

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

The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met on Tuesday, April 14, 2020 virtually. The meeting commenced at 8:05 am.

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

Staff members present were: Cindy Gibbon, director of policy and special projects; Dave Ratliff, neighborhood libraries director; 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; 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; Merris Sumrall, The Library Foundation; and Jackie Starr, Friends of the Library.

WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

Meeting attendees joined the virtual meeting via video conference or phone, and roll call was conducted, with meeting guests introducing themselves.

COMMITTEE UPDATES**Finance Committee**

Erin Cooper noted that a lot has changed since LAB voted on the library's CBAC memo. Director of Operations Don Allgeier and County Economist Jeff Renfro offered context and timing around potential impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on property taxes (the library's primary source of revenue), which are slower to react to downturns. Impacts are not yet known. The Finance Committee will add a brief statement to its CBAC memo to acknowledge COVID-19, and resubmit the memo by April 30. Allgeier also noted that the county's budget approval timeline was extended by about two weeks, with FY 21 budget adoption now scheduled for June 11. Allgeier added that the library is tracking costs incurred related to pandemic response for possible federal reimbursement at a later date.

Nominating Committee

Sveltana Karpe shared that Nominating Committee work is paused, as outreach and recruitment are currently difficult with libraries closed. The committee plans to touch base in the near term.

Equity Committee

Lois Leveen shared that the Equity Committee has been working on a vision statement and goals, which it plans to share with LAB ahead of the May meeting for discussion. Leveen added that now might be the right time to think deeply about how LAB engages folks and centers equity.

DigiCommittee

Brendan Gallagher shared that the DigiCommittee's last meeting was focused on tech related to the library's capital planning. The group will next focus on privacy around digital platforms.

THE LIBRARY FOUNDATION (TLF)

Merris Sumrall shared that TLF staff are all working from home, and the Foundation is supporting the library's virtual services work with recording equipment and books for virtual storytimes.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY (FOL)

Jackie Starr noted that FOL's Spring Used Book Sale was cancelled, and the Friends will continue to update this group about its fall sale. FOL has also made adjustments to its staffing model during closure of library locations and admin offices, and is using social media channels to highlight the work in which library staff are currently engaged.

OVERVIEW OF MCL'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

Oehlke gave an overview of how the library is currently responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to libraries closing on March 13, Oehlke convened a COVID-19 response team. This team participates in ongoing updates and coordination with public health and other partners; and works to interpret and communicate directives as they apply to library operations, services, and employees. Since closure, this team has been working with library staff, county leaders, and the county's Emergency Operations Center to support our community by redeploying library resources and supplies for other needs; scheduling library staff to support critical operational needs at shelters and other locations; and reimagining and increasing virtual library services and access to digital content.

The library's primary focus during this time has been supporting essential county work around health and safety needs in our community. As county employees, library staff are involved in many aspects of the county's response, and library staff are uniquely qualified to work and manage spaces (like temporary shelters) in which folks are in crisis. Oehlke also mentioned that library staff will support ballot collection and transport for Oregon's May primary election.

Oehlke and members of the response team answered questions from LAB around staffing; logistics; addressing the digital divide; and plans for Summer Reading and eventual reopening. Oehlke closed by sharing appreciation for the ways in which library staff are stepping up and flexing to use their expertise in new and unexpected ways.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 am.

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