The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met on Tuesday, January 9, 2018, at Central Library in the U.S. Bank Room. Chair Elizabeth Hawthorne called the meeting to order at 7:31 am.

Board members present were: Marc Alifanz, Erin Cooper, Rob Edminston, Elizabeth Hawthorne, Lois Leveen, Jack MacNichol, Lizzie Martinez, Mardy Stevens, Cynthia Tseng, Clare Wilkinson, Brian Wilson and Elliot Zais.

Board members excused were: Chester Ching, Alisa Folen, and P.K. Runkles-Pearson.

Board members absent were: Thomas Dwyer and Amaya Gustave.

Staff members present were: Vailey Oehlke, director of libraries; Terrilyn Chun, deputy director; Don Allgeier, director of operations; Aaron Bluitt, neighborhood libraries director; Shawn Cunningham, director of communications and strategic initiatives; Johnette Easter, human resources manager; Sonja Ervin, equity and inclusion manager; Cindy Gibbon, director of policy and special projects; Jeremy Graybill, marketing + online engagement director; Javier Gutierrez, collections & technical services director; Rita Jiménez, neighborhood libraries director; Katie O'Dell, programming and outreach director; Dave Ratliff, neighborhood libraries director; Jon Worona, director of content strategy; and Caitlyn Percell, administrative specialist.

Also in attendance were: Jeff Renfro, budget analyst senior, Department of County Management, Multnomah County; Julie Peterman, The Library Foundation; and Bridget Donegan, Friends of the Library.

The board approved minutes for the November 14, 2017 meeting. The board approved minutes for the December 12, 2017 meeting with an amendment to Lois Leveen's contribution regarding the “DigiCommittee.”

**Chair’s Report**
Chair Hawthorne invited Mardy Stevens to give a report on the nominating committee.

**LAB Nominating Committee**
Ms. Stevens reported that the nominating committee will be meeting for the first time this season on Tuesday, February 6, 2018, at 4 pm at the Isom Operations Center. The Library Advisory Board nominating committee welcomes every member on the Library Advisory
Board as well as any members from last season. The nominating committee will focus on creating a list of actions and a timeline. Ms. Stevens encouraged LAB members to speak with friends and acquaintances about serving on LAB. The Library Advisory Board currently has two positions that will be open, as two members will be ending their first term. The position of the nominating committee will be to ask member Brian Wilson and Chair Elizabeth Hawthorne if they would like to serve a second term. At the April Library Advisory Board meeting, nominations will be opened up for Chair and Vice-Chair respectively according to the bylaws. Ms. Stevens encouraged LAB members to please keep that in mind.

The two terms that are ending as of July 1, 2018 are Erin Cooper and Mardy Stevens.

Marc Alifanz noted that with Ms. Stevens departure, representation for East County will be thin and asked for recruitment of new LAB members to focus on East County. Ms. Stevens responded that she has connected with elected officials from East County requesting they connect with citizens and stakeholders who might want to step into this role.

Lois Leveen noted that when connecting with friends and acquaintances in terms of equity you get a lot of the same. Ms. Leveen suggested talking to Sonja Ervin, equity and inclusion manager to facilitate a conversation in order to diversify the Library Advisory Board. Ms. Stevens agreed to transition these changes moving forward.

Chair Hawthorne noted that Vice-Chair Jack MacNichol will be sending an email regarding the budget committee meetings and encouraged members to attend in order to gain insight on the county from a financial perspective.

**LIBRARY DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

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

- The 2016 Digital Inclusion Fellow was funded through a grant from the Nonprofit Technology Network (NTEN) aimed to bridge digital divide within our community using with the help of library partnerships. In particular, the Earn-a-Computer program in partnership with funding from Free Geek allowed participants to walk away with a free computer after the program concluded. The library will continue to try and secure funding to continue this program.
- Expanded support for educators: Ms. Oehlke noted that in June 2016 youth fines were eliminated and beginning in January 2018 there will no longer be fines for educator cards. This action seeks to remove barriers to the library and to reinforce support for student learning and public education.

Mardy Stevens asked if there is an interest to move and grow library partnerships to bridge the digital and community divide. Ms. Oehlke responded that, yes, that is the plan being considered at this moment but that the library does not have funding for another round of the Earn-a-Computer program. Terrilyn Chun deputed director concurred with this statement.
Lois Leveen noted that there is the potential to connect with tech industries in Portland in order to engage with people who are new to Portland and may not think about the library as a service they use or support the library in a way which we would like them to be. Ms. Leveen also shared that with Portland and Multnomah County changing this would be a good opportunity to gain their buy-in for future partnerships. Ms. Oehlke concurred with this statement and noted that a goal of this would be to tie into the energy in other ways. Ms. Oehlke noted that The Library Foundation has also been doing work around this effort.

