

Central Arkansas Library System
Board of Trustees Meeting
October 24, 2019
The Bookstore – 3rd Floor Meeting Room

Board Members in attendance were Marian Berry, Nancy Rousseau, Brandon Grice, Marilynn Porter, Andre Guerrero, Stephanie Gibson-Branton, Sarah French, John Bush, Sheila Wright, Kelly Moss, and Sophia Said. Annette Herrington and Bob Brown were absent.

Staff members in attendance were Nathan James, Cathy Sanders, Tameka Lee, Nate Coulter, Lisa Donovan, David Stricklin, Lance Ivy, Jo Spencer, Joe Hudak, Mark Christ, Kay Kay DeRossette, Carol Coffey, Pam Rudkin, Ellen Samples, Rosslyn Elliott, Polly Deems, Linda Ellis, Elizabeth Newbern and Nathania Sawyer.

Also, in attendance were Dr. Victoria Ramirez, Director of the Arkansas Arts Center (AAC), and Laine Harber, Chief Finance Officer of the AAC.

Action Items

1. Approval of Minutes

Berry asked the Board to approve the September Minutes with grammatical corrections.

French moved to approve the September Minutes as amended. Grice seconded the motion and the Minutes were approved unanimously.

2. Financial Report

Jo Spencer, stepping for Annette Herrington who was absent, stated that as of September 30, 2019, the total assets for CALS are \$115,592,566 with net losses of \$898,095. She reported that tax collections are up 5.28 % year to date over the previous year. This puts us in great shape since we only budgeted for 1.4 % increase. She is hopeful that this increase will carry over into November since that is one of our biggest months for tax collections each year.

She added that she and Coulter have been working on the 2020 Budget in preparation for the December meeting. They are currently waiting for some departments to get back to us about their parts of the budget.

Spencer also noted that due to an increase in premiums, CALS will be switching from Blue Cross Blue Shield to United Healthcare which will allow our employees to receive the same coverage at the same price.

Coulter noted that when Spencer came to him with this issue, they had three options:

- Pay the raised rates to Blue Cross Blue Shield to maintain coverage.
- Switch to United Healthcare which offers a similar plan without any price increase.
- Go back to Blue Cross Blue Shield to see if another deal could be worked out.

Given the circumstances, Spencer felt switching to United Healthcare would be the best option that would allow for continued coverage. It will also be possible to have employees with existing conditions grandfathered in.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Jo asked the Board to approve the September financials be filed for audit.

Rousseau moved to approve the Financials be filed for audit. Bush seconded the motion and the Financials were approved unanimously.

3. Approval of Policy 700 Change

James reported that this policy describes CALS internet and public computer use policy. In keeping with what was done with the rules of conduct, the branch services coordinators updated this policy to reflect current practice and help clarify why CALS is required to filter results due to the e-rate tax break. Most of the changes reflect minor language changes. James asked the Board to approve the policy change.

Bush noted that he was aware that internet usage and privacy were very politically topical. He asked if the library would be held liable if a patron misused public computer by, for example, posting controversial information from a public computer. Coulter said that based on current copyright laws and peoples' freedom of speech rights, it seems unlikely that CALS would be held liable, although insurance does provide some defense resources.

Guerrero asked if CALS would be susceptible to a defamation lawsuit in which someone sent or posted defamatory content from a public computer. He additionally asked if this would bring bad publicity. Coulter noted that bad publicity is a different question but responded that it is possible CALS would be susceptible to a lawsuit.

Coulter added that CALS or any library for that matter cannot entirely prevent misuse of public computers without surveilling library users. Many libraries oppose this and similarly oppose the requirement to filter searches for e-rate pricing.

Gibson-Branton said she commends the staff for the content and writing of the policy.

Gibson-Branton moved to approve the changes to Policy 700. Wright seconded the motion and the policy changes were approved unanimously.

4. Approval of Sunday Hours Proposal

Rudkin reported that CALS spend the last three weeks circulating a digital survey and paper copies to gather data about community member's thoughts on changing Sunday hours at various locations.

At the time of this meeting, there were 761 responses to the digital surveys and 262 responses to the paper surveys. In both sets of responses, approximately 65% of the community responded that they would be more likely to use library services if branches were open on Sunday. There were of course negative responses and comments, but the overwhelming majority were positive with some neutral responses. Based on that feedback, CALS would like to approve the proposal presented at last month's meeting that

Dee Brown Library, McMath Library, Sanders Library, and Terry Library branches will be open on Sunday instead of the Main Library and Children's Library.

