

Library Advisory Board Minutes November 13, 2012
For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB)

The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met on Tuesday, November 13, 2012 at Central Library in the U.S. Bank Meeting Room. Chair Katie Lane called the meeting to order at 7:36 a.m.

Board members present were: Etsegenet Ayele, Hallie Blashfield, David Blount, Erin Cooper, Marian Creamer, Katie Lane, John Potter, Adam Starr, Danika Stochosky, Henise Telles-Ferreira, Maegan Vidal, Carlene Weldon and Sola Whitehead. Board members George Feldman and Mardy Stevens were excused. Board member Lori Irish Bauman was absent.

Staff members present were: Vailey Oehlke, Director of Libraries; Becky Cobb, Deputy Director; Rita Jimenez, Neighborhood Libraries Director; Dave Ratliff, interim Central Library Director; Javier Gutierrez, interim Collections Services Manager; Shelly Kent, Human Resources Manager; Jeremy Graybill, Marketing & Communications Director; Cindy Gibbon, Access & IT Services Manager; Katie O'Dell, Youth Services Director; Terrilyn Chun, Public Programming & Community Outreach Manager; Don Allgeier, Neighborhood Libraries Assistant Director; Shawn Cunningham, Policy Advisor; and Jamie Owens, Administrative Specialist, Director's Office.

Also in attendance were: Diane McKeel, District 4 Commissioner; Corie Wiren, Chief of Staff, Commissioner McKeel's Office; Jane Gigler, Friends of the Library; Althea Gregory, Multnomah County Budget Office; and Merris Sumrall, The Library Foundation.

The October 9, 2012 minutes were approved.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Vailey shared that within the director's report this month there are examples of MCL's strategic priorities, reflecting the library's continued commitment to the community. Three pillars underpin all of the library's priorities: free access for all, a trusted guide for learning, and a leading advocate for reading. Those pillars transcend time, technology, format, and demographics. They are fundamental to what a library provides the community and help shape a set of three-year strategic priorities, which may be adjusted as community needs change. The current priorities are:

- We think yes: Our customer service priority looks at our service from a patron's perspective.
- We champion reading for all: We provide resources to benefit patrons at their points of needs.
- We help the community flourish: We focus on the library's role in helping people through this current economy.
- We prepare young minds for success: Our programs promote children's early literacy and prepare children for kindergarten. We support the reading success for children K-12.
- We speak your language: We work with new immigrants whose native language is not English, to have access to our services and reap the benefits that we provide.

The Director's report provides many examples that show the library's priorities in action.

Vailey announced the book selections of author Sherman Alexie for this year's Everybody Reads: The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian for young adults and Ten Little Indians, a collection of short stories for adults. Literary Arts makes his lecture possible. The lecture is the culmination of two months of ER programs that are made possible almost entirely by The Library Foundation.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Katie welcomed the five new LAB members. Members of the LAB have an opportunity to participate in the library's governance that is fulfilling and enlightening.

Katie announced how excited she is that the library district passed. The public was finally given the opportunity to say what they wanted, and that was a library district. There is a lot of work to be done; figuring out what the district looks like, bringing governance to the system that meets the needs of the patrons, and honoring the promises that were made to the citizens during the election.

Vailey added that the library district passing is huge and thanked the LAB for their support and forward thinking. Vailey thanked TLF for its hard work on community engagement and fund raising. She also thanked Commissioner McKeel, stating that she was the first one to take the notion of a district to the charter review committee, and for her dogged determination to see it through. Vailey thanked the FOL for the events, fundraisers, outreach and communication that supported the district effort. She thanked the MCL staff who provided excellent service to the patrons during the ups and downs of the process. Vailey acknowledged the hard work of Chair Cogen and thanked the rest of the commissioners for their leadership as well as Local 88 leadership, in particular, Michael Hanna, who worked endlessly to make sure the district moved forward. Vailey thanked Becky Cobb, who has been with MCL for 23 years, who participated in moving

the Library Association of Portland into the county and now whose experience will help move the library to the district.

Vailey continued by asking “what’s next?” There will be plenty of opportunity for LAB input in building a transition framework with the help of the BCC. Opportunities will be given for public input. The actual legal entity will start July 1, 2013. Vailey encouraged the LAB to ask questions and keep informed during the process.

Marian Creamer read a statement to Vailey, the Multnomah County Library staff and leadership, The Library Foundation, Friends of the Library, visionary leaders, the many individuals who contributed tirelessly to the measure, and the County Commissioners. Marian stated that MCL built a relationship of knowledge and trust with the voters of Multnomah County long before the measure. Marian was heartened to discover that the voters get it and they understand vital role that the library plays in a democratic society.

