

**Library Advisory Board Minutes: December 12, 2017**For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board

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The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met on Tuesday, December 12, 2017, at Central Library in the U.S. Bank Room. Chair Elizabeth Hawthorne called the meeting to order at 8:12 am.

Board members present were: Marc Alifanz, Chester Ching, Rob Edmiston, Alisa Folen, Elizabeth Hawthorne, Lois Leveen, P.K. Runkles-Pearson, Clare Wilkinson and Elliot Zais

Board members excused were: Erin Cooper and Mardy Stevens.

Board members absent were: Thomas Dwyer, Amaya Gustave, Jack MacNichol, Lizzie Martinez, Cynthia Tseng and Brian Wilson

Staff members present were: Vailey Oehlke, director of libraries; Terrilyn Chun, deputy director; Don Allgeier, director of operations; Shawn Cunningham, director of communications and strategic initiatives; Johnette Easter, human resources manager; Cindy Gibbon, director of policy and special projects; Jeremy Graybill, marketing + online engagement director; Rita Jiménez, neighborhood libraries director; Jon Worona, director of content strategy; Chelsea Bailey, communications strategist; June Bass, interim programming and outreach manager; Toan Lam-Sullivan, Chinese regional librarian; Rachael Short, librarian, information services; Sara Ryan, teen services specialist; Amy Miller, Teen Action Team char, library services; Danielle Jones, Teen Action Team vice char, teen librarian; Alicia Tate, teen librarian; Keli Yeats, teen librarian; Bobbye Hernandez, bilingual youth librarian; and Caitlyn Percell, administrative specialist

Also in attendance were: Jeff Renfro, budget analyst senior, Department of County Management, Multnomah County; Merris Sumrall, The Library Foundation; and Marisa Lee, Friends of the Library.

Lacking a quorum at the beginning meeting, the group did not formally convene to approve minutes from November's meeting.

**LAB Committee Update**

Lois Leveen shared that the "DigiCommittee" meeting which met on December 7, 2017 focused on the library's relationship with vendors that provide digital material, and how trends in digital borrowing affect the library budget and holdings.

**LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

No information shared at this time.

### **Community Engagement Report**

Chair Elizabeth Hawthorne invited Vailey Oehlke to introduce the Community Engagement Committee.

Vailey Oehlke shared that over the past nine years Multnomah County Library has shared a set of strategic priorities with an emphasis on staff who provide service in the community. Leading up to the capital planning process, the library wanted to consider new priorities based on community feedback.

The community engagement committee has specifically looked at the priorities that currently impact our community and how can the library help.

Ms. Oehlke introduced Shawn Cunningham; director of communications and strategic initiatives. Shawn is joined by Toan Lam-Sullivan, Chinese regional librarian and Rachael Short, librarian, information services, Central Library.

Mr. Cunningham shared that the community engagement committee was directed to gather feedback from community members to shape MCL's priorities and provide better service. The committee gathered staff from across the system including all language groups in order to bring together the connections to the communities in which they serve.

Mr. Cunningham provided more information on the work that was accomplished.

- Hearing from the community on their needs, hopes and barriers in order for MCL to serve them correctly.
- Doing that without the frame of the library in order to make library services more responsive.
- The community engagement committee also looked to sustain this work and systematize it in the future.

Library Advisory Board Members received the Community Engagement Project Final Report that provided tangible feedback from the community regarding strategic priorities.

Rachael Short shared that the community engagement committee began in August 2016 by supporting the capital planning framework. She noted that community members were eager to participate and that participation was done using the Harwood Institute Turning Outward methodology in which clear themes of safety, meeting basic needs, inclusion, recreation, education and transportation emerged.

Toan Lam-Sullivan shared that the goal of the community engagement committee was to gather feedback at five community events and 10 focused conversations. In the end there were 13 conversations and seven events that informed the group's work. These

conversations and events included people of all ages and backgrounds, including feedback in English, Spanish, Chinese and Russian. Mr. Lam-Sullivan concluded that those who participated shared a positive view of the library as a trustworthy government entity and were interested in becoming more active in the community with the partnership of the library.

Mr. Cunningham shared that community engagement committee started by evaluating the analysis in the feedback given from participants with the help of Shani Fox, administrative analyst and Gesse Stark-Smith; programming and outreach librarian, in order to make feedback actionable. Mr. Cunningham also shared that community building was the biggest response from participants and that many of the top responses are not typical to what we think in terms of what the library can do. This brings into question how the library can change our services to better serve communities?

Ms. Short shared that participation included for example teens working together to create block parties in order to build a better sense of community. Next steps for the community engagement committee included allocating MCL's resources and support to better serve the community which includes addressing and reflecting on the themes that emerged.

Clare Wilkinson inquired if the responses were nuanced in different neighborhoods and if individual libraries nuance their individual communities? Mr. Cunningham responded that responses were attributed to events or conversations, but not cross tabulated. He said that the community engagement committee can look more deeply into the results as the library looks to systemize those efforts.

Chester Ching noted much of the presentation was based on older immigrant groups, and inquired if some groups focused on newer smaller immigrant communities? Mr. Cunningham responded that the Rockwood Teen groups were engaged as well as other specific groups, but that future efforts can be more targeted and deliberate going forward. Ms. Short also added that there was more of a response from young people from African-American communities than from immigrant communities.

Chair Hawthorne inquired how the community engagement committee would operationalize "community building" and how the committee envisioned that. Mr. Cunningham responded that there was a common definition that incorporated different kinds of feedback into working together in order to solve problems. The next step will be for the strategic priorities group to use this information in order to determine how the library can be more responsive to the community.

