

**Library Advisory Board Minutes: June 11, 2019**  
For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board

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The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board met on Tuesday, June 11, 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: Bethel Sishu, Brendan Gallagher, Brian Wilson, Clare Wilkinson, Cynthia Tseng, Elizabeth Hawthorne, Elliot Zais, Lizzie Martinez, Lois Leveen, Marc Alifanz, P.K. Runkles-Pearson, Quinn MacNichol, Rob Edmiston, and Willow Kelleigh. Erin Cooper and Thomas Dwyer were excused. Chester Ching was absent.

Staff members present were: Cindy Gibbon, director of policy and special projects; Don Allgeier, director of operations; Jeremy Graybill, marketing and online engagement director; Johnette Easter, human resources manager; Jon Worona, director of content strategy; Katie O'Dell, programming and outreach director; Shawn Cunningham, director of communications and strategic initiatives; Sonja Ervin, equity and inclusion manager; Terrilyn Chun, deputy director; Vailey Oehlke, director of libraries; and Maddelyn High, director's assistant.

Also in attendance were: Commissioner Lori Stegmann, District 4, Multnomah County; Layan Ammouri, District 4, Multnomah County; Jeff Renfro, Office of County Management, Multnomah County; Julie Peterman, The Library Foundation; and Jackie Starr, Friends of the Library.

**CHAIR'S REPORT**

The board approved the minutes for the May 14, 2019 meeting.

Chair Elizabeth Hawthorne expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve as Library Advisory Board chair for the past two years. At the conclusion of her term as chair, Hawthorne distributed copies of a letter to LAB members on their role as library advocates.

**LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Director of Libraries Vailey Oehlke highlighted the following from the [Director's Report](#):

- Library holds free vision screenings for kids
  - A theme that continues to come up as MCL engages in capital planning work is the changing role of libraries. For a long time, libraries have been providing more than books. One example of that is free vision screenings for children who might not otherwise be able to obtain them. This offering is available thanks to Elks Children's Eye Clinic at OHSU's Casey Eye Institute, and evidence of just how robust the library's partnerships are in our community.

- Gresham Teen Council hosts first-ever “Teen Mental Health Fair”
  - This successful event was the first of its kind at the library. It was created and hosted by [Teen Council](#) members at Gresham Library to create time and space for teens to talk to one another and share experiences about issues that are critical for them.

Oehlke announced the library's [Everybody Reads](#) selection for 2020: Tommy Orange's debut novel, *There There*. Oehlke noted that many of the books readers are most familiar with by Native authors are set on reservations. Orange's novel is particularly resonant in that it speaks to the Native experience in an urban environment (Oakland). Lois Leveen added that Portland has one of the largest urban Native populations in the United States. Oehlke thanked the Library Foundation and Literary Arts for their support of this program.

Oehlke reported that the library's capital planning committee had its second of three meetings, and committee members raised valuable questions and concerns for the library to consider as it moves forward with its [space planning efforts](#). Oehlke expressed gratitude for the time and thought members of the capital planning committee are dedicating to this effort. Commissioner Stegmann (who sits on this committee) echoed Oehlke's sentiments.

Lastly, Oehlke shared that this meeting is Marc Alifanz's and P.K. Runkles-Pearson's last as Library Advisory Board members. Oehlke thanked Alifanz for his meaningful contributions on some very active LAB committees; and Runkles-Pearson for her time and service. The library honored Alifanz and Runkles-Pearson with the installation of books with bookplates recognizing their service on LAB, which Oehlke presented.

Oehlke also thanked Hawthorne for her service as Chair of this esteemed body and for her letter with suggestions on opportunities for LAB to engage.

### **DIGICOMMITTEE UPDATE**

Leveen announced that the DigiCommittee's last meeting for this fiscal year is Monday June 17 at 4pm at Central Library. One of the topics the committee will discuss is better communication with the public around how data collected by the library and its vendors is used.

### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE UPDATE**

Nominating Committee Co-Chair Lizzie Martinez announced that the committee has three actions to present: recommendations of two candidates for appointment to the Library Advisory Board; term renewals for two current members; and the election of new officers.

