

Library Advisory Board Minutes: October 8, 2019
For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board

The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board met on Tuesday, October 8, 2019, at MidlandLibrary. Chair Quinn MacNichol called the meeting to order at 7:37 am.

Board members present were: Bethel Sishu, Brendan Gallagher, Clare Wilkinson, Cynthia Tseng, Elliot Zais, Erin Cooper, Lizzie Martinez, Lois Leveen, Rob Edmiston, Sandra Acosta Casillas, Svetlana Karpe, Thomas Dwyer, and Willow Kelleigh. Brian Wilson, Chester Ching, and Quinn MacNichol were excused.

Staff members present were: Don Allgeier, director of operations; Javier Gutierrez, collections and technical services director; Jeremy Graybill, marketing and online engagement director; Johnette Easter, human resources manager; 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; Maddelyn High, director's assistant, Darrel Mally, interim library manager; and Nasra Ali, Public Library Association intern and North Portland Library volunteer.

Also in attendance were: Michaelane Wilcox, Friends of the Library; Laura Fay, Jennifer Stepanek, and Alyssa Reid, The Library Foundation; Commissioner Lori Stegmann, District 4, Multnomah County; Layan Ammouri, District 4, Multnomah County; and Stuart Levy, Parkrose High School.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Lois Leveen, who chaired the meeting in Quinn MacNichol's absence, welcomed folks to the meeting. Attendees introduced themselves and shared a recent library experience. The board then approved the minutes for the September 10, 2019 meeting.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Library Director Vailey Oehlke shared gratitude for Public Library Association (PLA) Intern and North Portland Library volunteer Nasra Ali's attendance at the meeting. Oehlke was involved in the development process of PLA's Inclusive Internship Initiative, and MCL was excited to be selected as a 2019 host site.

Oehlke also shared that she and others have continued to be focused on digital content issues. Library patrons both locally and nationally have been incredibly responsive in advocating against publisher restrictions on e-content for libraries. There has also been interest in this issue from local media, and Oehlke continues to engage in national discussions. Oehlke expressed gratitude to several MCL staff members for their work to amplify the message in a way that other libraries are replicating and paying attention to. Oehlke emphasized that these restrictions have the

potential for real impact on the relevance of public libraries and their ability to deliver equitable access to resources for everyone. Oehlke invited folks to follow updates on Twitter (@MultCoLib_Dir and #eBooksForAll).

In response to a question about what LAB members can do, Oehlke suggested that folks continue to educate themselves, pointing to [condensed slideshow](#) that explains the issue and encouraging folks to share it and what they learn with others. In addition to the eBooks issue, Leveen asked how libraries are dealing with Amazon, which restricts library access to its content. Oehlke noted that the problem here is Amazon itself, which is committed to owning access to purchasing. Amazon owns the dominant audiobook platform, Audible, and creates exclusive contracts with authors and other content creators. This content is not sold to libraries, and this is of great concern to libraries.

THE LIBRARY FOUNDATION (TLF)

Laura Fay introduced two newer Foundation staff members, Jennifer Stepanek, grantwriter, and Alyssa Reid, development coordinator and office manager.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY (FOL)

Board Member Michaelane Wilcox reported that Friends raised almost \$105,000 at its Fall Used Book Sale — a new record. Wilcox thanked library staff at the Isom Operations Center and Director of Policy and Special Projects Cindy Gibbon, who volunteered at the sale. Wilcox also expressed gratitude to Marketing and Online Engagement Director Jeremy Graybill for advertising the sale on the library's social media platforms.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE UPDATE

Lizzie Martinez shared that the Nominating Committee reached out to two new LAB candidates and will make an offer for a board seat shortly.

PRESENTATION: EMBRACING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Library intern and volunteer Nasra Ali gave a presentation on her time as a Public Library Association (PLA) intern. After a positive library volunteer experience, Ali applied and was selected for PLA's Inclusive Internship program, which began in early June. A component of the internship program was to do a project focused on making positive changes in the library community. Previously, as a student at Franklin High School, Ali had tried to start a Muslim Teen Alliance. While that project didn't get off the ground, Ali developed that idea into a Multicultural Teen Alliance at the North Portland Library. Ali engaged in outreach and interviews, and 20 teens attended the launch event. Going forward, Ali will host the Alliance once a month, and the goal is to bring teens from diverse cultural backgrounds into the library and provide them with a safe space to build stronger connections.

Ali shared that this experience taught her to think creatively to turn a "no" into a "yes" and gave her valuable community engagement experience. Ali added that this experience, as well as her participation in a national cohort meeting of PLA interns in Washington D.C., helped in building both a network and real interest in a career in libraries. Ali thanked Library Deputy Director Terrilyn Chun, who advocated for this program. Chun, in turn, thanked Learning and Development Specialist Amy Honisett for preparing the library's PLA application and conducting Ali's orientation.

LAB GOALS FOR THIS FISCAL YEAR

Leveen shared reviewed LAB committee assignments and goals for 2019-2020, noting that the DigiCommittee and Finance committees still need chairs. Based on the results of an online survey and a group activity at the September meeting, LAB identified the following goals for the current fiscal year, summarized as follows:

- Clarify the purpose and mission of the Library Advisory Board
- Support implementation of the Framework for Future Library Spaces
- Make the Library Advisory Board a more welcoming, equitable, and representative body

Willow Kelleigh stressed the importance of determining how to make these goals actionable, which several LAB members seconded. Martinez expressed excitement around engaging new LAB members to contribute toward these goals.

Bethel Sishu asked for more information on the Governance Committee, and Erin Cooper responded that this committee was created in the process of developing LAB's bylaws. The Governance Committee is an ad-hoc committee charged with overseeing changes to and implementation of the bylaws. Any bylaw changes are discussed and approved by the full board. Oehlke thanked Cooper for her work to establish bylaws during Cooper's term as LAB chair.

GOOD AND WELFARE

Oehlke shared that library staff recently met with Senator Merkely, who reached out in order to discuss the eBooks issue and other issues important to public libraries, noting that the senator is a strong ally for libraries. Oehlke expressed gratitude for the senator's interest, concern, and leadership.

Leveen adjourned the meeting at 8:32 am.

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