Katie Lane explained that the library will become a separate entity that still will be overseen by the BCC, acting as the Library District Board. For the most part, not much will change from the patron’s point of view; they will still have the great service that they are used to, and staff will still proceed on the same strategic principles. There are opportunities for change, and one of those could be how the LAB interacts with the library governance. Is there a way that the LAB can engage that allows for greater public participation? The LAB serves two roles; advising the county commissioners and the director, and advising the public of library business. The LAB needs to continue to do both. Danika Stochosky added the need to communicate the July 2013 start date for the new hours and programs. Vailey added that these questions are already being asked and MCL is addressing them in a variety of ways. Staff is informed, and the website and Facebook have been updated. Danika added that posting the hours in all branches would inform the public who do not go to the website.

John Potter stated that it is not too early to think about joining the Finance Committee, which is involved in reviewing and providing input to the FY14 budget.

Commissioner Diane McKeel thanked everyone for their hard work and added that this is a wonderful moment for all. She always believed in the district, starting with her time as an LAB member years ago. MCL customer service is the best there is, recently garnering a 5-star rating, and this helped make the library district successful at this time. Chair Cogen and Vailey made it a priority and Corie Wiren and the rest of her staff worked very hard for the passage. It has been a wonderful collective effort.

BUDGET WRAP UP

Becky explained that part of the role of the LAB is to serve to serve as the Citizen Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC); that role will not change. MCL has been given a great gift of trust by the public and now it is the library’s responsibility to manage that gift, moving forward. The CBAC’s oversight is critical at this time. Becky provided two

handouts: 2011-2012 Budget Summary and 2011-12 Spending vs. Budget. Both of these documents are a recap of how the library ended the last fiscal year. Budgeted revenues were \$63.2 million, which included \$9.2 million in carryover because even last year the levy was not producing nearly enough to fund the library's operations for current service levels. Even with the budgeted carryover, MCL's revenues were under-received by \$1.9 million due to increased property tax compression. 64% of the library's expenditures is for staffing, which is not unusual for libraries. Overall the library spending level was at 96% of its budget.

Danika asked how much budget control for internal services MCL will have once the district goes into effect. Vailey stated that the primary goal is to insure a stable funding horizon, as there is now a permanent rate and the library must live within those means. The library will continue to contract with the county and work with the county to analyze costs and needs. Katie requested information about service areas the library will be exploring. Henise Telles-Ferreira asked about a balance MCL shows at the end of the fiscal year and Becky explained that the balance of \$10 million one-time only money the county provided this spring will be returned to the county, as only one-third of it was budgeted for FY 13. The \$3.8 million figure shown in the handout represents library reserves that were unappropriated for FY 13. Soon the library will receive next year's property tax projections, which will help set the target for the FY 14 budget and the reserves. The budget process starts in mid-December and information will be shared with the LAB.

THE LIBRARY FOUNDATION

Merris reported that staff is catching up with fall fund raising for the library's literacy programs. The Foundation targeted its recent efforts for the district. Merris thanked everyone for their help.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Jane Gigler said FOL was elated with the outcome of the vote. The FOL members canvassed, campaigned, called voters, and worked very hard for the district passage. There were activities that helped focus the public's attention on the library district. The fall book sale held in October grossed about \$74,000. The amount of rain may have impacted the event. The 40th birthday party was celebrated by more than 70 people including US Representative Earl Blumenauer who was the surprise guest. The centerpiece of the event was the Turning the Pages video, and the FOL thanks Becky Cobb who provided photos for this. The FOL in Portland was started in 1972 in response to a budget reduction.

Commissioner McKeel submitted a proclamation to the BCC as part of National Friends of the Library Week, October 21-27. That honor was much appreciated.

The Friends have hired a new online book sales coordinator.

GOOD & WELFARE

Marian asked that everyone reflect on how the library reacts to community needs. We are continually reminded of the ways the library solves problems. Having library lobbies open for ballot drop off on Monday was brilliant. Vailey added that during the last election the library collected 25% of the ballots. This year the small NW branch, where the normal daily patron count is 300-600, reported 2,000 people visiting on Election Day. Marian added that the citizens trust the library.

Marian announced the American Library Association is holding its mid-winter meeting in Seattle and it is open to the public. All of the publishers will be there and national book awards are announced.

Katie thanked the library for sending email reminders when books are due, as it is great customer service. Vailey added that the library is close to adding text messaging reminders.

Henise reminded everyone that there is a December LAB meeting.

Danika announced there is another opening on the Board and soon the Nominating Committee will have another name to put forth.

The next LAB meeting is Tuesday, December 11, 2012.

Katie Lane, Chair, adjourned the meeting at 8:33 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
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