Chair Hawthorne suggested that due to so many new people in the community, the library could connect with the Realtors Association to request they share information about the library system with new residents. Brian Wilson added that the number one request from families, according to the Realtors Association, is the location proximity to a library. Ms. Oehlke added that this is also a popular request among patrons.

Chair Hawthorne noted that the idea of a "welcome wagon" for new communities would be helpful and informative regarding library services.

**Library Priorities**

Ms. Oehlke introduced the library's draft priorities for 2019-2021. Ms. Oehlke noted that the shape of these priorities reflects the library's work and resources at the library, which are redesigned every three years due to constant change within the community. These priorities are meant to be a broad and high-level direction for the library about where the library allocates resources. In the past, the process has been fairly insular, working internally to identify these priorities based on community needs. The 2019-2021 draft priorities were outwardly focused, with the community engagement process helping inform the priorities. Ms. Oehlke thanked Shawn Cunningham, director of communications and strategic initiatives, and the community engagement team for their work on the community engagement project, which the Library Advisory Board heard about at the December 2017 meeting. The priorities team also surveyed staff to gather additional insight for shaping the priorities. Finally, library management shaped the the draft priorities based on their expertise on the state of public libraries and the impact areas where libraries should focus.

Ms. Oehlke charged the priorities team to take all of the gathered information and draft priorities based on input from library staff, the community, and library leadership, and then present them to LAB for feedback. Ms. Oehlke also provided further background on this process, including that the priorities are intentionally written at an eighth-grade reading level because they are shared with the public.

Ms. Oehlke asked LAB members to think about what they liked about the draft priorities and what concerns they might have. Ms. Oehlke noted that the next steps will move quickly, as these priorities will be submitted with the budget on February 16, 2018.

Ms. Oehlke highlighted the library's pillars, which were shaped with support from Friends
of the Library, to articulate what aspects of library service are immutable. Those pillars are:

- Free access for all
- Trusted guide for learning
- Leading advocate for reading

The priorities team added an additional pillar with the new draft priorities:

- A champion for equity and inclusion

In the Community Engagement Report, public feedback dictated community priorities in the following order:

- Community building
- Safety
- Meeting basic needs
- Recreation
- Environment
- Belonging and inclusion
- Diversity
- Education
- Transportation

The next step was to look at where the library can have an impact. The priorities team reviewed the staff feedback that was gathered in November 2017. Staff responded that the priorities should be based on:

- Education
- Belonging and diversity
- Community building
- Recreation
- Safety
- Meeting basic needs
- Environment

Ms. Oehlke noted that four priority areas were created:

These are intentionally broad. These priorities will be used to determine how we allocate our resources as well:

- Making a better community
- Focusing on those left behind
- Helping meet basic needs
- Respecting tradition, embracing change
Ms. Oehlke opened it up to the Library Advisory Board for discussion.

Mardy Stevens remarked that it's wonderful that the document is one page. Ms. Oehlke responded that this was intentional, as an outward-facing document, it is something everyone can take with them to recruit members or talk about the library. Ms. Leveen noted that the document communicates that the library is not just a place to get a book and the role of the library is well reflected.

Brian Wilson noted that the topics captured the dynamics of where the conversations in the community are happening. Mr. Alifanz added that these priorities track the new pillar of equity and inclusion and focus on it. Ms. Wilkinson also noted that the priorities reflect community engagement and community building.

Ms. Stevens suggested finding new icons to reflect the priorities. Ms. Oehlke stated that the icons are all changeable.

Erin Cooper noted that no one will disagree with any of these priorities and that they are all priorities that people can get behind. Ms. Leveen added that the priorities are not controversial but they might surprise some people. Ms. Oehlke agreed with Ms. Leveen and added that the library's role in the past has been to serve people with the fewest resources and that for the first time Multnomah County Library is outwardly stating this overtly through its priorities. Ms. Oehlke also added that there are services and programs that currently reflect these priorities, but it hasn't been stated at a top line level.

Feedback commenced on all four priorities points starting with “making a better community.”

