

**Library Advisory Board Minutes: December 13, 2016**  
For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board

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The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met on Tuesday, December 13, 2016, at Central Library in the U.S. Bank Room. Chair Erin Cooper called the meeting to order at 7:33 am.

Board members present were: Marc Alifanz, Erin Cooper, Thomas Dwyer, Alisa Folen, Elizabeth Hawthorne, Emma Keppler, Lois Leveen, Jack MacNichol, Mardy Stevens, Carlene Weldon, Brian Wilson and Elliot Zais.

Board members excused were: Rob Edmiston and Cynthia Tseng.

Board members absent were: Lizzie Martinez, Danika Stochosky and Christopher Williams.

Staff members present were: Vailey Oehlke, director of libraries; Becky Cobb, deputy director; Terrilyn Chun, Public Programming and Community Outreach manager; Cindy Gibbon, Access and Information Services director; Martha Flotten, interim Youth Services director; Jeremy Graybill, Marketing + Online Engagement director; Rita Jiménez, Neighborhood Libraries director; Shelly Kent, Human Resources manager; Katie O'Dell, Special Projects director; David Ratliff, Central Library director; Jon Worona, director of Digital Strategies; Natalya Bokov, bilingual Russian library assistant; Marina Nersesian, bilingual Russian library assistant; Angela Tveretnova, bilingual Russian library assistant; Bill Richard, volunteer; and Paige Monlux, administrative analyst.

Also in attendance were: Jeff Renfro, budget analyst senior, Department of County Management, Multnomah County; Commissioner Diane McKeel, District 4, Multnomah County; Marisa Lee, Friends of the Library; Dennis Bokov, private citizen; and Barbara Kerley, private citizen.

The board approved minutes for the November 8, 2016 meeting.

**CHAIR'S REPORT**

Chair Erin Cooper shared that the time is approaching for the nominating committee to begin its work. The committee will begin meeting in late January. Board members who are interested in serving on the committee are encouraged to contact Mardy Stevens, chair of the nominating committee.

The finance committee will also begin meeting in January.

**LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Vailey Oehlke highlighted the following items from the Director's Report:

- Multnomah County Library upholds principles of inclusion and intellectual freedom. Ms. Oehlke discussed the critical role of the public library. Jeremy Graybill shared that the inclusion

statement can be found on the library's home page and that it has been translated into the languages of the We Speak Your Language group: Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Vietnamese.

- Multnomah County Library launches Best Books of 2016. This is the second year the library has produced the list, which is available on the library's website. Titles were selected by library staff, and the list is sortable by tags.

### **SERVICES TO THE RUSSIAN-SPEAKING COMMUNITY**

Ms. Oehlke introduced the presentation and discussed the investments the library has made in developing services for the community.

Marina Nersesian, Natalya Bokov and Angela Tveretina shared their backgrounds and the responsibilities of their positions at Multnomah County Library.

Ms. Bokov shared a map of Multnomah County, which displayed by census tract where Russian is spoken at home. This informs where Russian speaking staff are allocated at library locations.

In 2006, the library conducted the Multnomah County Library Needs Assessment for the Russian-Speaking, Vietnamese, and Chinese Communities, a report funded by a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant. Based on the results and recommendations of that assessment, the library began hiring Russian-speaking staff. Currently, the library employs eight staff with Russian Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSA) designations. These staff meet four to six times a year to collaborate, plan and make decisions about services. This includes facilitating book clubs, building e-content, training patrons to use mobile devices, and providing recommendations to make the website welcoming and easy to use.

Russian We Speak Your Language staff can serve patrons representing 58 nationalities from 50 different countries.

Ms. Tveretina discussed the Russian language materials collection, which is available at six library locations. She discussed how patrons may request items and the importance of developing strong relationships with vendors to meet the library's needs in building a growing and healthy collection.

The highest circulating material format is books. One of the most popular programs is Russian storytime, which Ms. Bokov shared includes reading, singing, learning and making activities. There is also an annual fall craft program.

