

Central Arkansas Library System  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
January 23, 2020  
Bobby L. Roberts Library – Room 124

Board members in attendance were Nancy Rousseau, Brandon Grice, Stacey McAdoo, Sheila Wright, Robert Brown, Annette Herrington, Sarah French, John Bush, Marlynn Porter, Marian Berry, and Stephanie Gibson Branton. Kelly Moss and Andre Guerrero were absent.

Staff members in attendance were Jo Spencer, Nate Coulter, Carol Coffey, Nathan James, Mark Christ, Lisa Donovan, Lance Ivy, Tameka Lee, Rosslyn Elliott, Joseph Hudak, Pam Rudkin, David Stricklin, Polly Deems, Kate Matthews, and Elizabeth Newbern.

Also in attendance were Matt Bell, Partner at Entegriy; Sam Selig, Director of Operations – Water Division from Entegriy; Jason Cater, General Counsel for Arkansas Municipal Power Association; and Nathania Sawyer, private citizen.

**Action Items**

**1. Approval of Minutes**

Herrington asked for the Board to approve the December Minutes as written.

Rousseau moved to approve the December Minutes. Grice seconded the motion and the Minutes were approved unanimously.

**2. November and December Financials**

Grice reported that as of November 30, 2019, CALS assets totaled \$119,906,828 with net losses of \$1,794, 579. November (traditionally the month in which we receive the largest amount of ad valorem taxes) was up over the same month last year.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Grice moved to file the November Financials for audit. Herrington seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Grice reported that as of December 31, 2019, CALS assets totaled \$119,191,797 with net losses of \$1,072,956.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Grice moved to file the December Financials for audit. Brown seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

**3. Solar Energy Discussion**

Coulter introduced Matt Bell from Entegriy who is proposing that CALS enter into a service contract with them, which essentially means that CALS would acquire a certain amount of our electricity from solar panels that Entegriy will build on an off-site facility. This is a slightly time sensitive consideration because the Public Service Commission (PSC) has a couple of items to consider that may impact the current advantages to people, companies and nonprofits who are using solar power. CALS currently pays

two different rates per kilowatt hour, one at 4.3 cents per kilowatt hours for our high usage buildings in Library Square and another at 8.4 cents per kilowatt hours for all other locations. With the service contract we would pay, Entegrity would charge us 6.1 cents per kilowatt hours to replace the higher priced electricity that goes to the branches. If CALS does this, it stands to save between \$20,000 and \$25,000 per year.

Within the agreement, there is an option to acquire the facility producing the solar power at some later date. One thing that gave CALS staff pause was that these contract agreements are active for 20 years and will lock CALS into the rate for that time, which comes with some risk associated with a further future reduction in the price of solar power.

Bell thanked Coulter for the introduction and the background explanation. He said that Act 464 of 2019, the Solar Access Act, was part of the reason that this proposal is possible although it was and is contentious among utility providers. Currently, this law allows for solar energy be credited for 1:1 rate. The PSC's current consideration of this law may change that consideration. Bell noted that rates currently increase annually and there is no expectation for that to change, but it is impossible to say what exactly the price of electricity will do so there is uncertainty there and associated risk especially when you would be locked into a rate for 20 years.

Carter introduced himself as an attorney who has represented governments and their allies on energy and utility matters. He said that the PSC will be looking at two issues: one concerns the old net metering law, which has a 2016 date on the docket, and then the other deals with an issue on the Act 464's credit classification. He says that he cannot say how this issue will be received at the PSC, but it is tactically smart to decide to go into this contract before that decision is made. Carter noted that there are good tax reasons to pursue a private/public partnership like this one and good reason why there also should be provision for CALS to purchase the property since it would allow the library to continue to receive lower utility rates. Ultimately, the CALS Board will need to weigh the pros and cons of this decision and vote on what they believe will be the best course of action for the system long term.

Given the information presented, the Board asked the Administrative Staff to provide a recommendation during the next meeting before they vote on this issue.

#### **4. Board Policy 401 Revision**

Nathan James said that the current Board Policy has specific language regarding card eligibility that would not allow for CALS to take the action mentioned last month of disallowing North Little Rock residents and CALS area employment. CALS staff has had some extensive conversations about how continuing to allow North Little Rock residents and CALS area employment card holders to access our materials for free does a disservice to the taxpayers of Pulaski County. Therefore, CALS staff has revised Board Policy 401 to simplify the policy so that all language that refers to specific card types and other unnecessary details so that the policy is consistent with what CALS staff has seen for other libraries in the region. This ensures that this policy is consistent with Administrative procedures and allows staff to make changes to day-to-day operations as needed.

James mentioned that while it is not specifically spelled out in the new policy, there will now only be four card types – individual, family cards, special circumstance cards, and non-resident cards. This will require that all residents that live outside of Pulaski or Perry county or in North Little Rock pay a fee, probably equivalent to what the average taxpayer pays - approximately \$54. If people are willing to pay for the

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for the service, this may allow for CALS to have a second revenue source that would allow us to reduce or eliminate fees for some group of people at some point in the future.

James asked for the Board to approve the proposed revision to Board Policy 401.