Ms. Leveen suggested changing the title to "Strengthening a better community" to not rely on one institution to make this change. Ms. Leveen also noted that it might work better to have the third statement under "making a better community" placed first. Clare Wilkinson added that it might be beneficial to add a statement regarding have a neutral space for people to come together without discrimination. Ms. Leveen agreed with this point.

Feedback continued with, “focusing on those left behind.”

Ms. Leveen commented that the title for this priority was troubling. Further, community building and community empowerment are an asset-based approach and define the whole category. Lizzie Martinez added that the statement doesn't allow people to see themselves. Erin Cooper agreed and added that it doesn't address people on a whole spectrum. In particular, the statement focuses on people who might be "houseless," which is a concern. Ms. Cooper also added that she would like to see a statement that is more inclusive that would address people who are struggling but not left behind. Ms. Leveen added that the last point in this priority focuses on using public resources to make an impact and
suggested using that to reshape the wording for this particular priority. Ms. Oehlke responded that this is something that can be done, and the goal of these priorities needs to be clear.

Feedback continued on the next priority, “helping meet basic needs.”

Lois Leveen suggested using the phrase, "we work to provide safe and clean spaces.” Ms. Oehlke responded that the library cannot strictly guarantee that spaces are safe in every sense of the word. Vice-Chair Jack MacNichol added that it conjures the idea of internal services and facilities in regards to maintenance and that this is not a public-facing message. Shawn Cunningham responded that, in a way, it is about facilities and maintenance. Erin Cooper added that in terms of patrons coming to the library, facilities should be behind the scenes. Ms. Cooper wants patrons to be thinking about feeling safe and being included. Ms. Oehlke added that to happen, it's up to the library as an institution to meet the expectations the public has of cleanliness and comfort and the library's commitment to that is very real.

Clare Wilkinson added that there is a missing message of "welcoming" into these spaces, as some people might be intimidated to come into Central Library in particular, and she would like to see that come across in this priority. Ms. Leveen agreed that she would like to see the word "welcome" in this priority. Ms. Oehlke asked if there was any feedback regarding a partnership. Ms. Leveen suggested adding the word "organizations.” Ms. Cooper agreed with this suggestion. Lizzie Martinez asked for further clarification on who "others" are in this statement. Ms. Oehlke added that to happen, it's up to the library as an institution to meet the expectations the public has of cleanliness and comfort and the library's commitment to that is very real.

Chair Hawthorne noted that the word "partnering" is a limiting phrase and word. She noted that the library also leverages resources in the community and suggested finding another way to express that the library doesn't work in isolation. Ms. Oehlke responded that the library provides direct service through information, in addition to leveraging partnerships. Cindy Gibbon, director of policy and special projects, noted that there is a point that wasn't made and that is that the library wants to make these simple and accessible for a variety of abilities and languages. Ms. Wilkinson responded that she thinks this has been done wonderfully in relying on the priorities in a simple way. Brian Wilson noted that along the lines of what Ms. Gibbon was saying, he believes it's important to encourage people to ask questions. Mr. Wilson also noted that asking questions will help people feel connected and engaged.
Elliot Zais remarked that he wondered if people will ask about a food bank in the library and that if this was a possibility? Erin Cooper responded that this is done through the summer lunch program and that not all locations are in need of this program.

Feedback concluded with, “respecting tradition, embracing change.”

Lois Leveen noted that this category didn't come together as nicely as the others did. Ms. Oehlke responded that this priority captures the effort that was trying to be made. Ms. Oehlke also noted that this priority was in response to how the community is changing, while meeting to expectations from the public about the traditional institution of the library.

Ms. Leveen voiced concern about whether someone who doesn't work for, or is part of the institution of the library, would be able to look at these four priorities and understand this statement. Ms. Leveen noted similarities between the third and fourth statements. Erin Cooper and Marc Alifanz agreed. Mr. Alifanz suggested combining the third and fourth statement to align with the other priorities.

Lizzie Martinez made the suggestion to add simple language such as, “we listened to our community.” Clare Wilkinson noted that the library fosters a culture of learning and information seeking and this priority in particular is the missing culture of inquiry. Ms. Leveen noted that this piece is part of the top level mission statement. Lizzie Martinez agreed with Ms. Wilkinson and added that books are only in one pillar. Ms. Cooper remarked that this was intended to stop the panic that the book is going away. Ms. Oehlke added that this is the reality that the library is trying to convey. She further added that print checkouts are declining while digital checkouts are continuously rising.

