

Library Advisory Board Minutes: June 14, 2016
For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board

The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met on Tuesday, June 14, 2016, 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, Marc Alifanz, Erin Cooper, Rob Edmiston, Elizabeth Hawthorne, Lois Leveen, Mardy Stevens, Carlene Weldon, Sola Whitehead, Elliot Zais.

Board members excused were: Emma Keppler and Ya-Li Lizik.

Board members absent were: Jack MacNichol, Danika Stochosky and Brian Wilson.

Staff members present were: Vailey Oehlke, Director of Libraries; Terrilyn Chun, Public Programming and Community Outreach Manager; Cindy Gibbon, Access and Information Services Director; Jeremy Graybill, Marketing + Online Engagement Director; Javier Gutierrez, Director of Collections & Technical Services; Rita Jiménez, Neighborhood Libraries Director; Shelly Kent, Human Resources Manager; David Ratliff, Central Library Director; Jon Worona, Director of Digital Strategies; Berenice Creecy, Regional Librarian for Fairview, Gresham, Rockwood, Troutdale libraries; Patricia Morán, Youth Librarian, St. Johns Library; and Paige Monlux, Administrative Analyst, Director's Office.

Also in attendance were: Jeff Renfro, Budget Analyst Senior, Department of County Management, Multnomah County; Beth Levy, Friends of the Library; and Krista Van Veen, Friends of the Library.

The board approved minutes for the May 10, 2016 meeting as amended.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Erin Cooper shared that several board members provided feedback for the Library Advisory Board website. The project is approaching completion and the board will be kept informed as things progress.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Vailey Oehlke highlighted the recent announcement of the Multnomah County Library District Board's resolution to eliminate library fines for material borrowed on youth library cards and for youth materials. The response has been very positive.

Ms. Oehlke invited Jeremy Graybill to discuss Facebook data related to this announcement. Mr. Graybill related that the Facebook post reached over 106,000 people and garnered 2000 likes. Comments from other users reveal the tone of the response from the community. Ms. Oehlke thanked Mr. Graybill and the social media team for coordinating social media responses and noted the interesting, rich and real-time conversation that took place between library staff and members of the

public on social media channels. Though not the first, Multnomah County Library is an early adopter of waiving fines for youth patrons and youth materials. Ms. Oehlke has received inquiries from other library systems with questions about the process. The library considered revenue implications but ultimately determined that the benefit to equity and access outweighed the financial factors. Ms. Oehlke thanked Jennifer Steward in Account Management for evaluating and negotiating process implications and IT staff for developing back-end solutions.

Ms. Oehlke described the process for shepherding the initiative through to resolution. The FY 2017 budget was developed with the absence of estimated youth fines revenue. Ms. Oehlke conversed with each elected commissioner as the initiative progressed. Shani Fox, the library's data analyst, worked with Ben Harper, the county's development analyst, to create a marginalization map that displayed by zip code where library cards were blocked due to excessive fines. Neighborhoods with the lowest income and highest poverty had the most blocked cards. Just prior to commissioners' voting on the resolution, Katie O'Dell and Shawn Cunningham checked in with Multnomah County Commissioners.

Materials that are not returned within 49 days of the due date are set to "Billed" status and the charge is added to the patron's account balance. Often, if a patron is unable to pay a late fine, they won't bring the material back. The new process will allow patrons to return materials without being penalized. Last year, the library collected about \$330,000 in late youth fines.

There followed a discussion about the common misperception of how much fines contribute to the overall library budget.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Mardy Stevens shared that the nominating committee had two action items to present: the election of LAB officers and recommendations of candidates for appointment to the LAB.

The nominating committee moved to nominate Erin Cooper for a second term as LAB chair and Carlene Weldon for a first term as LAB vice-chair. By oral vote, the motion was approved unanimously.

Marc Alifanz read the names of the five candidates who would be presented for recommendation for board appointments, four to regular board member positions and one to a youth member position.

Rob Edmiston described the credentials of Thomas Dwyer. Carlene Weldon described the credentials of Lizzie Martinez. Mardy Stevens described the credentials of Cynthia Tseng. Marc Alifanz described the credentials of Christopher Williams. Mr. Alifanz and Elizabeth Hawthorne described the credentials of Alisa Folen.

The nominating committee moved to refer the names of the aforementioned candidates to the Multnomah County Library District Board for appointment to the Library Advisory Board. By oral vote, the motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Hawthorne thanked Ms. Stevens and Mr. Alifanz for their leadership of the nominating committee. Ms. Stevens thanked library staff for their assistance. Mr. Alifanz thanked fellow committee members for their collaboration.

An alternate candidate has been identified should one be needed and the committee has scheduled a post-interview meeting to discuss the process.

Lois Leveen suggested that the onboarding process could be more welcoming for new board members and shared that she would be happy to host a potluck before the July 12 LAB meeting. Ms. Leveen will identify a date for the event and connect with Mr. Alifanz and Ms. Stevens about communicating with new board members.

