

## Tale of Three Library Boards

Murrysville, among the Westmoreland Library Network™ (WLN) communities in Western PA, is unusual in having its own Murrysville Community Library Foundation (MCLF). MCLF is a distinctly different entity from the Murrysville Community Library (MCL), each with its own set of Bylaws, its own Board, and its own 501(C)3 standing, but both share a deep commitment to the well-being of the community library itself. Because the public is often not clear about the roles of each, I want to distinguish those first, keeping in mind that the two entities are still closely connected formally by a Memorandum of Understanding.

Murrysville Community Library's Mission is: to inspire ideas, enrich lives, and create lifelong opportunities for learning, literacy and enjoyment. The PA Library Code-prescribed, seven-person MCL Board of Trustees' primary responsibilities include acting within the Code to provide policy and fiducial oversight. Trustees are appointed for staggered three-year terms by the Council of the Municipality of Murrysville. The MCL Board is responsible for hiring the Library Director and for review of the Director's performance against goals annually.

"The Murrysville Community Library Foundation serves the library in its adjunct role, under the aegis of the MCL, as the primary fundraising arm for the library's benefit." That is MCLF's only function, directly and indirectly. On behalf of the Foundation, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our incredibly generous donors who have made and continue to make a huge difference!

The MCLF Board of Directors, in accordance with its own Bylaws, and not directly governed under the PA Library Code or Council, "shall have a minimum of seven (7) and a maximum of fifteen (15) members," who are appointed by vote of the MCLF Board Directors from community applicants to a Governance Committee. Currently, there are nine Directors; it is not easy to get applicants. Those who do serve give much of themselves and bring various skill sets to the Board. That diversity of skill sets is evident by the following (with permissions):

<b>Board Director</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Skill Set</b>
Connie Cauvel	President	School Librarian
Phil Swearingen	Vice President	Small Business
Theo van de Venne	Treasurer	Corp. Engineer
Susan Greenberg, PhD	Secretary	Reading Education
Bill Snyder		Architect
Monica Smodic		Library Sciences
Jennifer Price		Attorney
Amy Lee Heinlen		University Librarian & Poet

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One way to appreciate the role of this Board is to note its accomplishments over the past ten years. First and foremost is the successful fundraising and grant-writing that supported fully the renovation and expansion of the Children's Room, which was completed in 2013. Second is raising funds to replace all MCL computers at that time, none less than 10 years old, and enabling a staggered three-year replacement schedule. And third is building an endowment ongoing as a buffer for hard times. Most other WLN libraries do not enjoy such second party adjunct support.

Instead their library Boards often have to seek patron support, both operating and capital, on their own. Every library needs patron funding. All WLN libraries alike (in fact, all PA public libraries), at least ones that meet minimum state standards, receive partial annual support for operating budgets from the PA Department of Education. WLN libraries receive partial funding as well from the Office of the Westmoreland County Commissioners, as well as from local governments. The latter varies a lot from community to community.

Both state and county tax-based sources are passed through the WLN District Center office, distributed to member libraries according to a complex formula. And, the WLN has its own Board of seven, with responsibility for oversight of District Center policies and fiducial operations. Those Board Directors are appointed by the County Commissioners (2) and elected by the member libraries (5).

So, in summary, at least as relates to Murrysville Community Library, there are three different Boards in play, representing the WLN, MCL, and MCLF. Noting again that the MCLF has a number of open Board seats, perhaps you will now even be inspired to inquire about filling one. In any case, you may contact one of the above named MCLF Board Directors for more information, and/or keep reading the articles in this series about public libraries for a deeper understanding of how the library world works.

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WLN Board President