Library Advisory Board Minutes: September 11, 2018
For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board

The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met on Tuesday, September 11, 2018, at Central Library in the U.S. Bank Room. Chair Elizabeth Hawthorne called the meeting to order at 7:32 am.

Board members present were: Marc Alifanz, Chester Ching, Erin Cooper, Thomas Dwyer, Rob Edmiston, Elizabeth Hawthorne, Willow Kelleigh, Lois Leveen, Jack MacNichol, Lizzie Martinez, P.K. Runkles-Pearson, Bethel Sishu, Cynthia Tseng, Brian Wilson, and Elliot Zais.

Board members excused were: Brendan Gallagher and Clare Wilkinson.

Staff members present were: Don Allgeier, director of operations; Aaron Bluitt, neighborhood libraries director; Terrilyn Chun, deputy director; Shawn Cunningham, director of communications and strategic initiatives; Sonja Ervin, equity and inclusion manager; Cindy Gibbon, director of policy and special projects; Jeremy Graybill, marketing and online engagement director; Javier Gutierrez, collections and technical services director; Katie O'Dell, programming and outreach director; Vailey Oehlke, director of libraries; Jon Worona, director of content strategy; Maddelyn High, director's assistant; and Seana Lane, Summer Reading program coordinator.

Also in attendance were: Jeff Renfro, Office of County Management, Multnomah County; Hayden Miller, Commissioner Vega Pederson’s office, Multnomah County; Julie Peterman, The Library Foundation; and Bridget Donegan, Friends of the Library.

The board approved the minutes for the July 10, 2018 meeting with changes.

Chair’s Report
Chair Elizabeth Hawthorne asked for a motion from the Nominating Committee to renew membership for three LAB members at the end of their current terms. Marc Alifanz moved to recommend Hawthorne, Brian Wilson, and Erin Cooper for second terms running July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2022. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The names of all three members will be referred to the Multnomah County Library District Board for reappointment.

Chair Hawthorne invited comments for a plan to rotate LAB meeting locations, and a discussion ensued. Lizzie Martinez expressed strong support for rotating locations. Cooper raised a concern that changing meeting times might sacrifice continuity — a current condition for board service is attendance at meetings at the currently scheduled time and location. Jack MacNichol noted this condition may be exclusionary for folks in East County. Cooper offered that LAB might start this process by rotating locations every other meeting and Lois Leveen suggested the decision about meeting times be considered separately from meeting locations. Leveen emphasized the
importance of demonstrating LAB is a countywide body and not a downtown group, and asked that discussion be centered on equity and the good of the library system. P.K. Runkles-Pearson echoed this sentiment. Vailey Oehlke recommended staff provide a list of branches best suited for meetings and asked that an LAB subteam work with staff on logistics for a proposal at the October meeting. Leveen, Martinez, MacNichol, and Cynthia Tseng volunteered to lead this effort.

Leveen asked DigiCommittee to let her know in advance if they're unable to attend committee meetings. Non-committee members are welcome to attend when there is space, and should contact Leveen if interested. The next meeting is Thursday, October 4 at 4:30 at Central Library and will include an update on San Jose Public Library’s vendor audit and the Library Music Project.

**Library Director’s Report**
Director of Libraries Vailey Oehlke recapped an incident on August 29 at Central Library's welcome desk in which a library employee was attacked by a patron. Oehlke acknowledged that this incident was upsetting and reiterated that safety and security have long been priorities for MCL. This incident has reignited conversations about how MCL can best address challenges that, faced by our larger community, are also experienced in libraries. MCL supports staff in meeting these challenges, and will continue to consider practices, policies, and staff suggestions to advance library safety. MCL is committed to libraries being as safe as possible, and thousands of community members visit library locations daily without incident. For many patrons, the library is a lifeline and an incredibly important resource. Oehlke thanked staff who have helped the library navigate this reality and this incident.

Oehlke welcomed questions from those attending the meeting. Cooper asked about changes made to the welcome desk, which Oehlke shared is closed while the library considers any longer-term changes. Leveen asked about opportunities to learn alongside other library systems dealing with similar issues. Oehlke responded that she frequently discusses safety and security efforts with library directors across the country, and that other library staff are also involved in national conversations on these issues that inform MCL’s work. In response to a question from Runkles-Pearson about what other steps have been suggested, Oehlke noted the library considers where more uniformed presence might be appropriate on an ongoing basis. However, there's a trade-off in terms of the message that increased security presence sends to marginalized communities with negative law enforcement experiences. Other steps to address safety and security include enhanced training; additional facilities-related improvements; and seeking additional support from service providers in the county and elsewhere in the community.

