
Library Advisory Board Minutes: May 14, 2019
For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board

The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board met on Tuesday, May 14, 2019, 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:, Clare Wilkinson, Chester Ching, Elizabeth Hawthorne, Elliot Zais, Erin Cooper, Lizzie Martinez, Lois Leveen, Marc Alifanz, Quinn MacNichol, Rob Edmiston, and Thomas Dwyer. P.K. Runkles-Pearson and Willow Kelleigh were excused. Bethel Sishu, Brendan Gallagher, Brian Wilson, and Cynthia Tseng were absent.

Staff members present were: Cindy Gibbon, director of policy and special projects; Dave Ratliff, neighborhood libraries director; Don Allgeier, director of operations; Javier Gutierrez, collections and technical services director; Jeremy Graybill, marketing and online engagement director; Johnette Easter, human resources manager; Jon Worona, director of content strategy; Rita Jimenez, neighborhood libraries director; Shawn Cunningham, director of communications and strategic initiatives; Sonja Ervin, equity and inclusion manager; Terrilyn Chun, deputy director; Vailey Oehlke, director of libraries; Seana Lane, Summer Reading program coordinator; Becky Blumer, volunteer services manager; and Maddelyn High, director's assistant.

Also in attendance were: Commissioner Lori Stegmann, District 4, Multnomah County; Nathan Clark, District 4, Multnomah County; Jeff Renfro, Office of County Management, Multnomah County; Meryl Cole, The Library Foundation; and Laura Fey, Friends of the Library.

CHAIR'S REPORT

The board approved the minutes for the April 9, 2019 meeting, and Elizabeth Hawthorne thanked Erin Cooper for chairing last month's meeting.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT & CAPITAL PLANNING UPDATE

Director of Libraries Vailey Oehlke reminded that the library is in the midst of rolling out its new integrated library system (ILS), which has meant long hours for some staff. Oehlke asked Director of Content Strategy Jon Worona to provide an update on implementation.

Worona shared that a snapshot of up-to-date data was captured from the previous system right before the library transitioned to a short period of operating offline. All transactions in offline mode are captured and stored and will be synched when the new system goes live May 16. There were no major issues to report during the first day of offline circulation.

Oehlke thanked Worona for the update, and encouraged LAB members to say hello and cheer on frontline library staff if they visit any branches this week.

Oehlke also gave an update on the first meeting of the library's capital planning committee. This meeting gave community and business leaders an overview of the library's space planning needs and the [Framework for Future Library Spaces](#). Lizzie Martinez is serving as a representative for both LAB and the library at these meetings, and Oehlke asked Martinez to share impressions. Martinez noted that a lot of what was shared at the first committee meeting are issues LAB has been hearing about from library staff for some time. Martinez also offered to collect and voice any questions from LAB members. Oehlke noted that the library is now focused on cost estimates, and the committee's next meeting will take place in June.

Clare Wilkinson asked about timing for reconvening LAB's capital planning committee. Oehlke responded that reconvening will be considered after the current group has wrapped up its meetings and work.

Oehlke closed by noting that the library recently presented its proposed Fiscal Year 2020 budget to the Board of County Commissioners. Oehlke thanked Quinn MacNichol for representing LAB again this year at the library's presentation, and also thanked the Finance Committee for its important role in this process. The county's budget will be finalized May 30.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE UPDATE

Martinez announced that LAB has nine applications from prospective new members (several from East County), and thanked everyone for their outreach efforts. The Nominating Committee will conduct interviews and call references, and bring a slate of recommended candidates for LAB's consideration at the June meeting. Martinez asked folks who have any interview questions they'd like the Nominating Committee to ask to please send those to her. Hawthorne reminded that after LAB votes on new applicants, recommendations are referred to the Library District Board for approval.

Lois Leveen asked that LAB respond to any applicants that don't move forward by sharing other opportunities to get involved with and support the library.

Martinez reminded that LAB will also introduce candidates for Chair and Vice-Chair at the June meeting, and asked those interested in either position to let the Nominating Committee know.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION (DEI) CHANGES TO SUMMER READING

Oehlke introduced Summer Reading Program Coordinator Seana Lane, who oversees the library's [Summer Reading program](#) and has done a lot of work to reenvision this important program. Lane shared that many positive changes made to this program started with the work of the Volunteer Services team, led by Volunteer Services Manager Becky Blumer.

Blumer shared some of the work Volunteer Services has done related to youth volunteers, based on surveys and interviews with both volunteers and staff. Recent changes include revising the library's volunteer application to remove othering language; offering opt-in gender pronoun buttons; expanding Trimet assistance; and a pilot to reserve some volunteer spots folks with specific language skills. Volunteer Services also developed a letter (translated into six languages) that explains the Summer Reading program and youth volunteer commitments to parents.

Volunteer Services is reporting record fill rates for Summer Reading volunteer slots this year. Summer Reading staff have also worked closely with The Library Foundation to retool the prizes participants earn, based on considerations like transportation access for entertainment prize packages and what prizes are of particular interest for different age groups (like Bluetooth earbuds and recycled journals for teens). Prizes are also increasingly sourced from small, local businesses, which can have the added benefit of building relationships between the local business community and library branches.

Lane noted that the library's programming and community outreach staff worked hard to line up summer programming in time for promotional brochures to go out to K-5 schools ahead of Summer Reading. The brochures highlight summer programming available by region. Summer Reading kick-off parties will also take place at HomeForward partner sites at New Columbia Apartments on June 26 and at Rockwood Station on June 29. Several other community partners will be onsite, and offerings include food from vendors chosen with partners (funded by The Library Foundation); library card and Summer Reading sign-up; and popular youth programs. Thousands of new, quality books will also be given away thanks to a grant from the National Book Foundation. Diverse staff will be present at both events, and the goal of events like these is to demonstrate that the library is relevant to all communities.

Lane also shared that the library's [Summer Reading To Go program](#), which started with Home Forward, had 12 site partners last summer and the hope is for 20-25 partners this year. Kits are delivered to site partners who work with kids of the same age group for about six weeks. To-go kits include instructions and tips for site contacts to encourage literacy; Summer Reading gameboards and prizes; and books of high interest.

Oehlke thanked Lane and Becky, adding that this program is an example of leading with equity to identify barriers and how to mitigate them. Hawthorne thanked Lane and Blumer for their presentation, and for this work.

THE LIBRARY FOUNDATION (TLF)

Major Gifts Director Laura Fay shared that TLF has six weeks to go in its spring campaign, and the foundation has hired a new office manager (Alyssa Reed) to replace longtime staffer Tina Tam.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY (FOL)

FOL board member Meryl Cole reported that the Spring Used Book Sale raised a record \$89,000 and engaged 270 volunteers over 1,400 hours (the equivalent of \$35,000 in donated time). The Fall Used Book Sale will take place October 4-7 and FOL is seeking a new venue for this and future sales. Cole asked those with connections to any potential venues to get in touch with FOL. Venue criteria includes easy access via public transit; parking access; 8,000-10,000 square feet; and public restroom access.

GOOD & WELFARE

Oehlke shared about her recent involvement in library-related efforts happening at regional and national levels, including:

- Serving on the interview committee for Portland State University's new librarian
- Participating in ongoing conversations between libraries and publishers about new business models for digital content (which are not necessarily in the best interest of public libraries)
- Serving on the steering committee to reexamine the role and structure of the American Library Association

Hawthorne adjourned the meeting at 8:17 am.

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