

Library Advisory Board Minutes: March 12, 2024For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board

The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met virtually on Tuesday, March 12, 2024. The meeting began at 5:02 pm.

Board members present were: Clare Wilkinson, David Jarvis, Domiè Newton, Gabie Mbenza-Ngoma, Hazel Burke, Jade Chan, Kate Fleming, Kelsey Fong, Kristi Ketchum, Madison Riethman, Megan Parrott, and Taryn Sauer.

Cassie Duprey, Lizzie Martinez, Mabel Reed, and Nikia Kae Solbjor were unavailable.

Staff members present were: Annie Lewis, deputy director; Dave Ratliff, integrated services director; Katie Shifley, finance and facilities manager; Jennifer Studebaker, community services director; Johnette Easter, HR director; Jon Worona, director of innovation & technology; Kirby McCurtis, location services director; Maddelyn High, management analyst; and Shawn Cunningham, director of communications & strategic initiatives.

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

Several guests were also in attendance: Love Centerall, executive director; Jamie June, operations manager; and Laura Fay, director of donor relations from The Library Foundation; and Jackie Starr, executive director of The Friends of the Library.

WELCOME & CHECK-IN

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

UPDATES FROM LIBRARY LEADERSHIP

Library Deputy Director Annie Lewis shared highlights from the Director's Report and recent systemwide updates, including:

- A reminder about the upcoming retirement of Vailey Oehlke, director of libraries, in June. County COO Serena Cruz is working with the Chair's Office and a recruitment firm to lead the recruitment effort for a new library director, which will launch soon. Meeting attendees expressed gratitude and acknowledged that this is a big transition.
- Several upcoming programs noted in the Director's Report, including events in celebration of women's history month, and Everybody Reads programming throughout the month.
- Ongoing impacts due to implementation of a recent labor management agreement (as of March 1) for a new model of the library's Person in Charge (PIC) model, which allows staff to

opt out of this role. The PIC position requires special training and involvement with escalated incidents, and provides manager coverage during breaks and lunches. Duties include managing day-of scheduling adjustments, serving as a point person for facilities issues, keeping the space welcoming for everyone, and calling for emergency response if needed. A minimum number of PICs is required onsite to keep public libraries open. Lewis shared appreciation for the staff navigating implementation of this change, which is impacting library operations, resulting in door services at some locations that cannot stay fully open due to a lack of PIC coverage. The library is working through several ways to address this.

- A reminder that Central Library is now open, post refresh work, and feedback has been broadly positive overall. Lewis encouraged folks to visit.

Lewis invited questions from LAB members, including what kind of training PICs receive to manage disruptive patrons. Director of Location Services Kirby McCurtis shared that training is extensive, and includes a mandatory full two-day PIC training followed by a full day of shadowing; Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) training; and safety training. Lewis added that the library has a training coordinator dedicated to training in this area.

THE LIBRARY FOUNDATION + FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Lewis welcomed guests from [The Library Foundation](#) (TLF) and Friends of the Library (FOL), who briefly introduced themselves. TLF Executive Director Love Centerwall (he/him) is brand new to the role, joining TLF from OMSI (most recently), and United Way prior to that. Centerwall has deep experience in fundraising and shared that he is excited to support the foundation's mission, which is deeply tied to MCL's role in the community. Operations Manager Jamie June (she/her) shared that she joined TLF many years ago during Central Library's first renovation.

June gave some background on TLF, which was founded almost 30 years ago, and exists to build private support to enhance the visibility of and to strengthen the public's commitment to a fully funded library system. TLF does this in a number of ways, working together with library staff to determine where private funds can be leveraged to have the most impact. TLF is a designated fundraising organization, and funds library programs, initiatives, and efforts that are not otherwise funding through the library district (by property taxes) — things like Everybody Reads, Summer Reading, youth and literacy initiatives, testing out new initiatives, and fundraising to support spaces for children and teens in new library buildings. TLF also engages in advocacy related to library campaigns (the library district campaign and the capital bond campaign most recently).

Director of Donor Relations Laura Fay (she/her) gave an overview of her role, which entails managing ~2,500 donor relationships with folks who have a lifelong love of the library. TLF engages with donors by lifting up library stories about people who use library resources to improve their lives and the lives of their families. In addition to individuals who contribute, TLF receives some business support, mostly in-kind donations for Summer Reading incentives. TLF also receives some grant support from foundations, and is designated to receive planned gifts on behalf of the library.