Vailey Oehlke added that the goal was to reshape services and transfer resources to drive impact in the community. This would be done by putting more focus on how we convene people. Ms. Oehlke also added that by sharing lessons learned the committee can refine and change this process as the needs of the community change which is being looked at by the strategic priorities sub team.

Chair Hawthorne inquired about identifying current community leaders and bring them into the library fold and planning.

Clare Wilkinson inquired about the time frames for next steps. Mr. Cunningham responded that the the framework for next steps is anticipated to be part of FY19 Budget specifically program offerings. In the meantime immediate next steps include drafting priorities for the January LAB meeting to be put in the next budget proposal.

PK Runkles-Pearson inquired if library usership is proportionally represented in the results.

Mr. Cunningham responded that feedback from the community wasn't gathered from every area of Portland. This feedback was disproportionately from some groups and the goal is to help people with the fewest resources.

Lois Leveen added that some groups will require more effort than others.

Vailey Oehlke invited Library Advisory Board Members to bring connections to help us and a more formal invitation will be coming soon.

### **Teen Services Impact and Highlights**

Vailey Oehlke introduced the Teen Action Team.

Amy Miller, Keli Yeats, Danielle Jones, Bobbye Hernandez and Alicia Tate presented that Teen Action Team (TAcT) focuses on future teen professional needs and interests in underserved demographics. Libraries are hubs of the community where outside groups come to distribute information. This is especially important for teens as it serves as a safe third place for them to go outside of home and school. The Teen Action Team was able to engage teens through programming, volunteering, teen councils and special projects which included partnering with community organizations; Latino Network, Native American Youth and Family Center, Rosewood Initiative, Multnomah Education Service District and SnowCap among others. TAcT was also able to provide leadership opportunities including help from Library Advisory Board member Alisa Folen to organize an event for teens to become more politically active. The results of these efforts included boosts in confidence, encouraged teamwork and creativity as well as equitable services for all youth.

Ms. Miller shared that the value of teen spaces included empowerment and a sense of ownership while building new connections as well as creating the social and developmental needs of teens. The Gresham teen lounge served as an example of finding new ways to use existing corners of the library space to create a new zone for teens to utilize by including high interest materials. The future planning of teen spaces will include a space at the Hillsdale Library which is nearing completion, as well as a proposed space at the St. Johns Library. Ms. Miller noted that these spaces would be an exciting and educational opportunity for our future adult patrons.

Ms. Tate reported that as a result of this work teen cardholders increased by 11 percent while teen led programs increased by 173 percent as well as attendance in teen programs increased by 30 percent, largely due to the no fines for kids. Ms. Tate also concluded that in 2016 TAcT made an increased effort on creating teen led programs which included rebranding the Summer Reading Program to cater towards teenagers and not just grade school aged children. As a result of this there were 1200+ teen volunteers that contributed to 20,000+ hours of volunteer work in schools.

Katie O'Dell thanked the Teen Action Team and commented that the youth librarians are a unique mold in general due to their efforts in social service and a passion for kids and that they have a special place in our system.

P.K Runkles-Pearson commented that they are a very diverse group.

Chair Hawthorne thanked the Teen Action Technology Team. Chair Hawthorne noted that she would like help on recruiting new members with TAcT's help to replace Library Advisory Board member Alisa Folen when her term is up next year and to help with recruiting teens for the current open position.

Lois Leveen inquired about what is exciting that is happening with teen services in different libraries?

Sara Ryan; teen services specialist responded that it is not about what the library can do but what is the outcome for teens in our library and it is about what we do with teens. Ms. Miller also shared that nationwide libraries are seeing exciting programs surrounding teens in different areas that are relevant by letting teens lead the way. Ms. Tate also added that reaching that includes reaching out to teens of color in underserved communities as well and that the goal is to make them feel comfortable and encourage them to come to the library.

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

Merris Sumrall reported that Laura Fay, the Director of Major Gifts is back from maternity leave. Ms. Sumrall shared that fall is the busy fundraising season for The Library Foundation. They are thrilled to be matching every donor's gifts once again this year. Ms. Sumrall also announced that The Library Foundation has been selected, once again, to be one of 150 nonprofits in Willamette Week's GiveGuide! this year. The Give Guide's overall goal is to raise \$4.4 million from 10,000 donors. The Library Foundation has raised \$22,000 thus far through the GiveGuide! along with other funds they have raised this fall. The Library Foundation is now in the Top Ten with the GiveGuide!. Ms. Sumrall also shared that she hoped the Library Advisory Board got a chance to review the annual report that she brought to the November 13 meeting. In the annual report TLF featured some very touching stories of families who have been helped by the library programs supported by TLF.

**FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY (FOL)**

Marisa Lee shared that the Give Twice Holiday sale occurred on December 1-3, 2017 and with the support from library, FOL were able to raise over \$7,000. They have raised \$2,000 towards their goal of \$8,000 to fund a replacement trailer to cart books around for sales, and just received a \$3,000 year-end match from a generous donor. Ms. Lee also shared that they have processed more books than ever and as a result are looking to hire a part time employee for six months. The application deadline for this position was December 11. The FOL store will be open at 9 am for LAB members interested in holiday shopping.

**GOOD AND WELFARE**

Chair Hawthorne wished everyone a happy holiday and will see everyone in the new year.

The meeting concluded at 8:43 am.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Caitlyn Percell, administrative specialist  
Multnomah County Library, Oregon