Recently, the library's popularity grew in the Russian-speaking community as a result of promotion through *Afisha*, a local Russian magazine, and the Slavic Family newspaper. Slavic Family media also broadcasts a monthly program, the Library Hour, a live program during which people can call in and ask questions. The program is also recorded on video and can be watched on the Slavic Family Radio YouTube channel. Ms. Bokov thanked Shawn Cunningham for his collaboration on these communication efforts.

The library has developed partnerships with schools with Russian language programs. Staff will visit the schools and present about child development during parent gatherings and do booktalks for older classes. A few classes regularly come to the library for tours.

Library programs for Russian speakers include computer classes, computer help, citizenship classes, Pageturners, Slavic New Year festival, storytimes, and arts and crafts programs. Ms. Bokov thanked volunteers who participate in these services.

Regarding the Slavic New Year event, the library has been organizing this program for the last eight years. It alternates location between Midland and Gresham libraries. The number of visitors exceeded 300 in 2015.

The Russian Pageturners program at Gresham Library piloted in July 2014. After a year, Friends of the Library began sponsoring the group, which is the first Russian language book group in the history of the library. The program officially started in 2015, and it now has 21 regular participants.

Library Outreach Services (LOS) conducts outreach to Russian speaking adults, including seniors and differently abled patrons, at their homes, in retirement facilities and at shelters. Patrons have the opportunity to check out items on the spot. Patrons in homeless shelters receive collections of withdrawn materials selected for them. The presenters shared a list of places where the library conducts outreach.

The largest annual community outreach is during the Slavic Festival, which was held this year at Ventura City Park. Library staff connected with more than 300 Russian speaking families during the event. The presenters thanked Gesse Stark-Smith for organizing the library's participation in the event.

This year's Slavic New Year festival will be held on January 15, 2017, 1 pm, at Gresham Library. There will be theater events, music, fun and presents.

In response to questions from LAB members, the presenters shared the following:

- Russian language storytimes are oriented towards providing a place where children will hear and see the language in a group that will foster communication.
- A couple months ago, the Russian Pageturners group gained a new member who is a writer. He would like to lead a children's group. Russian WSYL staff are considering developing a Russian language children's book club.
- Despite the many different nationalities represented by the Russian-speaking community in Multnomah County, the Russian language unites speakers.

### **HONORING COMMISSIONER DIANE MCKEEL**

Ms. Oehlke shared that this is the last meeting Commissioner McKeel will attend as a Multnomah County Commissioner as her second term concludes at the end of the year. Commissioner McKeel was an active board member who helped tremendously with the formation of the Multnomah County Library District. She has acted as a very important ally to the library and has been a wonderful source of support.

Ms. Oehlke shared that the library will honor her with a bookplate in the book, *Veterans Voices: Remarkable stories of heroism, sacrifice, and honor*.

Chair Cooper thanked Commissioner McKeel for her long term participation, support and dedication.

Commissioner McKeel shared that it has been a privilege to work with all of the LAB members and library staff. She learns something new about our libraries every time she comes to the meetings and believes that libraries are the jewel of Multnomah County. Commissioner McKeel served on the LAB before she was elected commissioner. The library is very fortunate to have Ms. Oehlke as the library director.

The new county commissioner liaison will be determined after the new commissioners are sworn in.

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

No report provided.

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

Marisa Lee reported that FOL participated in the Wordstock event on November 5, 2016. Sales were a little better than they were the previous year. The Laurelwood Pub Books for Beer event took place on November 15, 2016. This event takes place twice a year at both Laurelwood Public House locations. The Give Twice Holiday Sale on December 2, 2016 brought in a little more than the last year. Ms. Lee thanked everyone who stopped by or volunteered.

Friends of the Library launched its new website recently and they will soon have an Instagram feed.

### **GOOD AND WELFARE**

Liz Hawthorne shared that she recently visited the library in Vancouver, B.C. It is architecturally marvelous and was packed with a diverse group of people.

Mardy Stevens thanked the library for providing LAB members with the opportunity to participate in the facilities master planning survey.

Referring to a previous report from The Library Foundation about how the presidential election results will have affected library sponsors differently, Lois Leveen shared that it was helpful to learn that library donors have a variety of perspectives. It was also indicative of the need to learn how to communicate with people who have different opinions.

Chair Cooper adjourned the meeting at 8:29 am.

Respectfully submitted by:

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