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**Library Advisory Board Minutes: February 9, 2016**

For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board

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The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met on Tuesday, February 9, 2016, at Central Library in the U.S. Bank Room. Chair Erin Cooper called the meeting to order at 7:31 am.

Board members present were: Sarah Alibabaie, Erin Cooper, Rob Edmiston, Elizabeth Hawthorne, Emma Keppler, Lois Leveen, Ya-Li Lizik, Jack MacNichol, Mardy Stevens, Danika Stochosky, Carlene Weldon, Sola Whitehead and Brian Wilson.

Board members excused were: Marc Alifanz, Maegan Vidal and Elliot Zais.

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; Jeremy Graybill, Marketing + Online Engagement Director; Rita Jiménez, Neighborhood Libraries Director; Shelly Kent, Human Resources Manager; Katie O'Dell, Youth Services Director; Dave Ratliff, Central Library Director; Chris Linn, Safety & Security Manager; Susan Voss-Rothmeier, Project Respond Library, Crisis Services; and Paige Monlux, Administrative Analyst, Director's Office.

Also in attendance were: Commissioner Diane McKeel, District 4, Multnomah County; Eric Zimmerman, Chief of Staff, District 4, Multnomah County; Matthew Timberlake, IT Project Manager, Department of County Assets, Multnomah County; Jeff Renfro, Budget Analyst Senior, Department of County Management, Multnomah County; Jennifer Allen, Friends of the Library; Kirsten Leonard, Friends of the Library; Laura Fay, The Library Foundation; and Nicole Morgan, Portland Community College.

The board approved minutes for the January 12, 2016 meeting with an amendment to the membership of the nominating committee.

**CHAIR'S REPORT**

Chair Erin Cooper reported that Marc Alifanz has agreed to co-chair the nominating committee with Mardy Stevens. At Chair Cooper's invitation, Ms. Stevens shared the nominating committee's timeline for new LAB member recruitments and recommendations. The nominating committee will solicit applications in March and April, conduct interviews in May, and recommend candidates for LAB approval at the June 14, 2016 meeting. The LAB will vote on forwarding the names of candidates to the Multnomah County Library District Board for final appointment as new LAB members.

**LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Vailey Oehlke shared that she had been invited to participate in the January 16, 2016 City Club Friday Forum, the topic of which was digital inclusion and tech equity for Portland. It was an opportunity to highlight the library's role in ensuring that community members have quality access to the Internet. Last

year, the library provided approximately two million free Internet sessions through quality broadband connectivity. Nearly one million of these sessions were via desktop computers and nearly one million were through WiFi sessions. At the City Club event, a patron shared her story of how access to digital literacy resources at the library had positively changed her professional life. The patron had met regularly with Carlos Galeana, Regional Technology Coordinator, and learned enough to earn a promotion at work. The event also included discussion around improving diversity in the technology industry and the connection between this initiative and the Rockwood Makerspace.

### **LIBRARY SECURITY UPDATE**

Ms. Oehlke shared that the library is investing in creating safer and more comfortable environments in library locations. She introduced Chris Linn, the library's first safety and security manager, and described his professional background and expertise. Mr. Linn started at the library in his current position a little over year ago and has been assessing the landscape and developing recommendations.

After thanking the members of the LAB for the invitation, Mr. Linn reported that he has been focusing on six priority areas: staffing and security; safety and security-related training; reporting and communications; policy and procedure review; facilities improvements; and partnerships with other agencies. Elaborating on each area of focus, Mr. Linn shared the following:

#### **Staffing**

Mr. Linn has been overseeing the development of a library-employed safety officer position. The Multnomah County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) has traditionally provided Facilities Safety Officer (FSO) support at libraries; however, staffing limitations have prevented the MCSO from expanding current services to additional locations. The library is planning on implementing the new position at four neighborhood library locations.

#### **Training**

Increased training in this area has focused on augmenting the safety- and security-related training for staff who serve in the Person-In-Charge (PIC) role and making sure they are as well-equipped as possible to meet and resolve challenges. At the same time, Mr. Linn has been developing safety and security training for all staff, enhancing current training to ensure all staff members receive resources and information about their role in keeping the library safe.

#### **Reporting and communications**

Mr. Linn is working with Multnomah County IT to develop a new incident reporting method with enhanced data analysis capabilities that will provide a clear picture of emerging challenges and aid efforts in appropriate resource allocation.

