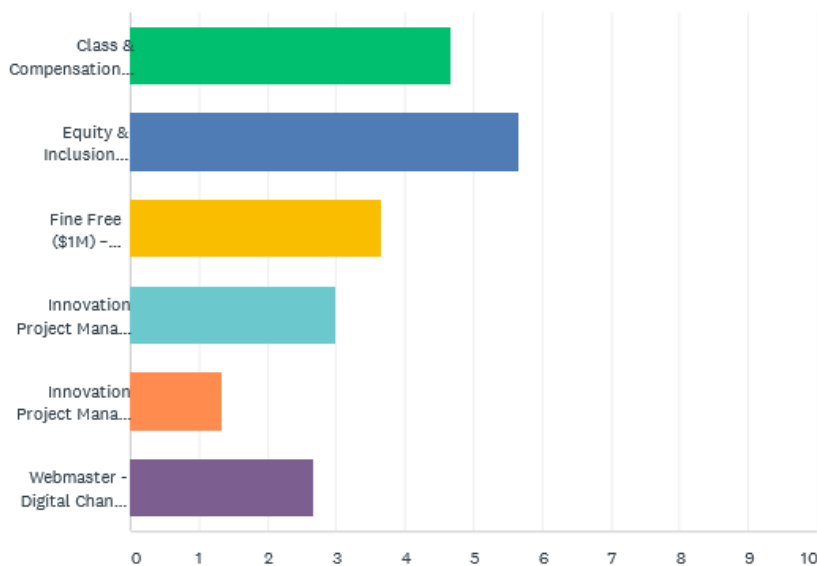
- The Webmaster position we also see as a critical position needed for the Digital Channel. The Webmaster will work to ensure the consistency and accessibility of the Library’s web presence by managing technical solutions that enhance website usability, architecture, and search engine optimization; configuring and monitoring SaaS solutions; and maintaining accessibility standards and guidelines for style and content. The Digital Channel is seeking to closely align the Library’s online resources with the County by partnering with Public Information on the new Digital Experience Platform. The Webmaster position will assist with the migration of cmlibrary.org, cmstory.org, imaginon.org, storyplace.org and the digital branch website into the shared environment. Mecklenburg County Information Technology Services (ITS) is supportive of this need at the Library.

### Budget Priorities Survey Results

#### ○ Library Leadership



#### ○ Library Trustees



## Budget Prioritization Discussion

- Category A- Class & Compensation
  - Ailen Arreaza inquired if the Class & Compensation was more of a County initiative and would therefore there would be more support for it. After some discussion regarding this being a more widespread initiative across the County the Board decided to focus more on Fine Free and the 3 positions the Library has identified as critical.
- Category B- Fine Free
  - The upfront and ongoing cost of this initiative is projected to be \$1 MM per year.
- Category C- Equity & Inclusion Leader, Innovation Project Manager and Webmaster
  - Estimated cost is projected to be between \$75,000 and \$110,000 per position
  - The Racial Equity Task Force may have some recommendations around how the Equity & Inclusion Leader position functions as it becomes fully functional. Mr. Keesler stated that the Library believes this should be a full-time position within the organization. Ms. Moen stated that the “baton” and recommendations that come from the RETF would pass to this position to make the work happen in the organization.

Charles Thomas stated that although we didn’t spend much time discussing the Project Manager for addressing the digital divide, he believes that this position has support on the BOCC and will ultimately help address some inequities in our community.

Ms. Myers requested that in the interest of time, if anyone would like to continue the budget prioritization discussion that they reach out to her in the next several weeks.

## Advocacy

Ann Stawski presented the following:

### Advocacy Activities

Option	Method	Audience	Narrative	Timing
1	Op Ed by Dr. Amy Hawn Nelson and Dr. Ricky Woods	Community at large	“From our perspective as relatively new trustees, here’s why we think the Library is relevant, vital and worthy of increased public support” Encourage residents to respond to the County’s survey on budget priorities	ASAP (survey cuts off 12.23.2020, could be extended)
2	Library Blog by Charles Thomas	Community at large	Library funding is key for providing programs and services into the community e.g. reducing divide	Week of 12.14.2020
3	Media interview for Caitlin	Community at large	Relevance of libraries Library response to COVID	December or January
4	Two-on-one meetings with commissioners (1 staff +1 trustee)	BOCC members	Relevance of libraries Library response to COVID “We encourage you to support X + Y + Z for the Library in this year’s budget process”	January (prior to BOCC retreat)
5	Meeting with County leadership (Joe Helweg, Brandon Neal, Caitlin Moen, Angie Myers)	Dena Diorio, Leslie Johnson	Encourage County Manager to include X + Y + Z in her recommended budget for FY 2022	Fall

## Proposed Advocacy Assignments

Lee Keesler presented the following:

