

Library Advisory Board Minutes: July 13, 2021For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board

The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met virtually on Tuesday, July 13, 2021. The meeting began at 4:05 pm.

Board members present were: Clare Wilkinson, Erin Cooper, Lizzie Martinez, Lois Leveen, Rob Edmiston, and Salma Sheikh. Gabby Shaffer, Nathan Senters, and Svetlana Karpe were unavailable.

Staff members present were: 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 LEADERSHIP REPORT

Incoming LAB Chair Salma Sheikh welcomed LAB members to a new fiscal year, sharing hopes for continuing to improve LAB, and thanking outgoing Chair Quinn MacNichol for their support.

Meeting minutes for the June 8, 2021 meeting were approved.

Incoming LAB Vice-Chair Lizzie Martinez made a motion to approve a second full term for Nathan Senters, whose first one-year youth member term ended June 30, 2021. Erin seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved using the "raise hand" feature in Google Meet.

Sheikh expressed thanks and appreciation to outgoing long-term LAB member, Lois Leveen, for welcoming Sheikh as a new member and for all of her contributions to LAB, particularly focused on equity. Other LAB members and library staff shared their gratitude for Leveen's service and impact over the past six years, and Leveen shared a hope that LAB members and supporting library staff members continue to center equity in their work and in how the Library Advisory Board operates.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Library Director Vailey Oehlke noted that, during the past several weeks, library staff and managers have primarily been focused on reopening library locations and on supporting response to the June heatwave. Oehlke noted that this work is logistically challenging, and thanked library

employees for meeting the challenge of supporting our community to open library locations as cooling spaces on a very short timeframe.

In a response to a question, Oehlke noted that while library spaces are a community resource open and free to everyone, they are not currently set up or staffed to be emergency response centers. Library leadership, in partnership with county leadership, will continue to strategize around community disaster response and how the library can contribute as one piece of a larger coordinated response; and, in addition, how new building design and infrastructure (as part of library bond work) can be taken into account around emergency response. Oehlke commented that the heat wave underscored the need for community connections, and referenced sociologist Eric Klinenberg's book, [Heat Wave](#). Sheikh added that the community is continuing to learn about how libraries offer more than books, and about the different roles libraries play in communities.

Oehlke also announced that, after considering several locations for the library's new Operations and Sorting Center through a thoughtful, strategic process, a decision was made to purchase property on the southwest corner of 122nd Ave. and Glisan St. on the site of a former Safeway grocery store. This location is ideal for a distribution hub both for the public and for staff due to its proximity to I-84, I-5, and MAX lines. The library will be able to keep the current facility on this property and renovate to meet organizations needs. Oehlke reminded that this project is a keystone for other bond-related projects, and architects are working closely now with library staff to shape renovation of that space.

2021-2022 LAB WORK PLAN

LAB Liaison Maddelyn High provided context on a draft LAB work plan for the new fiscal year (July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022), which includes two goals and related action items. This work plan was shared ahead of the meeting via email, and was developed based on the thought work and ideas generated in LAB's Membership and Strategy workgroups that met starting in 2019, and on a Jamboard sticky note exercise completed at LAB's June 2021 meeting.

Goal 1: Pursue opportunities to build trusting relationships and communication channels with library decisionmakers in order to build LAB's capacity to fulfil the library's advisory needs (which are dynamic)

Goal 2: Strategically recruit new members to build a more representative LAB

The goal of using a work plan is to move LAB toward action with concrete and realistic deliverables centered around creating a more welcoming and supportive space for new LAB members to engage, and on building relationships to support LAB's capacity to advise the library. High shared that, ideally, going forward, LAB will undertake a process at the start of each new fiscal year to determine LAB's goals and related work for the coming year.

Martinez shared additional context about the FY22 work plan, acknowledging that LAB has been going through a challenging period of revisioning. LAB members were invited to ask clarifying questions about goals and action items. Sheikh shared enthusiasm about a plan to move forward. Several LAB members posed questions, and named additional aspects work groups will want to

consider as they move forward.

Sheikh, Martinez, and High proposed that LAB's existing Strategy Group (Clare, Erin, Rob, Salma) take the lead on action items under Goal #1, and that the Membership Workgroup (Gabby, Lizzie, Nathan, Svetlana) take on action items in support of Goal #2. There was consensus among the group that these teams make sense for moving forward on this work.

LAB members also determined that they would like to return to one-hour monthly meetings of the full board, and work with High to coordinate separate workgroup meetings to allow for flexibility in completing action items on a timeline that makes the most sense (and is not tied to a monthly schedule).

Next steps include a survey to determine what monthly meeting time works best for LAB's current members, and, at Clare Wilkinson's suggestion, scheduling initial workgroup meetings to prioritize and set timelines and determine leads for action items.

The meeting adjourned at 5:19 pm.

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