#### **Facilities improvements**

Security cameras are being assessed to ensure they are installed correctly and functioning as well as they ought to be. The library is implementing over time the installation of doors between public and staff areas and improvements to exterior landscapes.

## Partnerships

Early emphasis in this area has been on working with law enforcement, including Portland Police Bureau and Gresham Police Department, and with Project Respond and Crisis Worker Susan Voss-Rothmeier.

There followed a discussion during which LAB members shared their perceptions of the environments at various library locations. Factors that affect the perceived safety and welcoming nature of different locations include building design and interior layout, staff engagement, the visibility of security personnel and the nature of their interactions with patrons.

Mr. Linn related that the library is exploring changes in its general service model in terms of how and how often patrons are engaged when behavior concerns arise and/or persist. Years ago the library developed, with the Multnomah County Attorney's Office, behavior rules that describe expected conduct within the library. The rules are posted on the website and at every location. Mr. Linn encouraged board members to review the behavior rules, assess whether they are doing what they need to do to create safe and welcoming environments, and provide input to the library.

With respect to the anticipated library safety officers, Mr. Linn shared that the library wants to ensure environments continue to be welcoming. The library is exploring factors that will contribute to security personnel conveying a visual impression that is approachable and service-oriented, for example how they are equipped and what sort of attire they wear.

Mr. Linn invited board members to provide ongoing input and recommendations.

Ms. Oehlke introduced Susan Voss-Rothmeier, the library's crisis worker, and shared information about her professional expertise and the background of her role at the library.

At Ms. Oehlke's invitation, Ms. Voss-Rothmeier provided additional information about her professional background. Ms. Voss-Rothmeier described her process for connecting with people who can benefit from her services and gave specific examples of people with whom she has worked. Ms. Voss-Rothmeier's work schedule includes time at Central Library and rotating shifts at several other library locations. When she is not at a particular site, FSOs and PICs can contact her by phone. If safety issues arise outside of library hours, a 24-hour team at Project Respond provides assistance.

With respect to community partnerships, Ms. Voss-Rothmeier is hoping to broaden relationships with housing organizations in order to be able to refer people for their services. Housing is particularly challenging in Portland. Ms. Voss-Rothmeier is also connecting with other libraries around the country that have social worker services, learning about their programs, and determining what might be implemented at MCL.

There followed a discussion with board members. Ms. Voss-Rothmeier described her goal to forge relationships and conduct outreach to make her presence known so that over time, more and more people will recognize her as a resource. Rather than the larger work conducted by organizations, Ms. Voss-Rothmeier's is on an individual level. Terrilyn Chun shared that Programming & Community Outreach is exploring programming about affordable housing. There are currently organizations that offer ready-to-rent courses. Dave Ratliff provided information about how resources like the Rose City

Resource Guide are shared and the role of the PIC in determining when to engage Ms. Voss-Rothmeier.

Commissioner McKeel suggested that the library brief the Board of Multnomah County Commissioners on this topic, noting that County Chair Deborah Kafoury's priority is addressing homelessness and there are many resources that could be accessed. Commissioner McKeel shared that Travel Portland is working on a related initiative.

Chair Cooper invited board members to send any additional questions to her. She will compile what she receives and share the results at a future meeting.

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

Laura Fay reported that TLF is finalizing its part of the Summer Reading program. Many of the same sponsors as last year are involved and there are some in-kind gifts coming in as prizes. The Library Foundation is preparing for its spring fundraising campaign.

### **FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY (FOL)**

Kirsten Leonard reported that FOL has onboarded its first executive director in 42 years. Ms. Leonard described Jennifer Allen's professional background and shared that she has already made observations about how FOL can improve and expand. Friends of the Library is looking at how it can expand beyond its traditional activities in order to support the library.

### **GOOD AND WELFARE**

Lois Leveen shared a poem that was featured in a poetry box in front of her house and made an impact on a passerby. The poem was *Talking to Grief* by Denise Levertov.

Chair Cooper will invite board members to participate in an Everybody Reads book discussion group.

Chair Cooper adjourned the meeting at 8:37 am.

Respectfully submitted by:

Paige Monlux

Administrative Analyst, Library Director's Office

Multnomah County Library, Oregon