

Library Advisory Board Minutes: March 14, 2017For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board

The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met on Tuesday, March 14, 2017, at Central Library in the U.S. Bank Room. Chair Erin Cooper called the meeting to order at 7:34 am.

Board members present were: Marc Alifanz, Erin Cooper, Thomas Dwyer, Rob Edmiston, Alisa Folen, Elizabeth Hawthorne, Lois Leveen, Jack MacNichol, Lizzie Martinez, Mardy Stevens, Cynthia Tseng, Carlene Weldon, Brian Wilson and Elliot Zais.

Board members excused were: Emma Keppler.

Board members absent were: Danika Stochosky and Christopher Williams.

Staff members present were: Vailey Oehlke, director of libraries; Becky Cobb, deputy director; Don Allgeier, director of Operations; Terrilyn Chun, Programming and Community Outreach manager; Shawn Cunningham, director of Communications and Strategic Initiatives; Sonja Ervin, Equity and Inclusion manager; Martha Flotten, interim Youth Services director; Cindy Gibbon, Access and Information Services director; Jeremy Graybill, Marketing + Online Engagement director; Javier Gutierrez, director of Collections & Technical Services; Shelly Kent, Human Resources manager; Katie O'Dell, Special Projects director; Jon Worona, director of Digital Strategies; Kirby McCurtis, youth librarian, North Portland Library; Alisa Williams, library assistant, Albina Library; and Paige Monlux, administrative analyst.

Also in attendance were: Jeff Renfro, budget analyst senior, Department of County Management, Multnomah County, and Krista Van Veen, Friends of the Library.

The board approved minutes for the February 14, 2017 meeting.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Cooper introduced a draft amendment to the LAB bylaws to reappoint board members in the same manner that new members are appointed. Mardy Stevens proposed an alternative option, which would revise the current language rather than add a new paragraph. There followed a discussion concerning the Nominating Committee's processes and the use of gendered pronouns in governing documents.

Lois Leveen made a motion for the LAB to vote on adopting the draft amendment. Brian

Wilson seconded the motion. The motion was passed.

Brian Wilson made a motion to adopt the draft amendment to the bylaws. The motion was seconded and passed with two votes in opposition.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- Bridging the digital divide at Capitol Hill
- Join us: capital planning meetings April 4, 5

Library Advisory Board members received copies of promotional flyers with information about the the capital planning meetings.

Noting that Becky Cobb is retiring at the end of June 2017, Ms. Oehlke related that the library is in the final stages of hiring a new deputy director.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

In advance of the meeting, LAB members were provided the Finance Committee's draft Citizen Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC) report to review. Jack MacNichol, chair of the Finance Committee, invited LAB members to share with him any grammatical edits to the report.

Mr. MacNichol provided an overview of the Finance Committee's role and shared that the committee met four times during January and February. Mr. MacNichol reviewed several major initiatives discussed in the report, including the library's reorganization of internal divisions, facilities and technology cost drivers, and the library district tax rate. The draft CBAC report recommends adopting the library budget as proposed.

Chair Cooper made a motion for the LAB to approve the budget recommendation letter with necessary grammatical corrections. The motion was passed with unanimity.

Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury will receive final CBAC reports on April 7, 2017.

Mr. MacNichol thanked Ms. Oehlke, Becky Cobb, Don Allgeier, Jeff Renfro, Jon Worona and members of of the Finance Committee for their participation in the process.

Ms. Oehlke thanked Mr. MacNichol for his leadership of the Finance Committee.

SERVICE TO AFRICAN AMERICANS AT MCL

Ms. Oehlke introduced Kirby McCurtis, youth librarian at North Portland Library, who will soon be serving as interim administrator at the same location, and Alisa Williams, library assistant at Albina Library.

Ms. McCurtis and Ms. Williams shared their professional backgrounds and experience.

There are currently 16 positions at the library with the African American Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSA) designation. Candidates' KSAs are determined through the application and interview process. The library strategically places KSA staff at locations based on demographics.

The African American KSA team is working with Marketing + Online Engagement to explore how to increase patron awareness of where they can find African American KSA staff. Currently, there are African American KSA staff at North Portland, Midland, Capitol Hill, St. Johns, Albina, Rockwood, Kenton, and Gregory Heights libraries.

