

Library Advisory Board Minutes: October 13, 2020For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board

The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met on Tuesday, October 13, 2020 virtually. The meeting began at 4:01 pm.

Board members present were: Brendan Gallagher, Clare Wilkinson, Erin Cooper, Gabby Shaffer, Jacqueline Martinez De Jesus, Lizzie Martinez, Lois Leveen, Nathan Senters, Quinn MacNichol, Rob Edmiston, Salma Sheikh, and Svetlana Karpe.

Staff members present were: Don Allgeier, director of operations; Jon Worona, director of content strategy; Katie O'Dell, programming and outreach 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 Scott Mannhard (member of the public).

CHECK-IN

Meeting attendees joined the virtual meeting either via video conference or phone. Chair Quinn MacNichol welcomed everyone, and attendees introduced themselves responding to a check-in prompt.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Meeting minutes for the September 8, 2020 meeting were approved.

MacNichol shared that LAB is trying some new things as it's changing and evolving, including meeting time, length, and structure. MacNichol highlighted some other changes, encouraging LAB members to share feedback on whether or not these shifts helps them engage better:

- New Board Brief
- Shifting meeting time away from presentations toward discussion and group work (as well as sharing information ahead of time when possible)
- Sharing meeting facilitation duties among interested LAB members

MacNichol asked those interested in facilitating in general or around a particular agenda item to get in touch; and closed by sharing that the plan for next month's meeting is to focus on evaluating LAB's committee structure.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director of Libraries Vailey Oehlke thanked MacNichol and Director's Assistant Maddelyn High for

their ongoing effort to reimagine LAB meetings and materials. Oehlke added that LAB members who have questions about items shared in the Board Brief can contact the Director's Office for more in-depth information.

Oehlke and others from the library's leadership team responded to a few questions based on information shared in the Board Brief, including accessibility for library holds lockers (self check-out machines that will be piloted at two locations later this fall); how the library will help students and parents with distance learning support; and outreach about [Library Connect](#).

Oehlke commented that outreach is particularly challenging during COVID-19 due to being limited to virtual communication, and encouraged LAB members to spread the word about programs like Library Connect and [the library's many other available services](#); and to lift up the specific needs of their respective communities to library staff. Planning for future library services will continue to be informed by the needs of folks most marginalized in our community.

BUDGET MODIFICATION UPDATE

Finance Committee member Svetlana Karpe provided context around an upcoming Fiscal Year 2021 budget modification proposal from the library, based on information previously shared with LAB's full Finance Committee. Karpe reminded that the library's Finance Committee is involved in the budget process every year, receiving briefs on everything that goes into the library's budget and details on how the library plans to use its resources. This process culminates in a letter that LAB members draft, review, and vote on as the library's [Community Budget Advisory Council \(CBAC\)](#).

Director of Operations Don Allgeier provided more detailed information about proposed budget adjustments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including new expenses related to staffing, patron services, and safety; and sources/cost savings to cover those expenses. In summary, the library's overall budget for Fiscal Year 21 will remain the same, but money in some categories will have to be spent differently now as the library continues to respond to COVID-19. Allgeier noted that the library is planning for and positioning itself to address immediate needs during this crisis but to also have supports in place for when things change — including holding some library positions in the budget for when social distancing orders are no longer in place.

Allgeier reiterated that the budget is a plan based on the best information available at a point in time, and the library could still encounter other unanticipated costs as the landscape of operating in a global pandemic continues to shift. These proposed budget changes will go before the Board of County Commissioners later this year for review and approval.

MEETING NORMS AND GROUP AGREEMENTS

Nominating Committee member Lizzie Martinez led LAB members through a group exercise to brainstorm meeting norms and group agreements to guide LAB as it continues to rethink how it comes together and interacts. Using a virtual whiteboard, folks added their ideas, which were grouped by theme and reviewed together. Commons themes included: making space for everyone to share; respectful conduct; assuming best intentions and patience with technical issues in a virtual environment; and two-way feedback between LAB and the library.

Other ideas that emerged to explore further included: how to handle emergency meetings or meetings between monthly scheduled LAB meetings; and ideas for how to continue to build group cohesion and community with check-ins and small discussions.

A draft document of norms and group agreements will be shared with LAB for further feedback, and will exist as a living document. Martinez invited LAB members to continue to share other related meeting practices they like for consideration by LAB.

LAB VISION AND GOALS

MacnNichol gave an overview of a draft vision statement and goals LAB created last spring, led by the Equity Committee. After some discussion, LAB decided to hold off on voting on and adopting this document, in favor of first spending more time discussing LAB's function and its committee structure. A discussion also ensued about the importance of centering lived experience in recruitment of new members. Oehlke added that MCL has made an overt commitment to addressing the greatest needs of those in our community, emphasizing the importance of the Library Advisory Board in providing a diversity of experiences and voices. MacnNichol closed by thanking the board for navigating this particular gray zone while it works to co-define its role with library leadership while rebuilding its culture and membership at the same time.

CLOSING

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.

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