

**Library Advisory Board Minutes: June 9, 2020**For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board

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The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met on Tuesday, June 9, 2020 virtually. The meeting commenced at 8:06 am.

Board members present were: Bethel Sishu, Brendan Gallagher, Cynthia Tseng, Erin Cooper, Lizzie Martinez, Lois Leveen, Quinn MacNichol, Rob Edmiston, and Willow Kelleigh. Svetlana Karpe was excused. Clare Wilkinson was 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; 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; Merris Sumrall, The Library Foundation; and Alec Fulford (guest).

**WELCOME AND CHECK-IN**

Meeting attendees joined the virtual meeting either via video conference or phone, and introduced themselves. Quinn MacNichol announced they will be in touch via email about what meeting times work best for LAB members going forward, as LAB will continue to meet virtually for the foreseeable future.

Meeting minutes for the May 12, 2020 meeting were approved.

**UPDATES FROM LAB COMMITTEES****Nominating Committee**

Lizzie Martinez reminded that several members recently left LAB at the end of their terms or for other reasons. Recruitment for new adult members is on hold due to outreach challenges and hardships prospective members may be facing during the pandemic. This means LAB will be short of its full 17-member roster for a little while. Recruitment for two new youth members to replace LAB's two outgoing youth members, both of whom just graduated, is ongoing — as youth may have more time and ability to engage. The Nominating Committee received three youth applications so far. The committee will continue to meet to rethink procedures and to determine what an equity process might look like for bringing on new members.

## Equity Committee

Lois Leveen thanked LAB and other meeting guests for engaged discussion and input given on the committee's draft equity vision and goals at the May meeting. Based on discussion group notes, folks are excited about moving this work forward, and the committee can take this momentum and work on implementation plans on how LAB can engage and provide more meaningful input to library staff; and on what supports might be offered to current and prospective LAB members to remove barriers to participation.

## **UPDATES FROM PARTNERS**

### The Library Foundation (TLF)

Merris Sumrall shared that the Foundation is in the process of negotiating deliverables with funders and working with library staff to determine what currently-available programs and services grants and donations can best support. Sumrall also noted that the Foundation has had to downsize.

### Board of County Commissioners Liaison

County board liaison Commissioner Stegmann shared that Multnomah County may enter Phase One of reopening as early as this weekend if its application is approved by the state. Pointing to the county's [dashboard](#) tracking progress meeting reopening metrics, the commissioner noted that state and county leaders are paying close attention to the uptick in the number of positive COVID-19 cases — which could impact reopening plans. The commissioner also noted that, in anticipation of reduced state funds, the board may be considering additional budget cuts, possibly in rounds, beyond the 2% constraint already announced.

## **UPDATE FROM LIBRARY DIRECTOR**

Director of Libraries Vailey Oehlke gave an overview of [contactless holds pick-up service](#) that launched at Central, Gresham, Midland, and North Portland libraries on June 8. Initial locations were chosen because they're the largest buildings in the system (to allow for mandated physical distancing of staff), and because they are located in [communities of opportunity](#) where the library is targeting services and resources. While holds pick-up service may not address priority needs, it is a service MCL is able to offer while COVID-19 constrains the library's ability to offer other in-person services like outreach. Oehlke shared that as Multnomah County moves into Phase One reopening, MCL will explore physically-distanced computer lab service and other services that are more outward facing and serving Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities — noting that availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies are key factors in the timeline for ability to offer these services.

Oehlke also called attention to her recently-issued public statement on the library's solidarity with the Black community and [commitment to meaningful change](#), noting that the library is committed to serving those facing the most barriers, particularly BIPOC folks. This includes supporting staff serving our most marginalized communities, making sure staff have what they need to feel safe and able to contribute in a way that makes a difference in our region. Neighborhood library director, Dave Ratliff, addressed how the library approaches safety versus security, sharing that the library is examining how it might change and/or refocus some of these functions so they are more aligned with MCL's equity and customer service values. Oehlke closed with a reminder that

there are many avenues through which MCL is and can make sure the library system centers race and serves people who most need services.

**FAREWELL**

Three departing LAB members — Cynthia Tseng, Bethel Sishu, and Willow Kelleigh — shared closing thoughts about their experiences on the Library Advisory Board and their plans for what's next. Meeting attendees bid them farewell with cheers.

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 am.

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