

Library Advisory Board Minutes April 8, 2014
For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB)

The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met on Tuesday, April 8, 2014 at Central Library in the U.S. Bank Room. Chair Sola Whitehead called the meeting to order at 7:35 am.

Board members present were: Erin Cooper, George Feldman, John Potter, Mardy Stevens, Carlene Weldon and Sola Whitehead.

Board members excused were: Bernadette Janét, José Padin, Adam Starr, Henise Telles-Ferreira and Maegan Vidal.

Board members absent were: Etsegenet Ayele, Megan Irwin, Katie Lane and Danika Stochosky.

Staff members present were: Vailey Oehlke, Director of Libraries; Becky Cobb, Deputy Director; Terrilyn Chun, Programming & Community Outreach Manager; Shawn Cunningham, Director of Communications and Strategic Initiatives; Jeremy Graybill, Marketing & Online Engagement Director; Cindy Gibbon, Access & IT Services Manager; Javier Gutierrez, Director of Collections & Technical Services; Shelly Kent, Human Resources Manager; Rita Jimenez, Neighborhood Libraries Director; Jamie Owens, Administrative Specialist, Technical Services; and Paige Hatcher, Administrative Analyst, Director's Office.

Also in attendance were: Althea Gregory, Budget Analyst, Department of County Management; Commissioner Diane McKeel, District 4, Multnomah County; Eric Zimmerman, Chief of Staff, District 4, Multnomah County; Dan Arenholz, County Investment Officer, Department of County Management; Eric Arellano, Deputy Chief Financial Officer, Department of County Management; Tanya Forrester, Friends of the Library (FOL); and Wes Breazeale, The Library Foundation (TLF).

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Sola Whitehead introduced Paige Hatcher as the new library staff assistant for LAB meetings. Approval of the March minutes was deferred due to the lack of a quorum. Chair Whitehead reported that next week, April 13-19, is National Library Week and encouraged attendees to visit their library branches and thank their librarians. Vailey Oehlke thanked board members for the work they do on behalf of the library.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Oehlke introduced Terrilyn Chun, Programming and Community Outreach Manager, and Jeremy Graybill, Marketing and Online Engagement Director, to discuss the new My Librarian service. The program is funded through The Library Foundation by a grant from the Paul G. Allen Foundation and provides a novel approach to online readers advisory.

Ms. Chun related that there is still some fine-tuning that needs to occur with the service. The program had a soft launch on Monday, April 7. My Librarian offers patrons the opportunity to interact with librarians through staff profiles, blog posts, reading lists, and other multimedia resources. Patrons can ask questions, comment on blog posts, and email, chat and Skype with librarians. Ms. Chun invited LAB members to visit the service and provide input.

Chair Whitehead recommended making the interface more intuitive for users to click on the librarians' photos to discover additional information. .

Mr. Graybill related that there is budget built-in for user testing and staff members have the ability to comprehensively gather and analyze data about how people are using the program, and make changes accordingly. Ms. Oehlke described the iterative nature of the development of the program as they respond to feedback and tailor it to meet users' needs.

George Feldman asked if all of the staff featured were front-line librarians and if they have time to maintain their pages and interact with users. Ms. Chun related that the grant pays four hours per week for each person to dedicate time specifically to My Librarian work. Ms. Chun stated that this is also considered part of the customer service work that librarians would typically perform. Mr. Feldman noted that having the capacity to maintain the service will be important moving forward. Mr. Graybill stated that part of the reason for the soft launch was to determine how staff resources would be affected.

Ms. Oehlke related that ideally, the library will have more librarians participating in the My Librarian program over time, as resources allow. Ms. Oehlke described how the My Librarian service provides a convenient, more personalized virtual service to patrons. Additionally, patrons can schedule an appointment to meet with a librarian at a branch location.

John Potter observed that there are 72 staff in bilingual positions and asked if there were plans to have them participate in the service. Ms. Chun related that Karen Sherman, a bilingual Spanish youth librarian, is one of the current participants and there are plans to recruit more in the future.

