

Library Advisory Board Minutes April 10, 2012
For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB)

The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met on Tuesday, April 10, at Central Library in the U.S. Bank Meeting Room. Chair Katie Lane called the meeting to order at 7:34 a.m.

Board members present were: Lori Irish Bauman, David Blount, Kerline Brownell, Marian Creamer, Allie Donahue, George Feldman, Mardy Stevens, Danika Stochosky, Henise Telles-Ferreira, Carlene Weldon, and Sola Whitehead. Board members excused were: Heidi Beebe, Mark Jackson and John Potter. Board member Mark Garber was absent.

Staff members present were: Vailey Oehlke, Director of Libraries; Becky Cobb, Deputy Director; Rita Jimenez, Neighborhood Libraries Director; Sue Banks, Central Library Director; Cindy Gibbon, Access and IT Services Manager; Mike Harrington, Facilities Manager; Pat French, Collections Services Manager; Shelly Kent, Human Resources Manager; Terrilyn Chun, Public Programming & Community Outreach Manager; Shawn Cunningham, Policy Advisor; Lisa White, Albina Library Administrator; and Jamie Owens, Administrative Specialist, Director's Office.

Also in attendance were: Karie Trumbo, The Library Foundation; Kurt Krause, Friends of the Library; Earl Dizon, and Matthew Altman.

The March 13, 2012 minutes were approved with changes. The minutes for the special March 16, 2012 meeting were approved.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Vailey shared that Chair Cogen gave his State of the County address March 23 and it is available on the Multnomah County website. Jeff Cogen spoke of community values and how we need to reflect them in our community services. His speech addressed library funding and the need for long term, stable funding.

Vailey announced that Community Chromebooks make it possible for all libraries to loan laptops; made possible through grant funds, the library now has 175 laptops available. Many patrons only have Internet access through this library; this new program offers patrons more flexibility.

The Friends have recently funded "Pageturners To Go", a new service that began March 12. Book groups can check out sets of Pageturner titles in bags of 10 books.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Katie Lane thanked the members who attended and called in for the special March 16, 2012 meeting. It was very important to get their CBAC report approved and submitted.

Katie talked about attending the Central CBAC meetings as the chair of this board. Katie explained it is comprised of the chairs of the other CBAC committees who meet together regarding concerns about funding and spending. Katie relayed that she explained the benefit a library district could have on the rest of the county and reiterated the benefits of collaboration. The message was well received and it will be relayed from the Central CBAC to the Board of County Commissioners.

Katie announced that on June 30 there will be four open board positions which includes the two youth positions, and the positions held by Virginia Koontz (resignation) and Mark Garber (term limited). The nominating committee needs a chair. Sola Whitehead and Henise Telles-Ferreira volunteered to co-chair. Marian Creamer offered to ask about getting office space for interviews and added that she would also be available to help. Vailey suggested that library meeting rooms could also be a place to conduct interviews. Lori Irish Bauman added that there are already three potential candidates for the openings. Katie explained that a good candidate would be someone who already has experience serving on a board, has knowledge of local government, and is a user of the library. Katie added that if members are interested in a leadership role (Chair or Vice-Chair) to contact the nominating committee.

LIBRARY PRIORITIES

Vailey distributed a handout titled Multnomah County Library Priorities 2012-2015. Vailey shared that when she became director three years ago she created a set of priorities as a way to give the library direction in allocating resources; they became the priorities of 2009-2012. Recently, Vailey asked the current leadership team to update the 2009-2012 document in order to provide guidance in allocating resources in light of upcoming budget reductions. Discussion of the priorities centered around what it is about a library that makes it relevant now and well into the future. She asked the LAB to consider how these priorities resonate for the group, how the document reflects a public statement, and what the role of the LAB is with regard to this document.

Marian Creamer agreed that the new priorities are clear and this is an opportunity for change. George Feldman appreciated the positive statement that the priorities make. Vailey agreed that the library continues to look forward, recognizing its obligation to the community. Henise Telles-Ferreira asked if MCL has a mission statement. Vailey

answered that MCL does and this priorities document is part of that. Lori Bauman added that the priorities document, by stating the importance of access for all to information held in the library, is critical in a democracy because it helps citizens to be informed and active. Vailey added that the library is for everyone no matter their station in life; it is access for all in a democratic society. Katie concluded the discussion by stating that the language in this document can be used to explain MCL actions. There will be a lot of tough choices this year; this document articulates the library's priorities. Jamie Owens will send the LAB an electronic version of the priorities.

FUNDING UPDATE

Vailey reviewed the budget timeline; May 3 is when Chair Cogen releases his executive budget, then the deliberations occur among the board members and with the community. The budget will be adopted May 31, 2012. Multnomah County Library has been busy planning how to best provide service at a funding level of \$0.89 (per \$1000 in assessed value). Vailey shared that she has visited all library locations talking about the budget and staff reductions and that her goal is to make sure employees know how these changes will affect them.

THE LIBRARY FOUNDATION

Karie Trumbo reported what she experienced at the Portland Children's Levy (PCL) meeting the prior day. For the last six years the PCL has been very generous to the Raising a Reader (RAR) program. The PCL is experiencing budget shortfalls and the staff recommended significant cuts in RAR to the PCL board; their vote was 3 to 2 in favor of the staff's recommendation to terminate the current RAR contract. The MCL Raising a Reader program was expected to receive \$170,000 in FY 2012-13 and \$115,000 the following year, so terminating it is a significant reduction.

Vailey added that MCL is figuring out how to cut \$6.5 million from FY13 and now we are about to lose money for this very important program. Early literacy is a key priority for the library, and exploratory conversations are underway about keeping this program at an affordable funding level. Marian Creamer added that the program is proactive and as a model it is highly successful. Vailey continued about the massive cuts coming for public schools that count on this early childhood program to help prepare children for school. This program is a model of such partnership.

Vailey thanked The Library Foundation for all the extra work they did on short notice to try and save the program. David Blount asked if there is a plan to replace the funding. Karie answered since this has just happened everyone was trying to determine what is next. Vailey added that this termination happened two months before the start of the new fiscal year, and that stakeholders will be looking into what resources may be available.

Karie shared that they have submitted a letter of intent for a Paul G. Allen grant for "Making Connections" initiative.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Kurt Krause stated that the Friends are getting ready for the levy campaign. The author event at The Old Church was very successful, and the Friends raised more than \$3000. Chair Cogen attended and spoke in favor of the levy and the library district. The authors all articulated how important the library is to them. This year's spring book sale will be at the Gresham Station Shopping Center on April 27, 28 and 29.

Book donations have fallen off recently, and the Friends are encouraging people to donate their surplus books.

GOOD & WELFARE

Sola Whitehead announced that today is National Library Worker's Day. Vailey thanked the Friends for the funds that provide for staff celebrations.

Marian Creamer had the opportunity to visit two other library systems recently and she appreciates that when she visits her own MCL branch it is a fine-tuned machine that hums with greetings from staff and with high morale.

The next LAB meeting is May 8, 2012.

Katie Lane, Chair, adjourned the meeting at 8:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
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