

Central Arkansas Library System
Board of Directors Meeting
July 23, 2020
Zoom Video Call

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

Staff members in attendance were Nate Coulter, Jo Spencer, Nathan James, Lance Ivy, Tameka Lee, Carol Coffey, Kate Matthews, Joe Hudak, Pam Rudkin, Ellen Samples, Mark Christ, David Stricklin, Polly Deems, Cathy Sanders, Jessica McDaniel, Maria Aguilar, Courtney Jones, Candace White, Guy Lancaster, Rebecca Beadle, and Elizabeth Newbern.

Also in attendance was Rachel Herzog, reporter for the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette.

Action Items

1. Approval of the Minutes

Herrington asked the Board to approve May Minutes with submitted corrections.

French moved to approve the May Minutes with submitted corrections. Wright seconded the motion and the Minutes were approved unanimously.

2. May and June Financials

Grice reported that as of May 31, 2020, CALS assets totaled \$108,721,692 with net income of \$457,425. The income increase can be attributed to an increase in tax collection revenue, even though the tax collections were down in May.

He also reported that as of June 30, 2020, CALS assets totaled \$108,099,112 with net income of \$2,601. Collections were also down in June, but only down 1 percent for the year.

He noted that the auditors will be finished with their audit report shortly and will be presenting their findings during the August Board Meeting.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Grice moved that the May and June Financials be filed for audit. Gibson-Branton seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

3. Approval of CALS Cafeteria Plan Cares Act Amendment

Spencer said that one of the benefits CALS offers its employees is a Flex Spending Account (FSA) where employees can elect to put a designated amount pre-tax deduction from their paycheck to go towards qualified medical expenses. Due to COVID-19, the Federal Cares Act allowed CALS to make some changes to that Cafeteria Plan. CALS' plan administrator is requiring us to get an amendment approved by the Board before the changes can go into effect.

The Cares Act is allowing CALS to make the following changes to the plan:

- No prescriptions will be needed for over the counter medications and that is retroactive back to January 1.
- Employees can now opt out or get in if they had previously opted in and wanted to get out or vice versa, which is usually only allowed at open enrollment time.
- Employees can increase or decrease the amount they originally agreed to contribute to flex spending, which is again usually only allowed during open enrollment time.

Spencer asked the Board to approve the amendment to plan so that it can be adopted by CALS. Bush verified that there were no costs associated with any of these changes being made. Spencer confirmed that he was correct, there are no additional cost to CALS to make these changes.

Grice moved to approve the Cafeteria Plan Cares Act Amendment. Rousseau seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

4. Approval of CALS Diversity Policy

Coulter said that when he arrived at CALS he was surprised to learn that CALS did not already have a Diversity Policy in place. He said that it was something that CALS ought to have, and he has worked with several administrative staff including Candace White, Tameka Lee, and Editor at the Encyclopedia of Arkansas Guy Lancaster.

White noted that this policy is in line with our Board-approved Strategic Plan. The goal for diversity inclusion is outlined in Goal 7, Strategy 2 which states that CALS will “develop an organization that fully supports and deploys its resources, both human and material to best serve our communities; and to recruit and train a more diverse staff with appropriate compensation.” Also, in line with these goals, CALS has been more intentional about making sure all current staff members are aware of our larger mission and commitment to diversity. CALS has also been more intentional while making recent hiring decisions and promoting job openings at historically black colleges, such as Philander Smith College and the University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff, and attending events at historically black community centers such as St. Mark Church. White said that CALS has also incorporated a Cultural Conversation series with various staff members to encourage more understanding and sensitivity of cultural differences across the system.

Guerrero said that this has probably been done but wanted to make sure that the policy itself is available to diverse language groups and that it has been translated into Spanish and/or other languages. Nathan James said that this was a great point and something CALS intends to do. Maria Aguilar, our new Latinx Community Liaison, has been working with CALS to find ways to translate pages on our website from English to Spanish. James said CALS resources have links directly to the Spanish interface. She is also working with social media to translate posts for our Latinx communities.

Berry and Guerrero moved to approve the Diversity Policy. French seconded the motion and the policy was approved unanimously.

5. Solar Energy Contract Recommendation

Coulter said that CALS staff was now prepared to make a recommendation regarding a possible solar services contract with Entegriy that had been previously considered by the board but tabled pending an anticipated decision by the Public Service Commission (PSC). That decision came down in early June.

Ivy said that back in January, CALS staff first brought this proposal to the Board's attention and in February, the staff recommended that CALS wait to see how current policy disputes over net metering would unfold. The PSC's June ruling was favorable to CALS and other purchasers of solar energy from third parties. The 1:1 net meter credit that allows solar users to offset every dollar of purchased solar against a dollar of electricity from the grid was upheld. That decision by the PSC eliminates much of the risk associated with a long-term agreement to purchase solar.

