

Library Advisory Board Minutes: December 8, 2015
For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board

The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met on Tuesday, December 8, 2015, at Central Library in the U.S. Bank Room. Chair Erin Cooper called the meeting to order at 7:30 am.

Board members present were: Sarah Alibabaie, Erin Cooper, Rob Edmiston, Elizabeth Hawthorne, Emma Keppler, Ya-Li Lizik, John Potter, Mardy Stevens, Carlene Weldon, Sola Whitehead and Elliot Zais.

Board members excused were: Marc Alifanz, Lois Leveen and Brian Wilson.

Board members absent were Jack MacNichol, Danika Stochosky and Maegan Vidal.

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 and Strategic Initiatives; Cindy Gibbon, Access & Information Services Director; Jeremy Graybill, Marketing + Online Engagement Director; Javier Gutierrez, Director of Collections & Technical Services; Rita Jiménez, Neighborhood Libraries Director; Katie O'Dell, Youth Services Director; Shani Fox, Administrative Analyst; Johnette Easter, Human Resources; Skylaar Amman, Internal Communications Specialist; and Paige Monlux, Administrative Analyst, Director's Office.

Also in attendance were: Commissioner Diane McKeel, District 4, Multnomah County; Peg Holliday, Friends of the Library; and Laura Fay, The Library Foundation.

The board approved minutes for the November 10, 2015 meeting.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Erin Cooper reported that the draft bylaws had been reviewed by Vailey Oehlke and Becky Cobb and edited per their feedback. The document will next be sent to and reviewed by the Multnomah County Attorney's Office, after which it will be brought to the LAB for final review and approval.

Chair Cooper shared that John Potter would be vacating his position on the board, effective after today's (December 8, 2015) meeting. Chair Cooper will not be attending the January 13, 2016 meeting. Given that neither the chair nor the vice-chair would be available to officiate the January meeting, Chair Cooper appointed Sola Whitehead as acting vice-chair and Ms. Whitehead will chair the next meeting. At the February 10 meeting, the LAB will begin the elections process to fill the vice-chair position.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

From the Director's Report, Vailey Oehlke highlighted the Best Books of 2015 application, which offers

library staff-curated reading recommendations. The interface allows users to filter titles based on category or audience.

FY 17 PUBLIC-FACING UPDATES

Ms. Oehlke related that the library is moving forward with a couple initiatives that will be included in the library's budget submission to Multnomah County for Fiscal Year 2017.

The first initiative pertains to the library's open hours. In 2012, library open hours were reduced due to funding challenges. In 2013, after voters approved the establishment of the Multnomah County Library District, library open hours were restored. Prior to their restoration, the library conducted a survey to determine which hours would work best for the community. Since then, the library has anticipated revisiting this subject and this initiative is intended to fulfill that goal.

The second initiative relates to the look and feel of the library. When the library joined Multnomah County in 1990, it became a county department and assumed the look and feel of the county. Much has changed since 1990. This initiative is an effort to refresh the visual identity of the library so that it brings to mind the library as an institution.

Ms. Oehlke invited Shawn Cunningham to provide further details about how the library would solicit input from the community regarding library open hours.

Mr. Cunningham shared that the survey conducted prior to the restoration of open hours gathered feedback through the website and paper surveys. Because this survey used a non-scientific method with self-selected respondents, the information it provided may not necessarily be an accurate representation of what the community as a whole really wants. Mr. Cunningham noted that a major segment of the population that was not represented included those community members who do not use the library. Currently, smaller library locations are open 53 hours per week, and larger locations are open 57 hours per week. Mr. Cunningham shared information about the open hours of peer library systems and those in geographical proximity to MCL.

The library is working with a research firm to develop and administer a statistically valid, scientific phone poll that will survey 600 households to completion, in English and Spanish. The open hours survey will be replicated and available on the library's website. A staff survey will also be administered. Mr. Cunningham shared that the phone poll is expected to launch the week of December 13th and should take less than a week to complete.