COUNTY INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO PRESENTATION

Becky Cobb introduced Dan Arenholz, County Investment Officer, Department of County Management, and Eric Arellano, Deputy Chief Financial Officer, Department of County Management.

Mr. Arenholz presented on how the county invest its funds. The presentation described the county's portfolio characteristics, explained policies on exposure limits and oversight, and provided a performance history of investments.

In Fiscal Year 2013, the average balance of the portfolio was about \$450 million through the year. It ranged from \$967 million in November 2012 to \$263 million in October 2013. The size of the portfolio is driven by property tax collection dates.

Investment choices include savings/checking/money market accounts at qualified banks, fixed income securities and the local government investment pool (LGIP), which is managed by the state treasurer. State law prohibits investments in stocks or mutual funds, including bond funds.

Policies that oversee this work include state statute [ORS 294 County and Municipal Financial Administration](#) and the county investment policy, which is re-approved annually by the Board of County Commissioners. The goals of the policy are safety, liquidity, and then yield. A five-member Investment Advisory Board (IAB) meets quarterly. The county investment policy is as, or more, conservative than the state statute.

Mr. Arenholz discussed current yields of investment choices. Mr. Potter inquired about the yield of bankers' acceptances (BA). Mr. Arenholz related that there is only one bank currently issuing BAs with a yield between 15-20%. Mr. Feldman asked what the effects would be on yield if there were more latitude with respect to investing in mutual funds. Mr. Arenholz posited that the yield would be less than that of the LGIP.

Over the last year or so, the county has discussed having the portfolio reflect the county's social values. The Community Advantage Banking (CAB) program allows the county to invest amounts up to the FDIC limit in local, community banks. There are currently no fossil fuel investments; the last one matured in March. Mr. Arenholz related that they are working on language to add to the policy that will articulate the county's social values vis-à-vis investment practices.

In response to an inquiry from Mr. Potter, Mr. Arenholz clarified that ORS 294 and ORS 295 govern investments in qualified banks over the FDIC limit. The CAB program invests amounts below the FDIC limit.

Mr. Feldman asked whether the restrictions on fossil fuel investments applied to LGIP investments. Mr. Arenholz clarified that the county's decision to refrain from investing in fossil fuel organizations does not affect the investment decisions of the LGIP.

Information is available on the [County website](#), which includes the investment policy, the last three recent investment reports, and the interest forecast.

Chair Whitehead inquired about ratings. Mr. Arenholz related that they are determined by ratings agencies, such as S&P and Moody's, and that they seldom change.

With respect to the county being self-insured, Mr. Feldman inquired about risk management and if there were an umbrella policy should the county be compelled to put forth an exceptional amount of money. Mr. Arenholz noted that he is not specifically familiar with that set of interests but indicated that that is the primary reason for the substantial allocation of funds to Risk Management.

Shawn Cunningham requested information that could be shared with candidates interested in serving on the Investment Advisory Board.

UPDATE ON LIBRARY DISTRICT TRANSITION

Ms. Oehlke described how, shortly after the library district was formed, conversations about next steps resulted in the decision to start with an investigation into how to best transfer the physical assets of the library, including the library's buildings, collections and art. An internal group, including Becky Cobb, Mark Campbell, Karyne Kieta, Althea Gregory, Vailey Oehlke, Bernadette Nunley and representatives from Facilities met monthly for eight months to analyze the feasibility and effects of transferring these physical assets.

Referring to the county code, the County Attorney discovered language about risk and liability that prompted concern. According to the code, the county's risk coverage applies to county-owned assets. Transferring ownership of the buildings could result in the library losing the ability to obtain liability coverage through the County. Furthermore, if the library were to procure its own liability insurance, the county and district might both be liable, as in that scenario the buildings would be owned by the library district but the library district would continue to pay the county for maintenance.

