
Library Advisory Board Minutes January 13, 2009
For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB)

The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met on Tuesday, January 13, 2009 at Central Library in the U.S. Bank Meeting Room. Chair Virginia Koontz called the meeting to order at 7:35 a.m.

Board members present were: Robert Brading, Marian Creamer, George Feldman, Mark Garber, Kate Kerns, Virginia Koontz, Henry Li, Alice Meyer, John Potter, Henise Telles-Ferreira, Carlene Weldon and Sola Whitehead. Board members David Blount, Rick Gustafson, Ruth Gundle, and Ethan Johnson were excused.

Staff members present were: Nancy Arvesen, John Cabrera, Bridget Cain-Bushman, Becky Cobb, Terrilyn Chun, Ellen Fader, Linda Fenster, Pat French, Cindy Gibbon, Penny Hummel, Mary Beth Lawrence, Brett Lear, June Mikkelsen, Lance Murty, Vailey Oehlke, Peg Solonika, Leila Wrathall and Yvonne Chambers.

Also in attendance were: Diane McKeel, Multnomah County Commissioner, Corie Wiren, Chief of Staff for Commissioner Diane McKeel; Kirk Krause, Friends of the Library; and Brenda Clark, community member.

The minutes of the December 9, 2008 meeting were approved.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Virginia Koontz opened the meeting with a report on an article in the Metro section of The Oregonian on Friday, December 19, 2008. The article indicated that library use was up 7.3 percent for Multnomah County Library from January through November 2008 as compared with .5 percent during the same months the previous year.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Access Policy Advisory Committee

Rob Brading reported on behalf of the Access Policy Advisory Committee. During a recent meeting the Committee discussed Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags. RFID tags are small square tags with a radio transmitter inside that are used to track and manage merchandise and other materials. RFID tags can be used to streamline the way materials are handled in libraries. The use of RFID tags would make it easier for staff to check materials in and out, facilitate automated check-in and sorting, make

patron self check-out easier and cut down on repetitive stress injuries. RFID tags can also be used for theft detection. The Committee visited the issues surrounding the use of RFID technology, including concerns about confidentiality that were raised when the technology was first introduced in libraries. RFID tags are now in wide use in libraries around the United States and internationally. Best practices to protect confidentiality have been developed and endorsed by the America Library Association.

The Committee will meet again on January 28, 11:30 am to 12:30 pm on the fifth floor at Central Library. The Committee hopes to have a discussion about RFID and present a recommendation to the LAB at some time in the near future.

Finance Committee

Mark Garber reported on behalf of the Finance Committee. The Committee is in the beginning of the budget process. Becky Cobb presented a schedule for the budget process to the Committee. A more detailed report will be presented at the next LAB meeting.

The County is having a difficult budget time. Revenues are projected to be down for the up-coming fiscal year. All County Departments have been asked to reduce General Fund expenses for the current fiscal year by four percent; this is a reduction of about \$650,000 for the Library. For next year, County departments have been asked to implement a twelve percent reduction in General Fund. That amounts to just over \$2 million for the Library.

In the original levy plan a three percent growth in the General Fund contribution from the County was projected for each year. Given the current economic climate in the County, the General Fund contribution is likely to decrease this coming fiscal year. The Library does have a carryover reserve from years when the levy brought in more than anticipated and from general underspending. The LAB needs to continue to communicate with the County Commissioners about why the carryover exists and that it not affect the County's General Fund contribution in the coming fiscal year. The two new branches, which are currently in the planning process, were included in the levy language. The materials handling project will require the use of the carryover.

Nominating Committee

Marian Creamer reported on behalf of the Nominating Committee. The Committee interviewed two qualified candidates. One will be recommended to the LAB during today's meeting. The second will be brought forward later in the spring.

Heidi Beebe is an architect, founder and partner at Beebe Skidmore Architects, and she's an adjunct professor at Portland State University and a former professor at the University of Oregon. She earned her Bachelors of Arts at Williams College and her Masters of Architecture at Princeton. Heidi wrote in her application, "I believe in the role

of public discourse, free access to information and the importance of encountering new ideas throughout one's life. It would be an honor to participate in one of Portland's long standing institutions that share those beliefs."