Berry moved to approve the proposed changes to Board Policy 401. Rousseau seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

#### **5. Approval of 2020 Budget Changes**

Spencer noted that there were two new financial developments that occurred after the 2020 Budget was approved last month. The first was that CALS received \$24,000 more in taxes through the payment in lieu program. CALS wants to take those funds and allocate it to a program with Rock Region Metro. This means we are asking to add \$24,000 to the budget that will expense out. The second was \$4,200 was left over in the Children's Nutrition Fund from last year. CALS wants to take that money and add it to this year's Children's Nutrition Fund budget. Altogether, this means that CALS is asking to increase the budget by \$4,200 in total expenses.

Spencer asked the Board to approve the Budget be adjusted to include \$4,200 in expenses for the year.

Grice moved to approve the proposed changes to the 2020 Budget. Wright seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

#### **Information Items**

##### **1. Marketing & Resource Development Report**

Lee reported that its work with the agency Thoma Thoma over the past year has resulted in the development of an ad campaign called "The Library, Rewritten." The agency has helped CALS Marketing department develop a series of ads that help showcase the many services, programs, and items outside of traditional library activities such as telescope lending, CALS lecture series, technology classes, etc. Thoma Thoma is also working with CALS to perform a Media Assessment that will help the marketing staff utilize advertising and the press in the most effective way.

She noted some upcoming events:

- Second Friday Art Night (2FAN) on Friday, February 14 at 5:00 p.m. will feature a new exhibition by Thristan "Tea" James Jackson in the Bookstore at Library Square.
- Legacies & Lunch on Wednesday, February 5 at noon will feature Benji de La Piedra and an update on his work on the Herbert Denton Community Project.
- An event commemorating Magic 105 will occur on January 24 at 7 p.m. in the Ron Robinson Theater.

Lee also noted that CALS was experimenting with a mini store at Sanders Library that features CALS swag, puzzles, soft toys, and photo clips. Sanders Branch Manager Ginann Swindle indicated that it has been successful thus far. If it continues to prove successful, CALS will explore doing this at other branches in the system.

Donovan stepped in to and mentioned several Youth Programs coming up soon:

- Fandom February – This will include events all across the month and the system that celebrates fandoms such as Pokémon, Harry Potter, and Minecraft amongst others. The fandom events will lead up to the larger CALS Con event in March.
- Laundromat Outreach – with support from the Clinton Foundation, CALS and Friends of CALS will be providing Storytime programs at the Funwash Laundromat on Baseline road. If this is successful, CALS will expand the program to other Laundromat locations around the Central Arkansas region.

Christ briefly highlighted a few adult programs and notable events coming up this year:

- Issues that Matter Series – CALS will be continuing its collaboration with the League of Women Voters of Pulaski County and KUAR to provide several events throughout the year.
- CALS Data Days – CALS will be working with the City of Little Rock to provide times across the system for library visitors to get a greater understanding of government data.
- 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the publication of Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee by Dee Brown, specific events to be announced.

## **2. Statistics Report**

In the interest of time, Coffey said she would keep the report brief. She noted that circulation was down 5 percent overall in 2019 compared to 2018, although, Digital Circulation was up 32 percent. She also said that she will be changing the format of the statistics report going forward to highlight big picture usages information and long term trends.

## **3. Director's Report**

Coulter reported that there are two projects in the works at CALS. One of them is a workforce development project that CALS is calling the Rock It Lab. The idea is to provide CALS visitors, specifically single parents and people of color, with a space for business and work ventures. CALS is working with a donor, Pat Riley, who has put up \$86,000 of the total \$154,000 required to create the space which is planned for the Main Library's 5<sup>th</sup> Floor. CALS plans to use a portion of the \$100,000 donation by Maribeth Murry, former CALS employee, to provide funds beyond Riley's gift to cover the balance of the \$154,000 and begin construction.

He said that CALS is also working with a private investor, who wishes to remain anonymous, to repurpose Hillcrest Hall. Currently, the space costs the library \$25,000 in operational costs and CALS does not get a lot of library related use out of the space. The evaluation thus far has been that to renovate the building is going to be expensive since it needs a lot of upgrades. However, it holds a lot of potential to be a community meeting area and social space for that part of the community. Coulter and the private investor are looking at the possibility of setting up an endowment to fund staff for the space.

## **4. Other**

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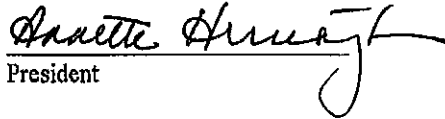
At the start of the meeting, Coulter welcomed Board Member Stacey McAdoo. She was appointed in December for a three year term to represent the city of Little Rock. Stacey is a teacher at Little Rock Central High School and is currently serving out her term (2019-2020) as Teacher of the Year for the state of Arkansas. CALS is happy to have her on the Board.

Herrington noted that there are several meeting dates that have not been determined for this year, the finalized summer dates and the December meeting dates. Due to time constraints, she asked the Board to postpone this decision until next month's meeting.

Herrington asked to adjourn the meeting.

Porter moved to adjourn. Berry seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

  
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President

  
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Secretary