Subsequently, the group recommended a more holistic analysis of the transition to County Chair Madrigal. Chair Madrigal supported this direction. It was agreed that the library district would retain its own legal counsel during the investigative process. Moving forward, the library district will identify capacity and expertise to perform a holistic analysis of what it will mean to transfer the library's assets to the library district. Ms. Oehlke emphasized that the goal is for neither the county nor the library to be negatively impacted as a result of the transition.

The intergovernmental agreement (IGA) between the county and the library remains intact. It expires in June. The library is asking the county attorney's office to refresh the IGA. Ms. Oehlke indicated that she expects it will be the same moving forward, essentially that the library contracts with the county for all library services.

Commissioner McKeel expressed support for the proposed plan moving forward and advocated the importance of taking the time to make a fully informed decision.

Ms. Cooper asked if a delay in the transition could have negative implications for the library. Ms. Oehlke indicated that a delay does not adversely affect the library.

Mr. Feldman inquired if the current interim situation could feasibly continue indefinitely. Ms. Oehlke responded that it could, but that it would hopefully be due to the determination that it was the best course of action and not the result of inactivity.

Mr. Potter inquired about the possibility for future confusion about library funding. Ms. Oehlke related that both the county board and the library share a desire to maintain a healthy and secure library system.

Chair Whitehead commented that the work that the asset transfer group has performed thus far will be useful moving forward.

THE LIBRARY FOUNDATION

Wes Breazeale reported that the Everybody Reads event on March 11 with United States Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor went very well. The presentation elicited a substantial amount of positive feedback from donors and sponsors in attendance. Mr. Breazeale thanked Ms. Oehlke, Ms. Chun, and everyone who was involved in making it a successful event.

Mr. Breazeale reported that TLF is beginning its spring fundraising campaign. Mr. Breazeale and other staff members will begin sending out letters and making phone calls as part of the campaign to raise money for programming.

Mr. Breazeale reported that preparation for the upcoming Summer Reading program is progressing well.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Tanya Forrester reported that the spring used book sale will be held this weekend, April 11-13, in Gresham.

Ms. Forrester reported that FOL continues to work with several cities and districts within the county on proclamations to support the library's sesquicentennial celebration.

Ms. Forrester reported that FOL will host a fundraiser on Mother's Day in May with local writer, Laura O. Foster, author of *Portland City Walks* and *Portland Hill Walks*. The event will include a hill walk in Gresham with the author. Ms. Forrester noted that tickets are selling fast.

Ms. Forrester reported that a "Books for Beers" event will be held in June. A similar event took place last year at the Laurelwood Public House and it was quite successful. During the evening, attendees can bring a book to receive a free beer. FOL will receive a portion of the proceeds from the evening. Ms. Forrester reported that an announcement of the event will be forthcoming.

Ms. Oehlke thanked FOL for the work they are doing on the 150th celebration proclamations. Ms. Oehlke reported that she and Martha Flotten, administrator at

Gresham library, along with Gail McMurchie, FOL board member, had recently attended a Gresham City Council meeting at which a proclamation had been read.

GOOD AND WELFARE

Chair Whitehead related an experience with her own children's patronage of the library. After developing a fondness for reading over Spring Break, they expressed a preference for visiting the library over a martial arts class.

Mr. Potter noted that Multnomah County Library (MCL) had won the recent Twitter competition with Seattle Public Library (SPL). Ms. Oehlke provided contextual information about the event: In anticipation of the soccer match between the Seattle Sounders FC and the Portland Timbers, the libraries had challenged people to tweet the title of a book they had enjoyed to either SPL or MCL. The libraries would then respond with reading suggestions. MCL received 206 tweets, SPL, 195. The story was picked up by the Timbers and local media in Portland and Seattle. Ms. Oehlke thanked MCL staff for their creativity in raising the profile of the library through this endeavor.

The next LAB meeting is on Tuesday, May 13, 2014.

Sola Whitehead, Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:43 am.

Respectfully submitted by:
Paige Hatcher
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Multnomah County Library, Oregon