Guerrero asked if there was any way to gauge what was meant by community members being less likely to come on Sundays. Rudkin said that most of those respondents likely came to the Main Library now and would be less likely to visit if that location is closed. It is likely that transport is the limiting factor there, and CALS is looking into solutions to that problem. She added that if this change goes well, CALS will probably investigate opening other branches on Sundays, such as the Fletcher and Maumelle Libraries.

Bush moved to approve the proposed change in Sunday hours. Rousseau seconded the motion and the Sunday hour change was approved unanimously.

Information Items

1. Partnership Presentation: Arkansas Arts Center

Coulter introduced two guests from the Arkansas Arts Center: Laine Harber, chief finance officer, and Dr. Victoria Ramirez, executive director. Shortly before Dr. Ramirez was appointed to be the executive director of the Arkansas Arts Center, Harber and his staff met with CALS staff to discuss the possibility of holding art classes out at the branches while the AAC was closed for construction. That partnership has evolved over the last year and CALS has not only hosted art classes and programs, but also hosts art at all its locations.

Harber thanked Coulter for the introduction and invited Dr. Ramirez to say a few words about her thoughts. Dr. Ramirez said that she was happy to meet the Board today and had high hopes for the partnership now and into the future as they move towards completing their new building.

Harber reported that the Art Center has historically thought of its self in terms of three separate pillars: the museum component, the art school component, and the theater component. He noted that the art center is sharing all three components throughout the CALS system. The Arkansas Arts Center is currently exhibiting 10 percent of its 1500 work contemporary craft collection at branches across CALS system, CALS is hosting several of the art school's drawing and painting classes and children's programs, and it is hosting some of the art center's theater shows at Children's Library. Each branch also has pieces curated for that location on site, for example, Nixon Library has military themed pieces to honor Jacksonville's history with its military base.

Nathan James added that CALS and the Art Center are looking on ways to continue the collaboration. One project they are developing is creating a passport app for visitors to use to learn and see all the different installations across the system.

2. Marketing & Resource Development Report

Lee reported several events across the system in late October and throughout November:

Library Square

- The November Friends Used Book Sale will take place from Thursday, November 7 through Saturday, November 9 at the Main Library.

- Thursday, November 7 – Friends of CALS members only sale from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Friday, November 8 – 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; Friends of CALS members get early entry starting at 9:00 a.m.
- Saturday, November 10 – 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; Friends of CALS members get early entry starting at 9:00 a.m.
 - Friends of CALS memberships are available for sale at the door. Pricing for books are \$1 for paperback titles and \$2 for hardcover books.
- On Saturday, November 9, CALS will be hosting the Self Published and Small Press Book Fair. It will take place on the first floor of the Main Library from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- On Friday, November 8, the Roberts Library will have its monthly Second Friday Art Night event.
- The *Rocky Horror Picture Show* events, the next one is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on Friday, October 25 at Ron Robinson Theater.
- There is also the end of Hitchcocktoberfest wrapping up with a screening of *Psycho* on Tuesday, October 29 at Ron Robinson Theater.
- The Oxford American will be co-hosting another speaking event with CALS following the success of Sarah Broom, author of *The Yellow House*. The next one will feature authors Nate Powell and Van Jensen who will speak on Tuesday, November 19 at Ron Robinson Theater.
- On November 12, CALS will host Legacies and Lunch at noon in Darragh Center and there will be a repeat performance on November 12 at 6:00 p.m. at Dee Brown Library.

Adult Programs

Christ noted that KUAR and the League of Women Voters will be co-hosting an upcoming Issues that Matter program on the 2020 Census on Thursday, November 14 at Nixon Library.

He said he is also working on developing a Kon Marie Workshop in 2020 to help patrons get rid of clutter.

Other News

Lee said that they are working on bringing some programs to local laundromats to reach a wider section of our community that might not know about our services. She also noted that to date, CALS has distributed 52,000 Tech cards and there are an additional 3,500 to be distributed soon to additional Perry County schools.

In line with our Strategic Plan Goal to increase outreach, CALS staff have attended several community events over the past month including: The Heroes Against Hunger 5K, Arkansas Goat Festival, Hillcrest Harvestfest, Little Rock Pride Fest, Big Booseum Bash, and the Cornbread Festival, among others.

3. Statistical Report

Coffey reported that overall circulation was up over September of the previous year. Although physical circulation was up 0%, it was up TK items. Digital circulation was up 14 % over September of last year. She said that door count was up 6 % and program attendance was up a whopping 18 %. Almost all other metrics were up over last year, including video and magazine use. She noted that they had just moved

some of their digital magazine subscriptions from the Flipster app to the RB Digital app in order to save money on digital magazine subscription packages going into 2020.

