

**Library Advisory Board Minutes: January 13, 2015**  
For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board

---

The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met on Tuesday, January 13, 2015, 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: Marc Alifanz, Erin Cooper, George Feldman, Elizabeth Hawthorne, Katie Lane, Ya-Li Lizik, Jack MacNichol, John Potter, Mardy Stevens, Danika Stochosky, Maegan Vidal, Carlene Weldon, Sola Whitehead and Brian Wilson.

Board members excused were: Bernadette Janét.

Board members absent were: Emma Caplan and José Padin.

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

Also in attendance were: Deborah Kafoury, Multnomah County Chair; Jenny Madkour, Multnomah County Attorney; Aaron Ridings, Policy Advisory and Community Liaison, Multnomah County Chair's Office; Wes Breazeale, The Library Foundation; Magnus McDowell, Friends of the Library; and Krista Van Veen, Friends of the Library.

The Board approved minutes for the December 9, 2014 meeting without revision.

**CHAIR'S REPORT**

Chair Sola Whitehead shared that she will distribute to LAB members descriptions of each of the board's subcommittees with the request that board members notify her of the committees on which they intend to serve.

Chair Whitehead reported that the futures committee has been dissolved with the intention of focusing efforts on the creation of a capital planning committee. At Chair Whitehead's invitation, Ms. Oehlke shared that one of the challenges the library faces moving forward involves determining how library building space will be used to meet the changing needs of patrons and the community. The capital planning committee will review these needs, reflect on opportunities

for expansion and make recommendations for a capital plan for the next 20 years. Ms. Oehlke reported that the library will act deliberately to maintain a capital reserve.

At Chair Whitehead's invitation, Mardy Stevens provided a report from the nominating committee.

Ms. Stevens welcomed four new LAB members:

- Marc Alifanz
- Elizabeth Hawthorne
- Jack MacNichol
- Brian Wilson

Ms. Stevens shared information about the professional experience and skills of each of the new board members, who were appointed to the LAB by the Multnomah County Library District Board (MCLD Board) on January 8, 2015.

Ms. Stevens reported that the nominating committee has been discussing governance and the responsibilities of the LAB. Ms. Stevens shared with LAB members a document with questions for library administrative staff and the LAB governance committee as well as copies of Multnomah County Code, Chapter 19, which is devoted to library governance and organization, including the LAB.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Vailey reported that this year's selection for the Everybody Reads 2015 community reading project is *The Residue Years* by Mitchell Jackson. Ms. Oehlke shared information about the author and discussed several of the book's themes. Ms. Oehlke related that she anticipates the novel will generate important conversations in the community. At Ms. Oehlke's invitation, Shawn Cunningham reported on his interview with Mr. Jackson.

Ms. Oehlke thanked The Library Foundation for funding the customized publication of 6000 copies of the book. These copies will be distributed in a variety of places, including schools and libraries. Ms. Oehlke shared information about Everybody Reads events that will take place in February and March. The library is partnering with Portland State University to hold discussions and forums related to the book. Terrilyn Chun shared that the library is also partnering with Portland Community College, which will host several screenings of *The Residue Years: The Documentary*. These screenings will be free and open to the public.

### **MULTNOMAH COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT BOARD AND LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD GOVERNANCE**

Chair Whitehead welcomed Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury and Multnomah County Attorney Jenny Madkour to the LAB meeting. Chair Whitehead thanked Chair Kafoury for her and the county commissioners' support in establishing the Multnomah County Library District in 2012.

Chair Whitehead shared that she had solicited questions from LAB members in advance of the meeting. Because the LAB serves as an advisory board to the library and the MCLD Board, the LAB is interested having a conversation to learn how to best support both entities.

Chair Kafoury shared that she grew up in Portland and has a personal relationship with the library. One of the reasons she was passionate about establishing the library district was to give the library some funding stability in order to plan for the future. In addition to capital planning, there are many ways that the library, LAB and MCLD Board can work together for the future.

Chair Kafoury related that the role of the LAB has, in some ways, not changed at all; the LAB still advises the same group of people. One of the most significant changes is the removal of the funding uncertainty that prevailed prior to the establishment of the library district. Chair Kafoury invited LAB members to share how the county can support the LAB.