Lewis added that she has worked with TLF over many years across multiple programs, and the impact of TLF's support is significant. While some of the programs TLF supports might not be as visible to the

community, their support has deep impact for children and adults who receive services ranging from early childhood programs serving Head Starts throughout the county to Inverness Jail programming. The role of sharing stories is an important one, and Lewis expressed gratitude for the significant amount of work contributed by TLF's small team. Community Services Director Jen Studebaker echoed this appreciation, as the staff person who oversees most of the library's funding agreements with TLF. Studebaker emphasized that without the support and understanding of service equity priorities from TLF and Friends of the Library, the library would not be able to accomplish its goals for services embedded into the community.

[Friends of the Library](#) (FOL) Executive Director Jackie Starr (she/her) explained that FOL is a membership-based advocacy organization founded in 1972. Membership starts at \$25 dollars a year and FOL has been most popular for its large used book sales (selling retired MCL materials and items donated by the public). Starr shared that FOL has a new permanent store at the Operations Center ([Rose City Reads](#)), where it sells books to fund library services like Summer Reading for adults and a celebration for National Library Workers Appreciation Day. FOL also has a store at Central Library, which was closed during the early pandemic and recently reopened. Starr noted that FOL is accepting materials donations again at every library location and at its Rose City Reads store.

Starr explained that FOL has unrestricted funds that MCL can submit grant requests for, for things not funded by taxes or by TLF. The most recent significant grant was \$200,000 toward the new East County Library. Since opening Rose City Reads, FOL has sold over 15,000 books, 3,000 media items, and 200 memberships; and raised over \$55,000 by selling books. Starr shared that the neighborhood near the Operations Center is very excited that FOL is in their community. FOL is largely volunteer-supported and the opening of this store is a historic moment for FOL, which is steering away from big sales toward everyday sales while the organization grows its capacity. Lewis thanked Starr, noting that FOL's funding is particularly impactful because it is unrestricted.

LAB Co-Chairs Clare Wilkinson and Megan Parrott thanked staff from both organizations for attending this meeting and sharing about how they partner with the library.

FISCAL YEAR 2025 CBAC MEMO

LAB Finance Committee members (David Jarvis, Kate Flemming, Kelsey Fong, Madison Reithman, and Taryn Sauer) summarized this year's Community Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC) workgroup process, noting that LAB CBAC leads met with Finance & Facilities Director Katie Shifley several times from January through March to learn details about budget priorities and revenue projections for the Fiscal Year 2025 budget cycle. This year's memo, which was shared ahead of the meeting, highlights challenges related to bond projects, increases in staffing and tech costs, safety and security-related resources, and an updated timeline for a projected fiscal cliff. Overall, the memo expresses support for the library's proposed FY25 budget.

LAB members discussed the memo, and in particular, an issue brought up in last year's memo about ongoing use of library reserve funds. Finance & Facilities Director Katie Shifley reminded that during last year's budget process, MCL updated its financial policies to reflect prioritized use of fund balance. Fund balance has ticked up recently due to underspending during the pandemic

(due to shut-down and other service disruptions). Last year, the library set up a Library Special Projects program offer for time-limited or one-time expenses, and this program offer is included again in the FY25 budget. The most significant cost in this category recently is leased flex space for materials sorting during bond work; and to support some level of service continuity during library closures (with the downtown Central Pop-Up space and U of O partnership at the Concordia campus).

Wilkinson asked for edits, and hearing none, made a motion to vote to approve the memo. Parrott seconded, and after a vote, the memo was unanimously approved.

Shifely shared appreciation for this year's Finance Committee members, who asked great questions and were very engaged. This committee incorporates community voice into the library's budget process.

Committee members expressed gratitude for support from Finance & Facilities Director Katie Shifley, County Economist Jeff Renfro, and Management Analyst Maddelyn High.

BOARD BUSINESS

Meeting minutes for the February 13, 2024 meeting were approved.

A brief membership update was shared. Recruitment is now open to fill four LAB positions, and the application window will close on April 30. New members will be proposed at the June LAB meeting, and on July 1, new member terms will begin. The focus for this year's recruitment is youth members.

Gabie Mbenza-Ngoma shared an update on the Equity Committee, which has now met twice to define its focus. Committee members are currently reviewing staff equity trainings to see what's applicable and adaptable for LAB.

High gauged interest in a special LAB tour of the renovated Central Library space, and will send a poll with some potential dates.

Parrott shared that LAB's first-ever Everybody Reads book club will meet virtually on March 26 from 5:30-7:00 and all interested LAB members are welcome to join.

ACTION ITEMS + CLOSING

The meeting adjourned at 6:33 pm.

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