A motion was made to recommend Heidi Beebe to Chair Wheeler and the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) for position 15 on the Library Advisory Board.

The motion was seconded and the LAB vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Heidi will fill a vacancy that was created when Diane McKeel left her position to assume her responsibilities as a newly elected Multnomah County Commissioner. Heidi's term will begin upon approval by the BCC and will end June 30, 2010.

Marian encouraged LAB members to make recommendations to the Nominating Committee for individuals who have a financial background and can serve on the Finance Committee in the future.

Alice Meyer explained the expiration dates of member terms to newer members. Previously, when individuals joined the LAB their terms would expire in relationship to what month they joined the LAB. The terms were inconsistent in relationship to the LAB's fiscal year which the ordinance establishing the LAB originally required. The terms of service are now consistent with the fiscal year of Multnomah County, July 1 to June 30.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Vailey Oehlke noted a report recently issued by Pew / Internet projects that the mobile device will be our primary connection tool to the internet for most people by 2020. MCL is now making it possible for patrons search the catalog using their cell phones. This is one tool MCL is looking at while we continue to look at how people meet their information needs.

Vailey also highlighted the library program Helping Your Aging Parents. Vailey noted that in her recent readings she discovered almost 40% of all US workers are more involved with caring for a parent than they are with caring for a child. This program is an example of how the Library is providing programming and services that really meet the relevant needs for the people in our community.

In late January the Library is bringing Joan Frye Williams, a library futurist, and George Needham, a strategist, to give a presentation to staff and our colleagues and advocates in the broader community, on real world trends that are shaping the future of libraries.

There will be two presentations of the same information on January 30, 2009 at the Bagdad Theater. The first session is from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm and the second session is 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. The presentation will be podcast through the Library's

website at some time in the future. All LAB members are invited and encouraged to attend.

Vailey closed her report with a briefing of Artic Blast 2008. During recent inclement weather, the Library was closed for six days, two of which were holidays. Vailey gave an overview of the County's decision making process when deciding whether or not to close County facilities and communicating the decision to Library staff once it has been made. She noted that the Library's website and the County's call-in number were the best tools to relay closure information. In the past Library staff depended upon telephone trees to get the message out to everyone.

MATERIALS MOVEMENT ASSESSMENT

Cindy Gibbon, Access Services Coordinator, gave a report on consultant Lori Ayre's recent findings regarding materials handling and collection management at MCL. Ayre's report responds to the following nine areas of concern identified by library staff:

- MCL has many small neighborhood library buildings with workrooms too small for the growing materials handling operation.
- Having completed a major system wide renovation and building project in 2004, expansion for the existing buildings is not a viable option. Even if funding were available, building larger buildings in the urban environment is not an option.
- MCL does not have the physical capacity to house and service the collection it can afford to provide and the public demands.
- Aggressive weeding undermines collection richness and balance. It also limits the scope of materials found in branch libraries.
- MCL has experienced a shift of public use from the large Central Library where 42% of the collection is housed to the 16, soon to be 18, neighborhood libraries.
- Patrons rely heavily on the holds and reserve system to get materials they can't find at their local libraries.
- The centralized Sort Center in the Library Administration Building is undersized to deal with the increasing volume of materials.
- MCL is experiencing an increase in worker's compensation claims related to a manual materials handling workload.
- MCL currently needs additional office space for administrative support and outreach staff.

Critical factors considered while compiling the report, based on data from FY2007 included: 20 million items circulated; 2 million holds filled; 4.6 million visits to the library; and 315,000 people attending programs.

It was also noted that MCL's library buildings are very small for the use they receive. MCL has only 25% to 50% as much square footage as comparable public libraries such as Denver Public Library, San Jose Public Library, Cuyahoga County Library or Hennepin County Library. Vailey also pointed out that the Seattle Public's Central Library has more square footage in one building than all of MCL's libraries combined.