Oehlke also highlighted Drag Queen Storytime, a new MCL program offered at many libraries across the country. Storytimes are presented by local Drag Queens who receive storytime training from library staff and read children’s books, sing children’s songs, and lead children in craft activities or dance parties. The program helps demonstrate that the library is for everyone, and has been well-received. Attendance at the second Drag Queen Storytime was double attendance at the first event. This program runs through October, and more information is available on the events page of the library’s website.
**Capital Planning Update**

Oehlke referenced the library's [Framework for Future Library Spaces](#), which was adopted by the Multnomah County Library District Board in June 2017. The board directed the library to undertake necessary due diligence to determine which library spaces might be expanded or relocated. The framework also includes a recommendation to double the library's physical footprint to meet a library standard on square foot per patron, and the goal is to do that within existing space as much as possible in a way that prioritizes equity. The library has started engaging county service providers and other municipalities about their plans for the future and any opportunities for co-location. Internally, the library is also examining staffing models in relation to reimagined library spaces, the library's current and future services, and financial sustainability. The library will also consider automated materials handling, standard technology utilized by many of our neighboring library systems. The library will ask for and welcome input from LAB, staff, and the public at different times throughout the due diligence phase. Oehlke noted that the Library Advisory Board will be an important resource in this effort.

**2018 Summer Reading Program Update**

Oehlke introduced Summer Reading Program Coordinator Seana Lane, who gave an annual report on the library's Summer Reading program for 2018. The library has offered a summer reading program for over 100 years, and the program is refined each year. Lane thanked The Library Foundation for its integral support of this program, and recognized the library's new Manager of Volunteer Services Becky Blumer for her willingness to dive in shortly after joining MCL to help make Summer Reading a success. Over 900 volunteers supported Summer Reading in 2018.

By the end of 5th grade, underserved kids are nearly three grade levels behind their peers in reading skills. Reading 20 minutes a day can reduce gaps in performance by 5th grade, slowing what's known as the “summer slide.”

Lane shared overall program results for 2018, including the program's amazing reach:

- 98% of elementary-aged kids receive a Summer Reading game board.
- Over 111,000 participants signed up for Summer Reading in 2018.
- Another ~10,000 youth were reached through outreach classroom games.

In addition, Lane highlighted some Summer Reading focuses for this year, including:

- Moving to a daily reading model from focus on a certain number of books: Research shows that reading daily supports a jump from standardized scores in the 70th percentile for kids who read 10 minutes a day up to the 90th percentile for kids reading 20 minutes a day.

- Transitioning to an online tracking interface for high school participants: The library conducted focus groups and user testing with teens, who especially loved curated book lists and the [Do-Make-Share-Win contest](#) focused on reading response. Teens submitted work inspired by a book, character, or author, including alternative cover art, poems, recipes, and more. Nearly 500 teens participated in the first year, and the hope is for even higher participation in 2019 with increased marketing.
● Expanding the library's partnership with Home Forward to offer “Summer Reading in a Box,” a pilot program to reach more underserved youth. Library staff worked with ten Home Forward sites in 2018, training onsite recreation coordinators to administer a community reading game. This program may expand to more community groups in 2019.

● Improving culturally-responsive outreach, including a new Spanish-language gameboard and outreach materials, and increased engagement with the library's We Speak Your Language and Black Cultural Library Advocate staff.

● Providing transportation assistance: The library piloted a transit assistance program for volunteers this year through a partnership with TriMet. Access to volunteer opportunities is an equity issue, and this program allowed volunteers who self-identified as needing transit assistance to obtain it.

The Library Foundation (TLF)
Katie Winters shared that TLF has started gathering information for its annual end-of-the-year report. The foundation had the opportunity to sit down with families with deep ties to or large impacts from the library. TLF looks forward to sharing results with LAB and MCL.

Friends of the Library (FOL)
Bridget Donegan announced that FOL's new Executive Director Jackie Starr will join the organization this week. Bridget also shared that FOL was chosen to be a nonprofit beneficiary of the Trail Blazers Foundation's 5050 Raffle at a January Trail Blazers game. FOL will receive 25% of net raffle proceeds. Bridget also invited meeting attendees to the Friends' Fall Used Book Sale October 26-29 at the Lloyd Center Doubletree Hotel.

Good and Welfare
Several folks highlighted a recent op-ed in the New York Times on civil society and libraries.

Leveen shared a negative experience in another library's rare book room that left her feeling grateful for MCL librarian Jim Carmin's skill in staffing the John Wilson Special Collections.

Erin Cooper expressed excitement about 2019 Everybody Reads selections, Americanah and We Should All Be Feminists by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Oehlke thanked The Library Foundation for its support of this program, which allows the library to purchase copies of these books, and invited LAB to attend Adichie's speaking event with Literary Arts on Thursday, March 14, 2019 at 7:30 pm at Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall.

Chair Hawthorne adjourned the meeting at 8:41 am.

Respectfully submitted by:
Maddelyn High, director's assistant
Multnomah County Library, Oregon