She said that eBook, audiobook, and music streaming all go up once the students get their Tech Cards. The music gets heavy streaming usage during the school year. Beginning in December, CALS will be offering 24 hours streaming through Freegal since CALS got a good deal on pricing, 13 months of the service for the price of 12.

Coffey said that since they dropped Hoopla last year, she decided to run some cost per use numbers to see how they had changed. Video costs stayed the same. Music costs were down .1 cent. Audiobook costs are up a dollar. However, it should be noted that the numbers for this year should continue to go down, since there are three months of use that have not yet been calculated into that comparison. Right now, there is an 8% growth trend and if that continues, the costs are expected to go down.

Guerrero noted that this is a great deal. He pays for an Audible subscription which costs \$230 per year.

4. Building Report

Ivy reported that Entergy installed all the posts for the solar panel array to be installed at Children's Library last week. Each of these panels is 3x6. He expected the installation would be completed by the middle of November.

He said that there was another installation at Children's Library, a dog sculpture that had been donated to the City of Little Rock by a French sculptor. It is a 10 foot tall sculpture and is one in a series of sculpture located throughout France. There are potential plans to hold a naming contest for the statue, although he does have an official name – Totor.

Ivy finished by reporting that the outreach vehicle that was approved at last month's meeting has been purchased and is currently in the process of being retrofitted to better serve outreach needs and to include our logo.

5. Update on Strategic Plan Progress

Coulter said that an update would be presented at the December Meeting instead due to time constraints.

6. Director's Report

Coulter reiterated the conversation from the previous month's meeting about the issue with eBook price gouging. As established in the September meeting, eBook and digital audiobooks are 9 and 10 times more expensive for libraries than they are for laypeople.

He also announced that there has been some internal restructuring beginning October 6th and several people have come into new positions:

- David Stricklin has become the Director of Strategic Partnerships and Community Engagement.
- Glenn Whaley has become the new Roberts Library Manager.

Coulter said that he recently had the opportunity to visit Stu Wilson and Chris Watkins in St. Paul and learned about their "Entrepreneurs in the Library" and "Job Seekers in the Library" programs. While in

Minnesota he had the opportunity to visit the Hennepin County Library, who are hiring people in the community who are bilingual. CALS is also planning to implement something similar in the coming year as part of CALS Strategic Plan.

He also had the opportunity to visit the Salt Lake City Public Library for the Urban Library Council's Annual Meeting and learned about their Main Library's rooftop garden.

Nathan James, who also attended the conference, noted that they learned about some interesting technologies that people are using, such as an AI device developed in Ft. Lauderdale that would help librarians communicate with patrons who speak different languages from what they know, such as Mandarin, Arabic, or other less common languages.

Coulter said that looking forward to the budget to be presented to the Board in December, he and Spencer foresee one structural problem that will come up in that conversation – the \$2M annual collection development budget. For quite a long time, a large portion of that budget has come from capitol improvement bond proceeds. Those proceeds are gone as of the end of this year, so the question now is where to come up with the \$705 thousand dollars that came from bonds in 2019.

In a related issue, he said that the Roberts Library had to make a \$300,000 payroll reduction in order to meet the objectives of the strategic plan. Roberts staff recommended that three part-time archival positions be eliminated. The employees who hold those positions have been made aware of the situation. He noted that CALS does have a large special collections staff. CALS employees 18 people in special collections while the Nashville Public Library has is 15 employees in a payroll that is almost twice the size of CALS.

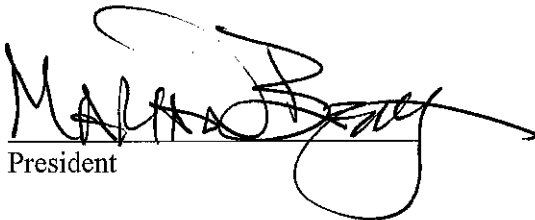
Guerrero asked if the archives staff can help collect and preserve personal records. He noted that this would be a great service to many members of minority groups in the community. Coulter said that this is something Roberts Library is going to do more with a new grant.

This and other issues will be discussed in greater detail at the end of year meeting in December.

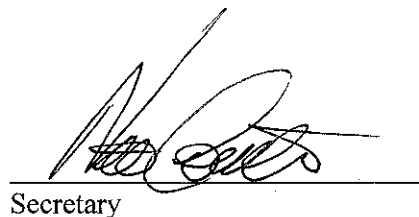
7. Other

Berry said she had the opportunity to attend the viewing and panel discussion of the documentary film, *Period. End of Sentence*, at Ron Robinson Theater this past month and thought it was a fantastic event. The panelists were fantastic, and she hopes this type of programming will continue.

Berry adjourned the meeting at 1:34 p.m.



President



Secretary