Other issues that were considered included: a dramatic increase in the self-service holds system; the staff work spaces being too small to accommodate current service demands; shelf space being too small for the collection; and the self-service check-out systems being out of date.

There is also a Central Library collection security project currently underway that is funded in fiscal year 2008-09. RFID is the recommended technology for the security gate system. It would provide security and enable materials handling efficiencies. Use of the RFID system would also enhance self-service.

If Ayre's recommendations are implemented it is important that any proposed solution adds value to each library outlet and does not weaken the appeal and relevance to the community it serves and that solutions benefiting MCL the most will result in creating more space in the community libraries for programs and people without reducing the size of the collection and the availability of new and popular material.

Recommendations include: establishing a centralized service center with an automated sorting and retrieval system; providing additional collection storage space in the service center to expand collection capacity; adding automated sorters to Central and regional libraries; adding book drops and delivery frequency; centralizing some tasks; and updating collection policies and expanding self-service options.

The next steps in the process include: submit a program offer for fiscal year 2009-10 to phase in a new service center with an automated sorting system. Plans for the first phase include adding RFID tags to new and existing materials throughout the system; completing the Central Library security project; considering an automated sorting pilot project at a regional library; developing an updated collection policy and investigating the feasibility of added book drops.

NEW LIBRARIES

June Mikkelsen reported on the progress of the Troutdale and Kenton libraries. On December 18th six site possibilities for the Troutdale Library were presented to the BCC. The BCC eliminated two sites from consideration and requested lease negotiations

begin with the four remaining developers. The Facilities department sent out a Lease Terms Solicitation to those four developers, and the responses are due February 17, 2009. Three of the sites are green field sites. There are no existing buildings on those sites. The Library would be on the main floor with commercial or retail space above. The fourth site is in an existing shopping center.

Kenton is progressing and the County and property owner have agreed on lease terms. A recommendation for a lease agreement is expected to be brought before the BCC on January 29, 2009. The anticipated opening date of the Kenton Library is December 2009 or January 2010, if we're able to meet a very aggressive schedule.

EVERYBODY READS PRESENTATION

Terrilyn Chun, Programming Supervisor reported on Everybody Reads (ER) 2009 which is currently underway during the months of January and February. ER is MCL's annual community wide reading program. The concept is to get everybody reading and talking about one book. This year the library is promoting the program in conjunction with Oregon Reads, a state-wide project with the same goal of having everyone read about the same book in conjunction with Oregon's 150th celebration.

The program is in its seventh year. Some of the highlights include the fourth year of a partnership between MCL and Portland State University. It is free and open to the public. Trimet is in the seventh year of sponsoring the event by providing advertising space on buses and light rail systems.

Every year approximately 700 high school students are involved with the program. This year we have students from Reynolds, Madison, Benson and Roosevelt. Roosevelt has approximately 150 students involved in the program this year. They each receive a book and transportation subsidies for attending ER events.

Related programs can be found in the ER brochure.

Thanks to the generosity of Kiyokawa Family Orchards, a third generation family owned farm, the Library was able to make available a selection of apples to promote Everybody Reads in our libraries.

Copies of the books are available free to the public and are available in the libraries.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Kurt Krause reported on behalf of the Friends of the Library. The Central store continues to carry a variety of gift items and used books at great prices, and they are

beginning to take on some consignment projects from local artists. The store also carries unique valentine cards and gifts. All Friends of the Library members receive a 10% discount on their purchase in the store.

The Friends are currently looking for a specific location for the annual Gresham spring book sale.

GOOD & WELFARE

Dianne McKeel will be highlighting the Library during the BCC meeting on January 29.

Good Day Oregon was filming a story on Central Library's eco roof prior to the LAB meeting this morning. Vailey Oehlke and Multnomah County Commissioner Jeff Cogan were included in the broadcast.

The next LAB meeting will be on February 10, 2009. The meeting adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Yvonne Chambers
Administrative Assistant to the Director of Libraries
Multnomah County Library, Oregon