Library Advisory Board members were invited to peruse the "Black Storytime Components" document, which served as the project proposal for the Black Storytime program. With funding from a federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant through Oregon State Library called Preparing African American Children for Kindergarten: A Library Planning Grant, Multnomah County Library conducted research and, in 2011, developed Black Storytime with the purpose to affirm Black children's self-esteem, impart an early literacy emphasis and mirror positive images of the culture while providing a window through which children can view themselves and others. Black Storytime debuted at Midland Library in June 2012 and expanded to North Portland and St. Johns libraries in September 2012. The program garnered significant media attention and interest from other libraries around the country, and inspired Ms. McCurtis's chapter in the book, "Libraries, Literacy and African American Youth: Research and Practice."

The library is working on an upcoming digital project, Our Story: Portland Through an African American Lens. Library Advisory Board members received copies of the promotional postcard about the project. The project intends to strengthen the library's bond with the African American community and share its story. Our Story will debut in spring 2018.

Ms. McCurtis and Ms. Williams described several library partnerships with other community organizations, including Creative Minds Academy.

African American KSA staff are starting a program for growing and helping urban farmers develop their plots. The first 20 participating families receive a starter kit. Staff are also working on adapting general programs to appeal to African American families, including comic book programs, author visits, writing workshops, poetry slams, music programs, film screenings, and programs about haircare and hair wrapping.

Ms. Williams described taking part in unique opportunities to connect with families outside library locations. She recently represented the library at two planning focus groups, one with African American teens and one with African American elders. Ms. Williams shared

input received from focus group participants.

Future goals of the American American KSA team include increasing cardholders by 5% and improving the collection of popular materials. The core goals are to make sure the library is connecting with the African American community and making the library feel like a community space.

Ms. McCurtis and Ms. Williams shared their contact information and invited questions from the LAB.

There followed discussions about:

- attendance at Black Storytime events. This varies by location. Black Storytime is most popular at the North Portland and Midland libraries, where attendance averages about 17-18 and 24-25, respectively.
- outreach work. Outreach is based on geographical areas. The majority of Ms. McCurtis's outreach work is with Albina Head Start. The library also conducts outreach with Self Enhancement, Inc., Black Parent Initiative, and other community groups that serve African American families.
- demographic reports. The library uses American Community Survey data as it becomes available.
- volunteer demographics. Katie O'Dell related that tween and teen volunteers represent more diversity of language and culture than staff currently do. North Portland Library has had a strong volunteer program for 20 years.

THE LIBRARY FOUNDATION (TLF)

Terrilyn Chun provided a report on a behalf of TLF. The Library Foundation's trustees and guests were impressed by the Everybody Reads author lecture with Matthew Desmond. More than 70 people attended the event on behalf of TLF and several attended school visits earlier in the day.

The Library Foundation is working on finalizing 20 funding agreements.

During spring fundraising, those who contribute to TLF will be able to double their giving amount through a matching grant.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY (FOL)

Krista Van Veen reported that FOL is seeking board applicants. Information is on the website and the deadline for applications is March 26, 2017. Friends of the Library is also hiring a part-time book room assistant. Applications are due March 19, 2017.

Friends of the Library Spring Sale is April 21-24, 2017 at the DoubleTree near Lloyd Center. They are looking for volunteers to fill about 500 shifts. The Spring Sale will include a literary

trivia contest on Saturday night and a first ever 50% off day for educators on Sunday, April 23, 2017.

Friends of the Library rented office space across the street from Central Library. They are moving in May.

Chair Cooper encouraged people to get together for an LAB trivia team.

GOOD AND WELFARE

Mardy Stevens shared that the Nominating Committee is continuing its work during the recruitment process. An interest form for youth members is now online and a flyer has been sent to libraries and teen volunteers. Library Advisory Board members received copies of the promotional flyer soliciting applications for the LAB. The April MCL newsletter will also include an announcement about the recruitment. The LAB has received 5-10 applications. All are well-credentialed. Each applicant receives an acknowledgement of their application from Carlene Weldon. The deadline for applications is April 30, 2017.

Chair Cooper remarked favorably on the Everybody Reads author lecture. Ms. Oehlke related a story from one of the school visits that the author participated in on March 9, 2017. There followed a discussion about rising housing costs in Portland and the potential legislative action the Oregon State Legislature is considering.

Lois Leveen shared a story about meeting fellow board member Elliot Zais at the Belmont Library. The encounter was a reminder of the library's role in facilitating access to technology and other activities.

Chair Cooper adjourned the meeting at 8:32 am.

Respectfully submitted by:
Paige Monlux, administrative analyst
Multnomah County Library, Oregon