Library Advisory Board Minutes: July 12, 2022
For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board

The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met virtually on Tuesday, July 12, 2022. The meeting began at 5:05 pm.

Board members present were: Clare Wilkinson, David Jarvis, Hazel Burke, Lizzie Martinez, Megan Parrott, Mabel Reed, and Rob Edmiston.

Cassie Duprey, Kate Fleming, and Nathan Senters were not available.

Staff members present were: Dave Ratliff, director of integrated services; Jon Worona, director of innovation & technology; Katie Shifley, finance & facilities director; Maddelyn High, director's assistant; and Vailey Oehlke, library director.

Commissioner Lori Stegmann, District 4, Multnomah County was also in attendance.

WELCOME & CHECK-IN
Meeting attendees joined the virtual meeting either via video or phone, and introduced themselves.

Board Co-Chair Clare Wilkinson welcomed new members, and explained that Library Advisory Board meetings are open to the public.

Commissioner Stegmann, District 4, also extended a welcome to new LAB members, sharing appreciation for LAB volunteers and that she is the liaison between LAB and the Board of County Commissioners. Commissioner Stegmann encouraged LAB members to reach out to her directly.

Meeting minutes for the May 10, 2022 meeting were approved with one spelling edit.

TEAMBUILDING ACTIVITY
Attendees engaged in a welcome activity to get to know each other, sharing their names, home library location, and their "odd expertise."

UPDATES FROM LIBRARY LEADERSHIP
Director of Libraries Vailey Oehlke highlighted some recent bond-related news, sharing that a successful groundbreaking event was held on July 6, 2022 for the library's new Operations Center (the first bond project) and thanking LAB members who were able to attend. Oehlke also announced the selection of two firms for the East County Library in Gresham – internationally-renowned firm Adjaye Associates, and award-winning local firm Holst Architecture.

From the Director's Report, Oehlke also highlighted MCL's new [Mobile Library](#). Director of Innovation & Technology Jon Worona added that equipment (computers and more) is still coming in, and the library's Mobile & Partner Libraries team is planning related operations and services.

GROUP NORMS
Co-Chair Lizzie Martinez gave an overview of LAB group norms for new members, sharing that LAB has been undergoing an evolution — both in its membership and its culture. Over the past few years, LAB has shifted to bring in community-oriented members from diverse backgrounds and lived experiences, with different library user experiences, and from locations across Multnomah County. Wilkinson added that LAB has been intentional in seeking broad community representation, noting that the board still has some work to do there.

Wilkinson also explained that in addition to advising on systemwide policies, LAB is also the library's [Community Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC)](#) and advises on the library's budget during development — this process is a great way to learn about the library and its priorities. LAB's structure as a CBAC is slightly different than for county departments, in that LAB members have insight into library operations year-round, as well as an ongoing two-way dialogue with library leadership. Wilkinson extended a special welcome to youth members, underscoring the importance of youth members in bringing their unique perspective as users to LAB.

Martinez then led attendees in an exercise to share most positive and most negative group norms they've encountered as members of other groups. Meeting attendees broke out into small groups to discuss, and came back together as a full group to share themes, including:
- Opening with a warm-up question or ice-breakers is a positive norm that can encourage spontaneous connections, although these need to be right-sized to not take up too much time for large groups.
- Large virtual meetings can be a challenge, and breakouts and chat functions are helpful tools to catalyze engagement and interaction, and can bring some levity to a virtual meeting.
- Accessibility is an important norm, and helpful practices can support accessibility — like the "raise hand" feature, acknowledging phone participants, and reminding attendees to announce their name when speaking, and checking volume, for example.
- Pausing to allow folks to think, analyze, and formulate their thoughts and questions can be a positive practice
- The chat, raise hand function, and mute can also help manage interruptions and distractions.
- Being mindful that virtual participants can't always control their physical environment is a helpful norm.

Martinez then asked longer-serving LAB members and library staff to reflect and share something they'd wished they'd known about LAB before joining, and/or a facet of LAB's culture or norms. Folks shared the following:
- LAB is not overly formal or high-pressure.
- LAB's culture has improved over time, and LAB members have an opportunity to decide and lead on how they want LAB to be.

- Relationship building is important and happens more now. LAB is more self-aware.
- LAB is a respectful community and folks can feel safe and supported when offering their point of view.
- Asking questions is a way to bring in your library user and community experience, and youth members often ask the best questions. Don't be afraid to ask questions!
- Different perspectives are welcome. Speak up when things don't make sense for you, your community, or your culture — this is how we learn from one another.

Martinez then read current group norms, noting that she will make revisions and additions to written groups norms based on today's conversations. Martinez invited others to send additional edits they may have at any time, noting that culture is changeable and modeling positive culture is one way to make changes.

Wilkinson added that LAB moved its meetings to the virtual sphere during the pandemic, and it has made meetings more accessible for many members. That said, LAB will continue to consider and evaluate opportunities to visit library locations and to connect in person.

ACTION ITEMS + CLOSING
Library liaison Maddelyn High shared LAB's upcoming meeting and training schedule, reminding members to please fill out a member profile.

The meeting adjourned at 6:16 pm.

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