

**Library Advisory Board Minutes: November 10, 2020**For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board

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The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met virtually on Tuesday, November 10, 2020. The meeting began at 4:01 pm.

Board members present were: 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. Brendan Gallagher was absent.

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: Jeff Renfro, Office of County Management, Multnomah County; Christopher Cobey (observer); and Calvin Brawner (observer).

**CHECK-IN**

Meeting attendees joined the virtual meeting either via video conference or phone. After roll call, attendees broke into four groups for virtual check-ins.

Chair Quinn MacNichol reviewed LAB meeting norms and group agreements synthesized from a discussion at the October meeting, broken down into the categories around meeting planning and communication; discussions (how folks engage with one another); and digital meetings (protocols and technology).

Meeting minutes for the October 13, 2020 meeting were approved.

**LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Director of Libraries Vailey Oehlke announced that [voters passed the library's capital bond measure](#) (Measure 26-211), and meeting attendees celebrated with cheers. Oehlke remarked that the vote is an affirmation of how much this community loves and appreciates the library. Library and county staff have been building infrastructure to support bond projects over the next eight years, and are ready to get to work. Community engagement to see what folks want from libraries in their neighborhoods will be one of the first few phases of this work.

Svetlana Karpe asked that a distribution of votes be shared with LAB once the election is certified.

Lois Leveen asked what passage of the county's [Preschool for All](#) measure (Measure 26-214) means for the library. Oehlke and Program and Outreach Director Katie O'Dell responded that

some early childhood services staff at the library were at the table during planning for this initiative, and library staff are excited about the opportunity to expand the library's reach to families who haven't been able to get in to some of the early childhood education and childcare sites MCL currently serves.

Oehlke also responded to several questions about what the next phase of public library access might look like. Oehlke shared that the library is paying attention to the fact that different communities have different needs, and these needs are currently being taken into account for planning for limited public access — which the library expects to be able to offer sometime next calendar year in consultation with county leadership and public health officials. Oehlke asked LAB members to share if they're hearing about particular needs, or know of particular things folks need access to, so these needs can be lifted up to the internal team working on planning.

Oehlke closed by sharing that the library's budget modification proposal (details of which were shared at the October 2020 LAB meeting) will go to the Board of County Commissioners on Thursday, November 12. Board meetings can now be viewed virtually on [YouTube](#).

### **LAB COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

MacNichol presented a short slideshow about LAB goals and its committee structure, and recommended some changes related to LAB's smaller membership in 2020 and the need to continue to meet virtually. MacNichol gave an overview of how LAB committees have worked in the past; the process this body went through to develop a vision statement and goals back in May 2020; and a proposed committee structure going forward.

MacNichol reminded that, in the past, LAB had several different committees with some folks serving on more than one committee, with all committees meeting outside of scheduled LAB meetings on their own timelines. Currently, LAB has five committees, none of which have been very active during the COVID-19 pandemic: Finance Committee, Nominating Committee, Governance Committee, Equity Committee, DigiComittee, and Capital Planning Committee.

MacNichol reshared the vision statement LAB originally came up with in early summer of 2020, explaining that a vision is an aspiration goal for what LAB can be and work toward. Goals tied to this vision statement include working to diversify LAB membership so it is a more representative body; improving how meetings function and input processes; and improving participation supports for LAB members. MacNichol acknowledged that these goals and even LAB's vision will likely continue to evolve as membership shifts and new folks bring their experiences and skills to the board.

MacNichol expressed desire to align LAB's committee structure with LAB's overall goals so committee members have a clearer charge; and to also acknowledge that we have fewer LAB members than in the past and reducing the number of committees may make committee participation more reasonable. MacNichol also shared that a new committee structure may work better in a digital format, and allow LAB to break into small workgroups more frequently.

MacNichol proposed moving forward with fewer committees tied to specific goals around

recruitment/membership, equity, and governance to shift LAB's formal and informal processes, structure, culture, and practices to make membership more accessible. They also recommended shifting capital planning and CBAC work to the full board (rather than just those committees); and incorporating committee meetings into monthly LAB meetings.

LAB members began discussing these recommendations, agreeing that they needed more time to review and discuss further at the December meeting. Issues raised included the Nominating Committee's planned recruitment schedule for 2021; CBAC meeting schedules; how the new Bond Oversight Committee might interact with LAB; developing job descriptions for LAB members; a desire for further clarity from library staff about LAB's advisory function and how to better connect members to existing library outreach teams; and the role of youth members, in particular, in offering specific perspective to enact positive change at the library.

Lizzie Martinez also offered to develop a plan for "board buddies" as a way to provide ongoing support to newer LAB members.

### **CLOSING**

The meeting adjourned at 6:01 pm.

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