John Potter expressed gratitude for Commissioner McKeel's regular attendance at LAB meetings. Mr. Potter shared that he thinks it is healthy to have this regular connection. Mr. Potter discussed his involvement with the budget committee and inquired about the distinction between making decisions that are favorable for Multnomah County or the Multnomah County Library District.

Chair Kafoury related that her understanding is that the LAB advises the MCLD Board. While she doesn't see any decisions that would harm one entity, ultimately, the LAB's role is to advise on what is best for the library.

With respect to the fact that the same people serve on the Board of County Commissioners and the MCLD Board, George Feldman inquired if the relationship between the LAB and these entities has changed since the inception of the library district. Ms. Madkour responded that the commissioners understand the need to change hats and focus on the best interests of the particular entities that they represent at a given time. The commissioners serve as several different district boards in addition to the MCLD Board. While the governance structure may seem complicated, this also offers the commissioners the opportunity to take a holistic look at all of the issues that face the community. Ms. Madkour reiterated that the LAB advises the MCLD Board and suggested that if the LAB felt that it needed a voice with another governing entity, the LAB members could discuss what issues they would want to communicate about on behalf of the library.

Ms. Stevens inquired about governing documents for the LAB. Ms. Madkour shared that the major foundational documents include the Multnomah County Home Rule Charter and Multnomah County Code. Ms. Madkour referred to the county code, which provides the LAB with the authority to create procedural documents that can include guidance on rules, decorum, expectations, etc. If such procedural documents do not already exist, the LAB can work together to create them.

Ms. Stevens inquired if, upon their creation, the documents need to be reviewed by Multnomah County staff. Ms. Madkour suggested working with the library director and offered that the

County Attorney's Office can assist if there are questions about legal issues. They can also help with providing information, guidance or assistance if there are questions related to public meeting laws.

Chair Kafoury related that she has appointed Commissioner McKeel as the liaison to the MCLD Board. Chair Kafoury also introduced Aaron Ridings, who works on library issues for her office. Questions from the LAB can also be directed to either of their offices.

Referring to the other district boards upon which the commissioners serve, Mr. Potter inquired if they provide anything to the commissioners that would be helpful for the commissioners to receive from the LAB. Chair Kafoury related that she receives and reads meeting minutes, including those from the LAB, and that she is in close contact with Ms. Oehlke so she is apprised of the LAB's activities. Chair Kafoury referred to the Advisory Committee on Sustainability and Innovation, which recently sent to her office a document that outlines the committee's priorities for the coming year. The tone of the document was thorough and informative and can serve as a template for future recommendations from the LAB.

Danika Stochosky shared that, with the the establishment of the library district having been accomplished, much of the LAB's concern focuses on how they can most effectively envision, communicate, support and advocate on behalf of the needs of the library and the community with the MCLD Board. Chair Kafoury encouraged LAB members to focus on issues in which they're most interested. Ms. Madkour suggested consulting the county code for specific and delineated direction about the LAB member duties. Ms. Madkour referred to *Multnomah County Code*, "Vol. 1: General Ordinances, Chapter 19: Library, § 19.005: Library Board General Powers."

Ms. Oehlke related that until the library district was created, long range planning was difficult. With more stability in funding, the library and LAB now have the opportunity to think more strategically. Ms. Oehlke shared that one of the current issues is space. Library services have been changing to support the needs of the community and we can expect them to continue to change. As director, she is focusing on responding to those changes. There followed a discussion on how the capital planning committee will be challenged to think about the future needs of the library community to determine how library building space will be best used to meet those needs.

Katie Lane shared that one of the things she appreciates most about programming is how it ties into other initiatives. In terms of long term planning, Ms. Lane inquired about what the commissioners understand to be some of the issues in the community that the LAB can consider. Chair Kafoury noted how each library branch has a distinct character that reflects its community. Chair Kafoury referred to the summer lunch programs at the Rockwood and Midland library branches and related that, because we believe that our government is here to provide services to those who need it the most, especially vulnerable populations, the library represents an institution that serves everyone. Chair Kafoury shared that she wants the focus to be on ensuring everyone has access and everyone is served, whether that is outreach for seniors, programming for teens after school, job search assistance, children who haven't had a

meal. With respect to the summer lunch programs, this may not be considered part of the library's mission, but staff saw the need and determined how it could be accomplished.