District	Commissioner	Trustee Assigned	Staff Assigned	Notes
At-Large	Leigh Altman	Ailen Arreaza (4)	Ann Stawski (1)	
At-large	Pat Cotham	Brandon Neal (5)	Caitlin Moen (1)	f
At-Large	Ella Scarborough	Kimmery Fleischli (5)	Rosalind Moore (2)	
1	Elaine Powell	Charles Thomas (1)	Jenni Gaisbauer (1)	b
2	Vilma Leake	Dr. Ricky Woods (1)	Tony Tallent (2)	d
3	George Dunlap	Joe Helweg (5)	Pamela McCarter (3)	a
4	Mark Jerrell	Rob Harrington (5)	Angie Myers (4)	c
5	Laura Meier	Gloria Kelley (5)	Seth Ervin (5)	e
6	Susan Rodriguez-McDowell	Dr. Amy Hawn Nelson (4)	Kevin Bittle (4)	

Mr. Keesler and the Board discussed the goals and content of the meetings and what the next steps would be after the meetings. Ms. Appleby would like something to put in the Commissioner's hands during the discussion and Mr. Keesler suggested we provide them something after the meetings to follow up and answer their questions. Mr. Thomas also suggested that they have some talking points going into the meetings of the highlights of the past year. It was decided that the Library would produce a "brag book" to present to the Commissioners that would include library highlights, stories of impact etc.

## Committee Reports

### Finance Committee

Angie Myers provided the following updates:

#### Budget Adjustments

- \$206,360 from Federal to Technology for the MeckTech Project
- -\$35 from Federal to Technology for the MeckTech Project (correction from the original adjustment)
- \$5,391.22 from Federal to Misc. General Operating for MeckTech Project
- \$30,000 from Foundation Contribution to Technology Related

#### Multi-Year Budget Adjustments

- \$21,736.50 from Foundation Contribution to Misc. General Operating
- \$9,000 from Foundation Contribution to Programming

On a motion by Dr. Ricky Woods, seconded by Charles Thomas the Board of Trustees unanimously approved the Budget Adjustments.

## Real Estate Update

Brandon Neal and David Dillard updated the Board on the following:

- South County Regional
  - Temporary certification of occupancy acquired
  - Branch looks fantastic
  - Books are being delivered
  - Opening day orders will arrive the beginning of January
  - Great flexible space with skylights allowing light to flow through the space

- Support Services
  - Getting weekly updates from contractor
  - Demolition going well and construction is underway
- Pineville
  - The Town of Pineville is going to Local Governments Council for approval of their loan and lease with the Library in January
  - Final review of the documents currently underway and going well
- University City
  - Continuing to work to find the best replacement space
  - Public is asking questions about where the new site will be located
  - Working with our county partners to ensure the best site is selected for the Library, for the County and for taxpayers

After some discussion regarding the amount of chatter in the community regarding University City, it was decided that the Library would continue to respond individually to requests for information. Marketing & Communication will continue to monitor and assist in responding.

## CEO Report

### Library Operations Update

Caitlin Moen provided the following update:

#### COVID Impact

- Employee cases following trajectory of public – much higher rate in last two weeks
  - No evidence of spread in libraries
  - No clusters at locations
  - Increase in identified "close contacts" after change in definition
- Renewed focus on policies and practices
  - Physical distancing is key
- Increased level of communication
  - Weekly employee updates – video and written information
  - More visibility and context for processes

#### Modified Phase 2 Service Levels

- Service levels remain the same – grocery store model
- Modified telework guidance – renewal of "maximize teleworking"
- **ACTION ITEM:** *Extend amendment of the Teleworking Policy to 4/1/2021 to stay aligned with Mecklenburg County's teleworking policy extension*

On a motion by Charles Thomas, seconded by Dr. Kimmerly Martin, the Board unanimously approved the amended Teleworking Policy.

- **ACTION ITEM:** *Extend elimination of Sunday hours for the period of January 1st - March 31st, due to the impact of COVID-19 on Library operations and the Library workforce*

After some discussion and on a motion by Charles Thomas, seconded by Dr. Ricky Woods, the Board unanimously approved the extension of the elimination of Sunday hours due to the impact of COVID-19 on the Library's operations and workforce.

## CMS Connector Initiative

The goal is to provide a very focused approach to support of students, teachers, and families in the areas of Curriculum Support, Social/Emotional Support, and a commitment to Equity and Access.

- Success:
  - 100% of CMS schools have been assigned Library contacts
  - Minimum of three (3) contacts between October 26 and December 14
  - Library resources
  - Recommended reading
  - Virtual resources and programs for winter break

## Eliminating the Digital Divide

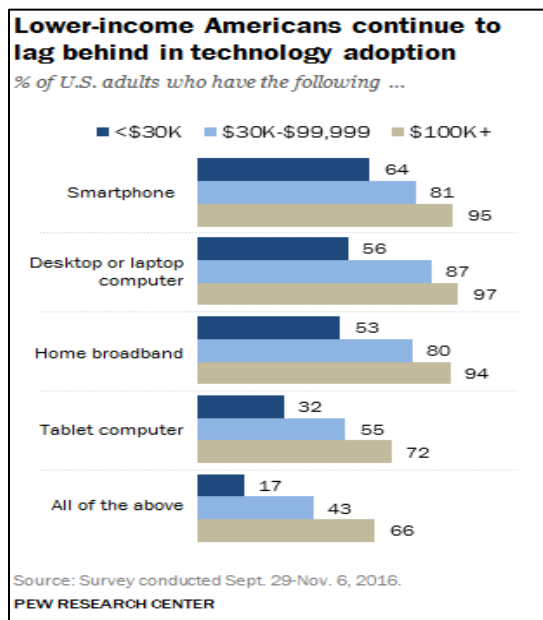
Seth Ervin provided the following updates:

