

Library Advisory Board Minutes: May 10, 2022For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board

The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met virtually on Tuesday, May 10, 2022. The meeting began at 5:33 pm.

Board members present were: Gabby Shaffer, Erin Cooper, Lizzie Martinez, Nathan Senters, Rob Edmiston, and Salma Sheikh. Clare Wilkinson was not available.

Staff members present were: Don Allgeier, director of operations; Maddelyn High, director's assistant; Katie Shifley, finance & facilities director; and Terrilyn Chun, deputy director.

Commissioner Lori Stegmann, District 4, Multnomah County; and Jeff Renfro, county economist, were also in attendance.

WELCOME & CHECK-IN

Meeting attendees joined the virtual meeting either via video or phone, and responded to a quick check-in question.

Meeting minutes for the March 17, 2022 meeting were approved.

UPDATES FROM LIBRARY LEADERSHIP

Deputy Director Terrilyn Chun shared that a new member of the library's Executive Leadership Team, Finance & Facilities Director Katie Shifley, was joining the meeting. Shifley introduced herself. Chun also shared that Library Director Vailey Oehlke was unable to attend the meeting, and asked if LAB members had any questions about the Director's Report shared ahead of time.

Outgoing Director of Operations Don Allgeier highlighted that library services continue to shift and expand, building back since the onslaught of the pandemic.

Allgeier also shared that the library's contact (call) center is adding, for the first time, three new Chinese language-focused positions to serve Cantonese/Mandarin speaking patrons – based on evaluation of the types of calls the library is receiving. Allgeier shared appreciation for the addition of new languages to this service, which is the “front door” for virtual library assistance. Currently, the library's contact center has English and Spanish-speaking staff, and patrons calling in other languages are served through a third-party service; and MCL looks forward to adding additional language resources to library services in the future.

In response to a question about what's new with the library bond, Chun shared that voting is now live (both [online](#) and in the branch) for new interior design schemes at Holgate Library.

Rob Edmiston, who also serves on the Library Bond Oversight Committee, offered a brief update from that committee's April meeting, noting that bond staff are managing cost increases (due to many factors) carefully, and are also creatively address seismic challenges and related cost increase related to renovation of two historic building included in the library bond – North Portland Library and Albina Library.

NEW MEMBERSHIP & LAB LEADERSHIP

Lizzie Martinez shared that, after a recruitment hiatus during the early part of the pandemic, LAB's Membership Workgroup launched a new recruitment effort during the first quarter of 2022. Martinez thanked the Membership team for its work, as well as other LAB members for their outreach about this opportunity.

Martinez shared that LAB received 25 applications. Membership folks used a newly-developed evaluation matrix tool to rate applications based on a number of criteria, including (but not limited to) geographic area ("home library" location) and different types of library users. LAB Liaison Maddelyn High added that recruitment was intentionally phased this time around, so library staff and current members can welcome and orient new members successfully. A second recruitment to fill remaining slots is planned for the first quarter of 2023.

After a round of interviews, the Membership Workgroup recommended six new members for appointment to the Library Advisory Board. Information on these candidates was shared ahead of time via email.

Gabby Shaffer introduced two prospective youth member candidates: Mabel Reed, who is an active Summer Reading volunteer; and Hazel Burke, who has also volunteered for MCL in a number of different capacities.

Martinez presented the following candidates:

- Cassie Duprey (Gresham Library patron)
- Kate Flemming (Belmont Library patron)
- David Jarvis (Central Library patron); and
- Megan Parrott (North Portland Library patron)

Martinez asked for comments, questions, or feedback on proposed candidates. Hearing none, Erin Cooper moved to approve all six members as a slate. Edmiston seconded. LAB members used the Raise Hand feature in Google Meet to vote; and all six new members were unanimously approved. Next, candidates will advance to the Board of County Commissioners/Library District Board for final approval and appointment to LAB.

Current LAB Co-Chair Salma Sheikh announced that LAB has two candidates for leadership, utilizing a Co-Chair model: Lizzie Martinez and Clare Wilkinson. Sheikh called for a vote, and Cooper seconded. Martinez abstained from the vote, and all other LAB members present voted unanimously to approve Wilkinson and Martinez as LAB Co-Chairs for 2022-2023.

Martinez shared that she's excited to lead with Clare, noting that LAB has done a lot of work to be more diverse and useful to MCL and she's looking forward to continuing this work around how LAB can be a better asset to the library.

Martinez also expressed appreciation for Sheikh, who stepped up to serve as Chair during a challenging time of much transition for both the library and the Library Advisory Board. Other LAB members and staff echoed this gratitude, noting that Sheikh was LAB's first-ever youth Co-Chair. Others shared their thanks and appreciation to Sheikh.

Meeting attendees then said goodbye and thank you, sharing memories and contributions made, for two other departing members: Gabby Shaffer, who starts college next year; and Erin Cooper, LAB's longest-serving member who has now termed out. Shaffer shared that her experience on LAB has made her appreciate public libraries even more. And, many folks expressed gratitude to Cooper for her many contributions to LAB and the library over the years. Cooper shared that it has been a privilege to work with so many fantastic board members and library staff, and to have witnessed the library's growth from passage of the library district to the current bond work.

Meeting attendees took a minute to also recognize and wish a fond farewell to Chun and Allgeier – for whom this LAB meeting is their last, as both are retiring in the coming months. Both Chun and Allgeier shared appreciation for the opportunity to work with LAB, and LAB's evolution in supporting the library.

High asked outgoing LAB members to look for an email request to complete an exit interview, and reminded that past members are welcome to attend future LAB meetings as a member of the public.

ACTION ITEMS + CLOSING

High shared that LAB meetings will return to a monthly schedule starting in July (although there is no meeting in August). A new meeting time will be determined based on results of a forthcoming schedule poll, since new members are joining the group.

High also announced that an in-person summer social is planned, with the date and time to be determined, but likely in August.

The meeting adjourned at 6:23 pm.

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