Mr. Cunningham introduced Shani Fox and invited her to discuss data the library has compiled related to library open hours. Ms. Fox shared information from the latest annual patron survey, conducted in May 2015, including specific comments and suggestions provided by patrons. Ms. Fox reviewed additional data, including in-person checkouts and checkouts per hour.

There followed a question-and-answer session with board members, during which the following was discussed:

- The library is working on acquiring better door count data. Current door count mechanisms do not provide adequate data.

- There are many facets to library use, including wi-fi use, desktop use, programming, in addition to checking out materials.
- Salt Lake City Public Library recently began a pilot to provide library services at its Main Library around the clock.
- There may be the capability to track public computer and wi-fi use.
- The open hours survey will collect data about respondents' demographics and satisfaction with the library.
- The open hours survey will include questions for patrons who use one location but would prefer to use another. There is also an open-ended question in which patrons can offer additional comments.
- The library will leverage current connections and networks to engage teens in the open hours survey.
- Once the open hours survey is active on the website, the link will be shared with LAB members to distribute to their networks.

With respect to the second initiative, Ms. Oehlke discussed how libraries as institutions have evolved and the importance of having a visual representation that evokes the library and the services it provides. Ms. Oehlke described work that has been accomplished leading up to this point, including the development of the library's three foundational pillars, supported by the Friends of the Library, and the adoption of a new mission statement, developed with input from LAB members. Ms. Oehlke thanked the Friends of the Library for making it possible, through the use of private funds, for the library to access creative expertise in the creation of a visual symbol for the library. A local firm was engaged for this work and a proposed logo has been developed. The library seeks input from LAB members as this audience serves as the library's initial access to the community. Ms. Oehlke asked board members to consider their reactions to the proposed logo and share those with the library.

Ms. Oehlke invited Jeremy Graybill to provide further details. Mr. Graybill shared that as library services continue to evolve, libraries will also sustain the services and resources that they are already known for providing well. However, data indicates that even the most avid users of the library are not aware of many of the services and resources the library offers. Mr. Graybill described the importance of having a visual cue that reflects and connotes the relevance and applicability of the library.

Mr. Graybill identified the characteristics of a good logo and presented the proposed logo to LAB members. The proposed logo makes a strong visual impression and has flexibility that will allow it to be applied to various mediums.

There followed a discussion during which board members conversed about their impressions of the proposed logo.

Ms. Oehlke and Mr. Graybill described the expected roll-out of this project. They will be engaging the Friends of the Library and The Library Foundation in the next couple months and convening focus groups of volunteers. It is anticipated that any revisions to the library's open hours and/or logo will launch on July 1, 2016. The LAB will receive updates as they are available.

THE LIBRARY FOUNDATION (TLF)

Laura Fay reported that TLF is in the midst of its year-end fundraising push. In Willamette Week's Give!Guide, TLF is number one in the education category and just outside the top 10 in all beneficiaries.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY (FOL)

Peg Holliday reported that FOL's Give Twice sale, held Dec. 4-6, 2015, was very successful.

The Friends of the Library's newly hired executive director, Jennifer Allen, will start in January 2016.

GOOD AND WELFARE

Carlene Weldon shared her experience at Gresham Library, where she received excellent customer service from Jay Hadley and Larry Lillvik after a printer crisis at home.

Sola Whitehead thanked the My Librarian team for the comprehensive list of suggestions they provided her family and commended the service for its ability to foster relationships with librarians in a digital environment.

Mardy Stevens thanked Mr. Potter for his leadership and participation on the LAB. Ms. Oehlke related that Mr. Potter has been integral to the operations of the LAB since his first term began. He led the finance subcommittee for a number of years and contributed much time to myriad funding efforts.

Mr. Potter shared about his positive experience serving on the LAB and thanked library staff and Commissioner Diane McKeel.

Chair Cooper adjourned the meeting at 8:41 am.

Respectfully submitted by:

Paige Monlux

Administrative Analyst, Library Director's Office

Multnomah County Library, Oregon