### The Challenge of the Digital Divide

- COVID-19 didn't start the fire
- It highlighted inequities that have existed in our cities for many years and put such a strain on communities that we can't ignore it anymore

### What the Numbers Show

- 10% of households in our city lack a home internet connection (roughly 40,000 households)
- 20% of households in our city lack a dedicated computer (roughly 80,000 households)
- The price of admission:
  - Computer
  - Internet (broadband)
  - Skills to use both (digital literacy)



## The Cost of the Digital Divide

Without digital access, citizens lack lifelines to everyday essential services:

- Civic engagement
- Healthcare
- Education

- Job training and opportunities
- Banking and finance

### **The Library's Leadership before COVID-19**

- Mecklenburg is the only county in NC with an established Digital Inclusion Plan
- The Library is a key stakeholder and the current convening institution
- The Library partners with the NC Department of Information Technology and the Institute of Emerging Issues to champion digital equity in North Carolina
- Successful innovations include:
  - DigiLit curriculum
  - One Access™
  - Rentable hotspots

### **The Library's Leadership during COVID-19**

- Leading the way in digital access through partnerships with:
  - Digital Charlotte
  - Techrising
  - Charlotte Digital Inclusion Alliance

### **MeckTech Computer Distribution Program**

MeckTech is the Library's response to adult technology needs in Mecklenburg County. The initiative was funded by CARES Act dollars from Mecklenburg County and the City of Charlotte. The initiative was designed to:

- Address needs specific to vulnerable adult populations, such as access to virtual healthcare and job opportunities
- Partner with key community partners – City Startup Labs and Informative Technologies
- Leverage Library space to distribute the hardware that would enable people to connect

### **Summary of Activities:**

- 1400 devices distributed over 3-month period (October – December 2020)
- >900 distributed in Library branches and nearly 300 will be distributed via Community partnership (Mecklenburg County, Goodwill)
- An additional 655 devices procured via City's CARES funding (deployment done in December and January)
- Sending a survey out to all participants to memorialize impacts
- Full wrap up by January 2021

### **Story of Impact:**

Our customer, Ms. Jacquelyn has a couple months left to finish her Associates Degree in Early Childhood Education however her computer died before an assignment was due. She participated in the program and received a refurbished computer through the MeckTech program and is over the moon to have a new device on which to complete schoolwork.

### **Recognition**

Urban Libraries Council recognizes Charlotte Mecklenburg Library's MeckTech initiative as the 2020 Top Innovator in Digital Citizenship from a pool of 260 other submissions from libraries across the country. This was a huge team effort and many thanks go to the committed team of library staff and partners who helped immensely with this project's success. This team included:

- Tara Smith (ImaginOn/Main)
- Saul Hernandez (Mobile Library/Outreach)



- Jennie Davis (Main)
- Chantez Neymoss and David Sniffin (Main)
- Tonya Lewis (Sugar Creek)

**WISP Neighborhood Network Project**

WISP (Neighborhood Network): Phase 1 of 5

December 2020 – February 2021

- Asset and stakeholder mapping with West Boulevard Neighborhood Coalition
- Community engagement with community champions
- Taking stock of the landscape (Access Charlotte)
- Exploring vendors in the marketplace
- Pilot site selection
- Technology solution determined

**Racial Equity Task Force Update**

Rob Harrington provided the following update:

- Team is assembled
- Facilitation proposals extended to December 23
- First meeting projected for late January 2021

**Library Foundation**

Jenni Gaisbauer reported the following highlights:

**The Common Spark Campaign Progress To Date**

	New Main Library Building	Support Service Center	Technology, Programs and Innovation	Endowment	Annual Support	Total
<b>County Investment</b>	\$50,000,000	\$15,000,000				\$65,000,000
<b>Private Investment</b>	\$50,000,000		\$8,000,000	\$7,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$70,000,000
<b>Total</b>	\$100,000,000	\$15,000,000	\$8,000,000	\$7,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$135,000,000
<b>Raised to Date</b>	\$76,597,247 76.6%	\$15,000,000 100%	\$1,453,082 18.2%	\$664,098 9.5%	\$4,537,461 91.6%	\$98,251,888 72.8%

**CEO Search**

Joe Helweg provided the following information:

- The search has been narrowed down to several finalists
- Overcoming the obstacles of COVID-19 to meet with these individuals in person
- Still in a confidential stage
- Excited about where we are in the search

**On a motion by Mr. Helweg, seconded by Dr. Kimmerly Martin, the meeting adjourned at 5:32pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

Lenoir C. Keesler, Jr.  
CEO