The director's office will forward the recommended names to the Multnomah County Chair's office for placement on the consent agenda at an upcoming meeting of the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners, acting as the Multnomah County Library District Board.

GUADALAJARA BOOK FAIR

Ms. Oehlke introduced Berenice Creecy and Patricia Morán who both work with recent immigrants and people who speak languages other than English and have attended the Guadalajara International Book Fair, to which the library regularly sends staff.

Ms. Creecy and Ms. Morán shared information about their roles at the library. As a Spanish bilingual regional librarian for East County libraries, Ms. Creecy serves members of the Spanish community and recent immigrants, helps East County libraries manage their Spanish book collections and coordinates staff trainings. Ms. Morán has been with the library for two and a half years. She is currently a youth librarian at St. Johns Library. Previously she worked at Central and as a selector of Spanish materials.

During their presentation on the Guadalajara International Book Fair, or FIL as it is commonly referred to (an acronym of its Spanish name, Feria Internacional del Libro de Guadalajara), Ms. Creecy and Ms. Morán focused on:

- What the fair is
- How it works
- Why it matters

Created in 1987, the FIL is the largest and most important Spanish language book fair in the world and a huge professional event with many librarians from the United States and Latin American countries in attendance, as well as authors and agents.

More than 1900 publishers from 38 countries are represented at the nine-day event, which is attended by over 20,000 book professionals, including 250 authors, and offers over 550 book presentations. The number of visitors increases every year, with 787,435 at the 2015 FIL.

Guadalajara is the second largest metropolitan area in Mexico, and the convention center, where the FIL is held, is the largest in Mexico.

Ms. Creecy described the diversity of audiences at the FIL. Hundreds of classes from around the state of Jalisco visit the FIL as well as people of all ages. The FIL's affordable entrance fee makes it accessible to a wide group of people.

Through its FIL Free Pass program, the American Library Association offers support for librarians from public, school and academic libraries in the U.S. to attend the FIL. In 2015, approximately 150 librarians

from the U.S. benefited from the program, which provides three to six nights of lodging, continental breakfast, registration, discounted airfare and reduced travel costs.

Ms. Morán shared that Multnomah County Library has been a leader in Oregon in terms of sending librarians to the FIL. Attendance at the FIL means that libraries can complement what they purchase through main vendors for their Spanish-language collections with independently published materials. It is helpful to review materials physically as it can be challenging to purchase items from catalogs with few reviews. Being able to offer access to quality and culturally appropriate materials has a great impact on the Spanish-speaking community. In addition to being available through the library's collection, Spanish-language materials support outreach, programming and curricula.

Citing demographic data from the U.S. Census and American Community surveys, Ms. Morán and Ms. Creecy discussed the importance of offering inclusive collections.

Ms. Morán and Ms. Creecy shared examples of materials in Multnomah County Library's Spanish-language collections, including those purchased through traditional vendors and those purchased through the FIL. Materials available at the FIL include not just books but also DVDs and music for children. Many items are not available through U.S. vendors.

In response to questions from board members, Ms. Morán and Ms. Creecy shared that:

- at the FIL, they primarily encounter librarians from the U.S. and Central American countries, many of whom face the same challenges.
- there is a Spanish-language book fair that is held in Spain and often librarians from European countries attend that event.
- many of the libraries who attend are part of Reforma, The National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking, which offers resources for small or rural libraries to get information about publishers and new titles.

THE LIBRARY FOUNDATION (TLF)

On behalf of Merris Sumrall, Ms. Oehlke reported that The Library Foundation is continuing to work on its current funding drive. The Library Foundation is interviewing children and parents from some of the programs funded by TLF and their stories will be shared in its annual report.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY (FOL)

Beth Levy and Krista Van Veen reported that Friends of the Library would hold its annual meeting on Wednesday, June 15, 2016. Six new board members will join the Friends of the Library board.

GOOD AND WELFARE

Sola Whitehead and Sarah Alibabaie shared that this would be their last meeting. Ms. Oehlke thanked them both for their service and noted Ms. Whitehead's steady leadership and contributions during her seven years on the board.

Ms. Stevens shared that one of the LAB candidates had suggested book carts in the same vein as Portland's famous food carts. Ms. Oehlke reported that during the capital planning process, the library will be looking at mobile opportunities.

Mr. Alifanz shared that the Summer Reading program is in high gear in his household. Ms. Oehlke reported that the library worked with Portland Public Schools to sign students up for the Summer Reading Program. Around 85,000 children were signed up at the end of the school year.

Chair Cooper and Terrilyn Chun discussed bingo cards for the adult summer reading program. Bingo cards are available this year.

Ms. Leveen shared that the Tour de Hives, a self-guided tour of backyard apiaries, will take place June 25 and 26, 2016.

Chair Cooper adjourned the meeting at 8:31 am.

Respectfully submitted by:
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