Martinez thanked everyone for their contributions to a robust recruitment effort that resulted in eight applications for two open positions.

Nominating Committee member Cynthia Tseng shared background information and credentials for LAB candidate Svetlana Karpe. Karpe is an East County resident and her home library is Fairview. She is multilingual and works as an instructor and translator. Karpe has also volunteered for the library as a tutor for the GED prep program. Tseng recommend Karpe for appointment to the Library Advisory Board.

Martinez shared information and credentials for LAB candidate Sandra Acosta Casillas. Acosta Casillas is also an East County resident whose home library is Rockwood. In her interview, Acosta Casillas shared that the library is a central part of her family's life. Acosta Casillas works for a local nonprofit and serves on the board of directors for Oregon Food Bank. Martinez recommended Karpe for appointment to the Library Advisory Board.

Martinez moved to nominate Svetlana Karpe and Sandra Acosta Casillas, and Rob Edmiston seconded. By oral vote, the motion was approved unanimously.

Martinez commented that this year's LAB candidate pool was very strong, and Nominating Committee members were very impressed during candidate interviews. Martinez reached out to The Library Foundation and Friends of the Library to connect candidates who didn't advance this year with other volunteer opportunities, and encouraged them to apply again next year.

Martinez made a motion to approve second terms for Leveen and Edmiston, and Tseng seconded. Leveen and Edmiston abstained from voting, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Edmiston shared that current Vice-Chair Quinn MacNichol offered to serve as Chair, noting that he has had a great experience serving on the Finance Committee under MacNichol's leadership. Leveen, who has served as the Chair of the DigiCommittee for three years, offered to fill the role of Vice-Chair. Edmiston moved to nominate MacNichol to Chair and Leveen as Vice-Chair. Martinez seconded the motion. MacNichol and Leveen abstained from voting, and the candidates for office were unanimously approved.

Nominations for both new candidates will advance to the Multnomah County Library District Board for approval, along with recommendations for term renewals.

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

Julie Peterman announced that the foundation's fiscal year ends June 30, and they have already met annual financial goals. Currently, TLF is gearing up for Summer Reading.

### **FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY (FOL)**

Jackie Starr shared that FOL's successful board recruitment process resulted in seven new board members (bringing the total up to 21). Starr also announced that longtime staff member, Michael Taylor, is retiring and they are recruiting for a new part-time Online & Specialty Sales Manager. Following up on last month's announcement about seeking venue options for its used book sales, Starr clarified that the Friends are engaging in a due diligence process to explore new venues — which has included talking to management at its current venue (Lloyd Center DoubleTree Hotel) about what appears to be an isolated racial incident there. Starr also announced that FOL's Annual Meeting (Starr's first as Executive Director) is June 12 at Central Library.

### **GOOD & WELFARE**

Leveen reminded that June 19 is Juneteenth, a celebration that commemorates the full emancipation and end of legal slavery in United States. Leveen also shared a recent discovery

([a letter](#)) related to the subject of her first novel — *The Secrets of Mary Boswer* — which imagines the life of Mary “Bowser” Richards, who was born into slavery and became a Union spy in the Confederate capital. The discovery of this letter has elucidated previously unknown circumstances about Bowser’s life, and Leveen emphasized that library resources were crucial to her ability to undertake this important historical research.

Oehlke shared that go-live for the library’s new integrated library system (ILS) went smoothly, although there are still some issues to resolve. Oehlke expressed deep gratitude to members of the Symphony team who spearheaded this project, and to library staff who participated in extensive training and served as onsite leaders and experts to prepare for this change. Director of Policy and Special Projects Cindy Gibbon noted that over 100 library staff members were part of Symphony project teams, which is what made implementation a success. Director of Content Strategy Jon Worona added that successful go-live was one milestone in the transition process, with other steps to follow. Hawthorne added that library staff should be commended for this major effort.

Hawthorne adjourned the meeting at 8:05 am.

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