

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

The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met on Tuesday, January 14, 2020, at Central Library. Chair Quinn MacNichol called the meeting to order at 7:33 am.

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

Staff members present were: Cindy Gibbon, director of policy and special projects; Dave Ratliff, neighborhood libraries director; 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; 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; and Maddelyn High, director's assistant.

Also in attendance were: Commissioner Lori Stegmann, District 4, Multnomah County; Jeff Renfro, Office of County Management, Multnomah County; and Alyssa Reid, The Library Foundation.

CHAIR'S REPORT

MacNichol welcomed everyone to the meeting and roll call was conducted. LAB members and other attendees shared a highlight or something they'd like to learn more about from the library's 2019 Equity and Inclusion Report, distributed via email ahead of the meeting. Minutes for the November 12, 2019 meeting were approved.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Library Director Vailey Oehlke announced that after a period of due diligence, the library will respond to the Board of County Commissioners' directive to explore models for costs, timelines, and staging of library projects on January 30. Oehlke expressed gratitude to Commissioner Stegmann, the board liaison to the library and LAB, who has been involved with this work since the beginning. Meeting details and a link to view online were shared via email.

Oehlke invited folks to attend [events](#) offered as part of this year's [Everybody Reads program](#), which launched early January. Programming centers our local Native community to speak to the history, strength, and cultural traditions of Indigenous peoples in Multnomah County. Portland has the 9th largest urban Native population in the country, and Everybody Reads provides opportunities to learn, discuss, and acknowledge the important themes in this year's book selection, [There There by Tommy Orange](#).

THE LIBRARY FOUNDATION (TLF)

Alyssa Reid shared that December was a busy month for the foundation as it processed an influx of gifts. TLF also reported a positive response to its Guide!Guide campaign, in which it raised the second highest amount of donations in the education category and was among the top 20 organizations that raised the most funds overall.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Lizzie Martinez announced that the *Nominating Committee* will start meeting shortly about recruitment strategies. Erin Cooper shared that *Finance Committee* meetings begin this month on January 30, and invited non-committee members to let her know if they're interested in attending.

TRAINING AND ENGAGEMENT AROUND EQUITY & INCLUSION

Equity & Inclusion Manager Sonja Ervin introduced herself, and oriented LAB and other attendees to the library's current equity and inclusion work. Ervin shared that the library recently reviewed staff demographics, and staff now reflect the racial/ethnic make-up of our community at large — one part of an intentional effort to impact the library's efficacy in meeting the needs of our community throughout the county.

Ervin noted that the library only recently added “champion for equity and inclusion” as one of [the pillars that comprise its mission](#). Ervin stressed the importance of centering the voices of folks from communities experiencing the greatest marginalization, and listening to what these communities tell the library about how to welcome and serve them better.

Ervin presented an abbreviated version of a training required for new library staff during employee orientation, on Othering in the Library, and distributed a handout. The presentation and handout are available in the Library Advisory Board's resources folder. Topics covered included:

- Terms and definitions, including the difference between *equality* and *equity*
- How Individual, institutional, and systemic forms of oppression function as interlocking gears that reinforce each other to perpetuate discrimination and structural inequities
- The history of public libraries excluding people of color, and impacts of this history today
- Ongoing work to build trust and shift libraries from places of historical exclusion to inclusion

Ervin then led Library Advisory Board members in a “privilege walk” exercise designed to highlight issues around privilege and access to resources, and an in-depth discussion ensued. A follow-up email will be sent with recommended resources, tools, and readings.

MacNichol adjourned the meeting at 8:34 am.

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