

Library Advisory Board Minutes: June 8, 2021For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board

The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met virtually on Tuesday, June 8, 2021. The meeting began at 4:04 pm.

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

Staff members present were: Annie Lewis, interim neighborhood libraries director; Jon Worona, director of content strategy; Shawn Cunningham, director of communications and strategic initiatives; Terrilyn Chun, deputy director; Vailey Oehlke, director of libraries; and Maddelyn High, director's assistant.

Jeff Renfro, Office of County Management, Multnomah County, was also in attendance.

ATTENDANCE & CHECK-IN

Meeting attendees joined the virtual meeting either via video or phone, and broke into virtual breakout rooms for small group check-ins.

LAB CHAIR'S REPORT

Meeting minutes for the May 11, 2021 meeting were approved with one correction.

Quinn MacNichol then called attention to group meeting norms for periodic review, which can be found on the second page of the agenda.

MacNichol announced LAB will continue to meet on second Tuesdays from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm virtually through December 2021; and that the August LAB meeting is cancelled (per custom).

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Library Director Vailey Oehlke highlighted some information from the June LAB Board Brief, including passage of the library's Fiscal Year 2022 budget, updated information on the first phase of public access to library buildings, and an update on bond work.

Oehlke shared that the five first-phase locations have now been open for a week. Members of the library's leadership team have been onsite, and patrons are very happy to be back in library buildings. Intensive planning for reopening other locations is still underway, and it's unclear how Governor Brown's new 70% state vaccination rate benchmark to lift the mask mandate will impact guidance from county health.

Oehlke also shared that architectural firms have been identified for the first four libraries slated for bond work. [LEVER Architecture](#), along with [Noll & Tam Architects](#), will lead the design work for the North Portland Library renovation and the new Albina Library. [BORA](#), partnered with [Colloqate](#), will design the new Holgate Library and Midland Library renovation projects. Both projects are led by female architects of color with substantial backgrounds in community-based architecture and design projects. Contractors have not yet been identified. Community engagement work will begin to kick off this summer and fall, and bond staff will share more information with LAB as planning progresses.

Oehlke closed by sharing words of gratitude for two outgoing LAB members — longtime LAB member Quinn MacNichol, and youth member Jacqueline Martinez De Jesus. Oehlke thanked MacNichol and Martinez De Jesus for their service in support of the library.

Deputy Director Terrilyn Chun shared that, after 17 years as a neighborhood library director and a longtime member of the library's Executive Management Team, Rita Jimenez is leaving MCL. Chun expressed thanks to Jimenez for all that she's contributed to the library system, noting that, under Jimenez's leadership, the library's We Speak Your Language program and teams were formed and blossomed. Oehlke added that MCL and library patrons benefited greatly from Jimenez's leadership and passion in serving immigrant communities.

Oehlke addressed several questions regarding various topics, including pressures and communications around reopening libraries amidst lifting restrictions; continuation of services during first-phase bond work at Albina, North Portland, Holgate, and Midland (as construction and renovation work is happening simultaneously); siting for the new operations center (for which the contact is being finalized) and the East County Flagship (for which a site has not yet been secured); the timetable for terrace work at Central Library (which may be pushed out due to lack of available contractors); and plans for locating Friends of the Library and Title Wave Used Book store operations (both of which are currently in discussion with Friends of the Library staff, and will be based on that organization's needs).

MEMBERSHIP

MacNichol announced that LAB received nominations for the Chair position from Salma Sheikh and for Vice-Chair from Lizzie Martinez. MacNichol moved to approve both nominations for LAB officers, and Martinez seconded. LAB members used the "raise hand" feature in Google Meet to express their support, and both nominations passed unanimously.

MacNichol then moved to approve a second term for Clare Wilkinson, and Martinez seconded. Wilkinson's second term on LAB was unanimously approved.

MacNichol raised the idea of developing a leadership committee to help shepherd the board's current visioning and change. This work has historically been led by the Chair, and MacNichol recommended LAB consider building a larger team with two to three additional individuals stepping up to support planning, facilitation, and strategy work. Interested LAB members were invited to connect with Martinez, Sheikh, and LAB Liaison Maddelyn High.

Sheikh shared that she appreciates the opportunity to serve as LAB's first youth member Chair, has learned a lot during her first year on the board, and is looking forward to the coming year. Sheikh noted that LAB is changing alongside the library, and thanked current members for their continued participation. Martinez added that she is excited to work with Sheikh, and about moving the board toward purpose and recruiting new members to rebuild up to full strength.

GOAL SETTING

MacNichol reoriented meeting attendees to LAB's two workgroups (Strategy and Membership), which have met over the past year to discuss and generate ideas for LAB's future role and work. MacNichol, Martinez, and High then shared three draft goals developed based on input from the two workgroups and a survey sent to library managers and community engagement staff. Goals were offered to LAB members for feedback and for brainstorming action items related to each goal, using Google's virtual Jamboard tool.

Goal 1: Pursue opportunities to build trusting advisory relationships and communication channels with library decisionmakers

Goal 2: Strategically recruit new members to build a more representative LAB with all sets filled by June 2022 and future of youth members decided

Goal 3: Build capacity for LAB members to fulfil their role as strong library ambassadors

Meeting attendees added comments and ideas to the Jamboard, and discussion ensued. While there was momentum around and desire to refine and move forward on Goals 1 and 2, uncertainty was expressed around what the term "ambassador" means in the context of Library Advisory Board membership, and if this is in conflict with LAB's ability to advise.

Time ran short due to robust discussion, and MacNichol closed the meeting, sharing that the next step is to take information gathered from this exercise and discussion and use it as a starting place for LAB leadership to build a workplan for LAB for the coming year.

Respectfully submitted by:
Maddelyn High, director's assistant
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