

**Library Advisory Board Minutes: February 14, 2023**For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board

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The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met virtually on Tuesday, February 14, 2023. The meeting began at 5:00pm.

Board members present were: Clare Wilkinson, David Jarvis, Hazel Burke, Kate Fleming, Lizzie Martinez, Megan Parrott, and Rob Edmiston. Cassie Duprey and Mabel Reed were not available.

Staff members present were: Annie Lewis, community services director; Jennifer Studebaker, community services director; Katie Shifley, finance & facilities director; Kirby McCurtis, location services director; Sonja Ervin, equity & inclusion manager; and Vailey Oehlke, library director.

Commissioner Lori Stegmann, District 4, Multnomah County was also in attendance.

**WELCOME & CHECK-IN**

Meeting attendees joined the virtual meeting either via video or phone, introduced themselves, and participated in a warm-up exercise.

Meeting minutes for the January 10, 2023 meeting were approved.

**MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT PLANS**

LAB Co-Chair Lizzie Martinez shared that there are nine open slots on the board, and with this next recruitment, LAB hopes to fill at least five or six of those slots. Recruitment opens on March 1 and will be open for 6 weeks until April 9. Initial contact with prospective new members will be informal phone calls, followed by virtual conversations led by LAB Membership Workgroup members during the end of April and first week of May. A new slate of members will be proposed to LAB at the May meeting, and after appointment by the Board of County Commissioners, new members will begin their terms in July.

David Jarvis asked about particular targets for new membership. Martinez responded that LAB is aiming for diversity in terms of membership that reflects all users of libraries, including racial and ethnic diversity, geographic location (with a focus on East County), and different types of library users (e.g. parents, people using job services).

Deputy Director Annie Lewis mentioned that library leadership will share recruitment is open at staff meetings as staff may know members of the community who would be interested. Kate Fleming suggested reaching out to parents who access storytime at Gresham Library as well as PTAs at schools in target areas. Equity & Inclusion Manager Sonja Ervin added a suggestion to reach out to City Central Concern and LAB Co-Chair Clare Wilkinson suggested linking in with the

engagement work that bond staff have been doing. Martinez reinforced that personal outreach is often the most successful recruitment method, and encouraged LAB members to reach out to folks in their own communities and networks.

### **UPDATES FROM LIBRARY LEADERSHIP**

Library Director Vailey Oehlke shared some general systemwide updates, including an update on bond progress. The groundbreaking ceremony for Midland Library is Friday February 17 and Representative Blumenauer will be in attendance. The closure of Central Library is coming up on March 11, and the library is working to mitigate closure impacts, as part of the collection will be unavailable while the building is closed for several months. A temporary location for the downtown region is still being sought. Internally, closures create a lot of operational work to reassign staff at closed locations (over 100 staff for Central Library) and Oehlke expressed gratitude for Annie Lewis and other staff members working to manage many moving parts.

In response to a question about closure-related talking points, Oehlke encouraged LAB members to direct folks to the website for updated, detailed bond project information. Building projects are an obligation to the community who voted for this bond back in 2020, and this work is fast-paced in order to maximize benefit and to minimize cost (in terms of the way the bond was issued, and to manage inflation). It's important to acknowledge that this work will be disruptive to patrons and to library staff. While the library is working to mitigate impacts as much as possible with some pop-ups where they are really needed, MCL is not standing up sophisticated temporary spaces as those would take money away from permanent spaces. This work is short term pain for long-term community gain. LAB members can always send folks to library leadership with questions or concerns.

Work on the library's FY24 budget continues, led by Katie Shifley. Oehlke thanked Shifley for her leadership here, and CBAC members for their involvement. The next CBAC meeting will include information on what's included in this year's proposed library budget.

Oehle also reminded that this year's Everybody Reads author event is coming up on March 16, and LAB members are invited to attend .

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE**

Deputy Director Annie Lewis introduced a new strategic planning process the library is beginning, with credit to Office of Project Management & Evaluation Manager (OPME) Elizabeth O'Neil for her leadership in this area. Lewis shared information about the project design, which will happen in phases, led by a subteam of the library Executive Management Team and OPME. The first phase is focused on building an organization roadmap tied to existing pillars and priorities, to guide staff and managers in development of action plans. Planning for development of a full strategic plan, including robust community and staff engagement, will begin starting in FY25.

For this first iteration (an organizational roadmap), development strategies will be updated every six months and action plans every three months so the plan stays active and relevant for service development and evaluation. Lewis shared an overview of plan sections, draft goals, and timeline. Lewis asked LAB members to consider whether any goals might be missing, and asked if LAB has interest in engaging to shape a goal as part of this plan.

In response to a question about how strategic planning works alongside the bond's pressures on staff capacity, Oehlke responded that the intent of this plan is to create something manageable and meaningful that will help tie everything together and support connectedness to current priorities.

LAB co-chairs Wilkinson and Martinez welcomed the opportunity for LAB to contribute to strategic planning.

### **COMMUNITY SERVICES UPDATE**

Lewis gave an update on the library's Community Service Team and particularly the library's new Community Engagement Team, explaining that creation of this team was a result of a restructure of the library's Public Services division. Lewis explained the structure and focus on this team, which meets folks where they're at (often outside of library spaces) to provide services. The Community Engagement Team was created to both provide a structure for community engagement as an ongoing library practice, and to provide leadership and direction for the library's language and culture teams. This team went through some management transitions and staff turnover during its first year, which has created challenges for team coherence and vision. Lewis shared that Community Services Manager Jen Studebaker and Community Engagement Team Manager Eddie Arizaga are working to fill key roles on this team. In the future, the hope is that the Community Engagement Team can engage and connect with LAB around community engagement infrastructure.

Oehlke thanked Lewis and others for their commitment to community services and for her expertise in this area.

### **ACTION ITEMS + CLOSING**

Rob Edmiston mentioned that the Bond Oversight Committee (which Edmiston is a member of) is working on its first annual report. The plan will be shared with LAB when it's ready. Oehlke thanked Edmiston for this update, and for serving on the oversight committee.

The meeting adjourned at 6:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Maddelyn High, director's assistant  
Multnomah County Library, Oregon