

Library Advisory Board Minutes: March 10, 2019
For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board

The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 at Central Library. Chair Quinn MacNichol called the meeting to order at 7:36 am.

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

Staff members present were: Don Allgeier, director of operations; 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: Laura Fay, The Library Foundation; and Michaelene Wilcox, Friends of the Library.

INTRODUCTIONS

Meeting attendees introduced themselves, and minutes for the February 11, 2020 meeting were then approved.

CHAIR'S REPORT

MacNichol announced that the Board of County Commissioners voted on March 5 to refer the library's bond measure to voters in November, reminding that members of LAB are not allowed to publicly advocate for the measure. MacNichol shared that a staff member from the county attorney's office will attend the April 14 Library Advisory Board meeting to provide an overview of related rules and to answer questions, which can be sent to Maddelyn ahead of time.

Library Director Vailey Oehlke reiterated that LAB members, although volunteers, are appointed and considered county officials when conducting Library Advisory Board business. Like library staff, LAB members can share factual information about the library's proposal and direct folks to the library's planning page at <https://multcolib.org/about/planning/>.

Oehlke noted that the referral passed unanimously and expressed thanks to everyone who contributed to the library's capital planning proposal, and to folks who were able to attend the March 5 board meeting. A campaign is now underway, and the goal will be to start capital project work immediately if the bond passes. Members of the library's capital planning team are in conversation now related to infrastructure, internal county resources, and governance so that design and procurement can begin right away if voters approve the bond.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Oehlke gave a summary of the library's current response to COVID-19, sharing that the library is acting under direction and guidance from the [Multnomah County Health Department](#), the Oregon Health Authority, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Library leadership receives daily updates from the county and is able to share information with staff in a timely manner. Recently, the library created an internal response team, led by Director of Operations Don Allgeier, that also includes others from Public Services and Human Resources. King County Library has also shared information to help MCL's response team learn and think through its own scenario planning.

Oehlke noted that this situation is evolving very quickly and there are a lot of unknowns. The library will continue to work closely with the county and the state to educate and remind staff of best practices. Unsheltered folks in our community are particularly at risk, and the library provides access to space and resources for many who might not otherwise have access. MCL will follow the county's direction on whether or not to close library locations to the public, and it will be a thoughtful decision.

Oehlke also mentioned that some staff, including Director of Communications & Strategic Initiatives Shawn Cunningham, are working in the county's Emergency Operations Center. The library may have limited communications capacity as a result. Communications Strategist Chelsea Bailey will serve as Cunningham's back-up, and is providing primary communications support for the library's COVID-19 response team.

THE LIBRARY FOUNDATION (TLF)

Laura Fey shared that staff are very proud of the foundation's [new website](#), which is now live. The new site features stories from patrons whose lives have been transformed because of the library, and includes a new online donation system.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY (FOL)

Michaelene Wilcox shared that the Friends are working to educate the community about the library's bond measure, through their speakers bureau and by reaching out to many community organizations. Wilcox also noted that the Friends have not yet made a decision on whether or not to hold its Spring Used Book Sale. Lastly, Wilcox announced that Deschutes Brewery in the Pearl District will donate \$1 to FOL for every beer purchased on Tuesdays during the month of March.

CBAC REPORT

Finance Committee Co-Chair Erin Cooper provided context on [Community Budget Advisory Committee](#) (CBAC) work, reminding that all LAB members serve as the library's CBAC. The county also has a central CBAC. Due to dedicated funding through [the library district](#), Cooper noted that the library does not have to compete for county funds and the library's CBAC has more opportunity to weigh in on program offers.

Cooper shared that the Finance Committee had a number of meetings between January and March, facilitated by Director of Operations Don Allgeier, who shared background information and context; projections; information on library FTE; and more. Based on this information, along with information shared by County Economist Jeff Renfro, the Finance Committee drafts a memo

weighing in on the library's proposed annual budget. A draft of this memo was shared with LAB members ahead of time for review. Cooper noted that this year's memo does not include any recommendations around the library's proposed bond measure — that measure has not yet been referred to voters, and as such, the library has to plan for a normal operational budget. However, work will still be ready to begin if the measure passes, and the Fiscal Year 2021 budget includes plans for some minimal capital project work if the measure does not pass.

Oehlke shared some additional info:

- The library is proposing an increase of 1 penny to its tax current tax rate, to \$1.22 up from \$1.21 currently. This is in line with the library's plans to increase the rate by a penny each year until reaching the maximum district rate of \$1.24.
- The library's proposed Fiscal Year 2021 budget reflects a 1% constraint from the forecasted growth in overall expenses.

Cooper moved to approve this year's CBAC memo, and Lizzie Martinez seconded the motion. The memo was approved unanimously by oral vote with basic grammatical edits. Cooper shared that the next step in this process is for CBACs to present their recommendations to Chair Kafoury, who approves the county's master budget. This presentation is scheduled for April 17, and all LAB members are invited to attend.

Oehlke thanked members of the Finance Committee, who are very active during a condensed period of time and who are an important part of the library's budget process. Oehlke also expressed gratitude to Allgeier, Renfro, and others who provide necessary background information for the Finance Committee to do its work.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE UPDATE

Martinez gave an up — date on Nominating Committee work, sharing that the Library Advisory Board will have several open positions to fill during this year's recruitment effort. Four members resigned mid-term (Elliot Zais, Chester Ching, Brian Wilson, and David Hoang); and three other members will leave at the end of June — Cythia Tseng and LAB's two youth members, Bethel Sishu and Willow Kelleigh, who both graduate this year.

Because there are several positions to fill, the Nominating Committee is considering a phased recruitment process in order to be thoughtful in its effort to recruit candidates with particular skills, with various life experiences, and from different parts of the county. The committee hopes to recruit one adult member and two youth members by the end of June, and can keep recruitment going into the fall if needed for the other four adult positions. MacNichol asked current committee chairs to please continue to lead their respective committees, as new LAB members will not be asked to chair committees.

A brief discussion ensued about how to best onboard new members joining at different times, and MacNichol stressed the importance of orientation for new members. Tseng encouraged LAB to be mindful of onboarding and retention and to relay the skills it takes to be a successful board member and consider mentorship pairs. Clare Wilkinson suggested LAB revisit its strategic goals and keep those in mind throughout the recruitment and nominating process.

Martinez asked LAB members who are remaining on the board to fill out an online skills matrix sent via email. Martinez also asked members to reach out with suggestions on how to reach communities not currently represented on LAB, and/or to highlight particular communities the Nominating Committee should seek to engage. The committee is prioritizing outreach in East County; in the Black community in North and Northeast Portland; and in communities adjacent to proposed new library buildings.

Cooper flagged an item in the bylaws for future consideration in order to make term guidelines consistent for both adult and youth members filling the remainder of another member's term.

GOOD & WELFARE

Cunningham shared that the library is providing support to folks filling out the 2020 census, and encouraged meeting attendees to let their friends and networks know that [the library can help](#) with technology and other census issues. Cooper noted that the library is a draw as a location for folks who might not otherwise feel comfortable filling out the census due to data and privacy concerns.

MacNichol adjourned the meeting at 8:29 am.

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