Ms. Oehlke discussed how the library resonates with the community beyond perceptions of conventional library services. She shared that she and her peers at Multnomah County have been engaged in conversations about the results of the Multnomah County Health Department's 2014 Report Card on Racial and Ethnic Disparities. While it is not commonly understood that the library has a role in an individual's physiological health, early learning and literacy have been found to be an important indicator and predictor of a child's health and success.

The group discussed the role of the library with other government agencies in addressing the needs of the community. Ms. Oehlke shared that the library partners with many agencies, including the health department. She reported that the library collects a significant portion of ballots cast during elections.

Mr. Feldman inquired about the allocation of funding to the sheriff's office and prisons and how that affects other county agencies, including the library and health department among others, and the proposal process for ideas that respond to this issue. There followed a discussion about the dynamic relationship between the LAB, the library and Multnomah County. Ms. Oehlke suggested that if the LAB has a proposal, they can develop it and it can be shared with the MCLD Board.

Chair Kafoury expressed appreciation for Ms. Oehlke's strong leadership of the library and the amazing work of library staff.

Chair Whitehead thanked Chair Kafoury and Ms. Madkour for joining the meeting.

Chair Kafoury invited the LAB to contact her if they need her to attend a meeting in the future.

### **THE LIBRARY FOUNDATION (TLF)**

Wes Breazeale reported that, in Willamette Week's Give!Guide, TLF ranked first in the education category. Mr. Breazeale shared that TLF is in the process of planning for the Summer Reading program. They will begin reaching out to the community for the purpose of soliciting prize donations.

### **FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY**

Magnus McDowell reported on FOL's first new book sale, the Give Twice Holiday Sale, which took place in December. Mr. McDowell shared that FOL approached the event with a \$3,000 goal and came out with \$8,400.

From recent donations, Mr. McDowell reported that FOL gave a dozen books to the John Wilson Special Collections.

Mr. McDowell reported that FOL will be convening its nominating committee to look at changing officers for 2015-16 and perhaps adding board members. Mr. McDowell invited the group to keep this in mind if they know of anyone who is interested in serving on the FOL board.

Mr. McDowell referred to a document he had shared with the LAB, which included information about Pairings Portland. FOL has been working with Pairings Portland on a fundraising event which will take place during January.

### **GOOD AND WELFARE**

Ms. Cooper reported that the finance committee will meet Wednesday, January 21, 2015 at Library Administration at Lloyd. Ms. Cooper described what board members can expect from participating in finance committee meetings and invited interested parties to contact her if they would like to attend. Ms. Oehlke shared that the finance committee will present a letter of recommendation to the MCLD Board describing where the budget will be best focused.

Ms. Stevens reported that she and Carlene Weldon communicated with the library coordinator, Venisha Bahr, of Gresham-Barlow School District. Ms. Bahr will be connecting with Martha Flotten, Administrator of Gresham Library. Ms. Stevens shared that the Gresham-Barlow School District is looking for funding to make it possible for libraries to be open at school sites that offer the summer lunch program.

Ms. Stevens shared that she saw quite a few families using the early learning play area that was recently installed at the Gresham library branch. Ms. Oehlke thanked TLF for making these possible.

Mr. Potter commended the initiative to help teens have their library fines waived during Teen Read Month. Mr. Potter inquired about the results of the program. Ms. Oehlke expressed appreciation for Katie O'Dell's leadership of the program and related that the results of Teen Read Month will be shared with the LAB at a future meeting.

Mr. Feldman thanked FOL for its sponsorship of the Pageturners program. He has been participating in the Pageturners: Classics events at the Hillsdale and Hollywood library branches and encouraged anyone who is interested to attend.

The next LAB meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 10, 2015.

Chair Whitehead adjourned the meeting at 8:39 am.

Respectfully submitted by:

Paige Hatcher

Administrative Analyst, Library Director's Office

Multnomah County Library, Oregon