Cynthia Tseng suggested changing the phrase "leading advocate for reading" to "the leading advocate for literacy" because of all the discussion around digital literacy and the change in the program, literacy would ring truer than reading. Ms. Leveen noted that the definition of literacy for most people would be the ability to read and not just the enjoyment of reading. Ms. Oehlke added that reading is an important value for the library to support which is why it is a pillar. Ms. Oehlke also noted that this document isn't meant to delineate every discrete thing the library does; moreover, it's meant to give a little bit of focus that is also in concert with the library's pillars and mission statement.

Other feedback given regarding the draft priorities:
- Rough design
- Icons need to be changed
- Dark background colors

Clare Wilkinson inquired about a program for staff to engage their community after the strategic priorities have been approved. Ms. Oehlke responded that the executive management strategic priorities subteam will be in charge of the second phase to engage
staff and manifest these priorities on the ground level by engaging the public as well as understanding.

Mardy Stevens inquired whether there is a metric used to measure the success of these priorities. Ms. Oehlke responded that there is a metric used.

Ms. Oehlke thanked the library board members for their feedback. Ms. Oehlke also noted that LAB has a unique role of gaining an inside look with more knowledge about the library than the average patron as well as being members of the community. Ms. Oehlke invited LAB members to share any further feedback they might have. Ms. Oehlke noted that the draft priorities are in the finalization process and reminded LAB members that this will be a continuation of change for the library in the next three years. Ms. Oehlke also noted that the library will be reflecting on this process since it was new for this year.

Chair Hawthorne inquired about how the priorities will be used once they are finalized. Ms. Oehlke responded that she personally uses the priorities to speak with elected officials and members of the community. Ms. Oehlke also reported that staff use these priorities in terms of thinking about projects and programs that are being created. These priorities are part of the larger picture in terms of how MCL looks at how we drive services and programs as well as how to talk to the community.

Chair Hawthorne inquired if these priorities are used when interviewing potential staff. Ms. Oehlke responded that MCL does and interview panels are always happy to hear when the priorities are referenced.

Ms. Oehlke thanked Lois Leveen and the rest of the Library Advisory Board members for their time spent reviewing these priorities and for their feedback. Ms. Oehlke reminded LAB members that next steps include more work on the priorities before they will be included in the budget that will be submitted on February 15, 2018.

Chair Hawthorne thanked Ms. Oehlke for the wonderful presentation.

**THE LIBRARY FOUNDATION (TLF)**

Julie Peterman noted that the busiest fundraising season is wrapping up for the Library Foundation and it was extremely successful. The Library Foundation participated in the Willamette Week’s Give!Guide and placed ninth overall. Next up for TLF is gearing up for Summer Reading. Their goal for Summer Reading this year is to raise over $40,000 incentive prizes.

**FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY (FOL)**

Bridget Donegan noted that the Friends of the Library recently had their holiday sale in early December 2017 and reported that it was very successful. Ms. Donegan also noted that they have a lot of new merchandise and books in the store. Ms. Donegan reported that due to an increase in sales on Amazon and eBay they have an ongoing source of funding.
The crowdfunding for the new book trailer surpassed its goal of $8,000; a final total was not given. Ms. Donegan also reminded LAB members of the “Friends and Family Night” at McMenamins Market Street Pub in downtown Portland on Tuesday, February 27, 2018. Fifty percent of all food revenue will go to Friends of the Library.

GOOD AND WELFARE
Chair Hawthorne invited Vice-Chair Jack MacNichol to speak about the LAB finance committee.

Vice-Chair Jack MacNichol informed LAB members that it is budget season. The finance committee will meet starting on January 18, 2018 for the next six weeks on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 4:30-5:30 pm at the Library Administration building. Mx. MacNichol noted that some LAB members are required to be on the committee and information will be included in an email. Mx. MacNichol provided an overview of the finance committee's role and encouraged new members to join in an effort to understand how the library operates. Erin Cooper added that the finance committee is a good way for new members to see how the county operates, not just the library.

Chair Hawthorne thanked Vice-Chair MacNichol for the updates regarding the finance committee.

Lois Leveen noted that she trains Vista Volunteers which is similar to the Peace Corps. Ms. Leveen wrote the new training and included an example of how the public can use the library in the community to help people understand that people put different values in the same asset for community engagement. Ms. Leveen thanked the Library Advisory Board for the opportunity where she gained the knowledge to write this training.

Mardy Stevens inquired whether the Friends of the Library could host an event in East County.

The meeting concluded at 8:31 am.

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