Following the PSC ruling, CALS staff has been working with its attorney and electrical engineer to negotiate an agreement with Entegriy. In the 25-year agreement before the board for action, the rates for solar powered electricity would be \$0.61 per kwh. CALS currently pays \$0.84 per kilowatt hour to Entegriy. Entegriy will own all of the land, solar panels, and other equipment. Entegriy would be maintaining everything. CALS can take advantage of the savings from the cheaper, cleaner energy without making any capital investment.

The first year shows the potential for over \$30,000 in savings with the potential to save up to \$2M over the term of the agreement. This is at no capital risk to CALS. Starting in the 7th year, CALS does have the option to buy the solar facility at various points over the course of the 25-year period of the agreement.

Coulter added that the only real risk is that if CALS energy consumption for some reason declines to a point below what the contract obligates CALS to purchase from Entegriy. Because CALS must purchase 100% of the solar power generated by the facility, CALS with the guidance of its engineer and lawyer, has conservatively projected its future need and the plant will only generate less than 80% of that projected demand. Gibson-Branton asked about the way

to get out of the contract. Coulter said the only way to get out is for CALS to purchase the facility from Entegriy for its fair market value at the time of the purchase.

Rousseau moved to enter into the Solar Energy agreement with Entegriy. Wright seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

6. Approval of Reopening Plan Amendment

Coulter said that CALS Administrative staff had decided to revisit this document because of staff concerns regarding some specific dates mentioned for proceeding to Phase IV and Phase V. The phrasing and the dates themselves alarmed some staff members since it seemed to indicate that CALS might go into new phases too soon. Therefore, the specific dates have been removed.

Nathan James said that in addition to the removal of that date information, CALS staff reworded Phase IV to clarify what the library would do when it is time to consider that phase. Most of the changes were to modify language to better reflect what would make logistical sense for this phase. For example, it originally stated that CALS would reopen meeting rooms starting with smaller rooms, but upon further reflection this might not be the best way to ensure social distancing guidelines are met so the reference to small meeting rooms was removed. CALS has also changed some of the verbiage about quarantine guidelines since that is changing rapidly as more information comes out. It previously stated that CALS would quarantine all materials for at least 72 hours. It now states that CALS will quarantine items based on the most current scientific data and research. This will prevent CALS staff having to come back to update this policy as each new piece of research comes to light.

Herrington asked that the Board adopt these changes.

Bush moved to approve the Reopening Plan Amendment. Rousseau seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Information Items

1. Director's Report

Although this report was submitted to the Board Members ahead of the meeting, Coulter said he wanted to highlight a few things in more detail:

- In May CALS furloughed 62 employees and reduced hours for 73 additional employees. CALS has been able to recall about half of the furloughed employees as CALS locations have reopened. As of August 3, CALS will have called back 32 employees; there are still 30 employees on furlough. Of the 73 employees who were working reduced hours, 51 of them have been restored to their pre-pandemic hours.

- Coulter reported to everyone that in the previous week, CALS had its first case of someone testing positive for COVID-19 at the Main Library. He said he was pleased to report that all employees working in that area of Main Library have tested negative for the virus, which underscores the effectiveness of the safety protocols in place. [The employee in question was cleared to return to work on Monday, July 27.]
- CALS has finished with the remodel on the 5th Floor of the Main Library that was provided by the grant from Pat Riley. Currently, CALS cannot bring large groups into the building for training there; however, CALS does plan to start providing virtual programming there. The library has also applied for a grant from United Way (and CALS has made it to the second round) that will provide funding for a full-time staff member to oversee that space and provide some money to purchase devices and software.

Bush asked if CALS was responsible for any employees working in the rented spaces, such as 4Square and spaces in the Roberts Library. Coulter said for those third-party rented spaces CALS does not have any oversight. By contrast, the library-operated Gallery and Bookstore, are open for limited hours and limited days and those spaces are subject to CALS rules and regulations. James added that any vendors or contractors that come into CALS buildings are required to follow the same protocols that CALS administration asks the staff to follow or they will not be allowed in the building.

2. Introduction of New Community Liaisons

Stricklin and Mark Christ said that CALS wanted to introduce three new staff members to the CALS Board of Directors:

- Jessica McDaniel, Community Liaison to the African American Community
- Maria Aguilar, Community Liaison to the Latinx Community
- Courtney Jones, Community Outreach Coordinator

Hiring these three individuals was part of Goal 1 of the Strategic Plan, and CALS is thrilled to welcome them. Although all three of these individuals started their positions during the pandemic, they have already proved to be valuable members of the staff. Stricklin said that all three of them have hit the ground running and are working on making connections with community organizations to help CALS provide better access and services to different segments of our community.

3. Other

Herrington announced that Sarah French has agreed to chair the Personnel Committee again this year and that they will be meeting at 11 a.m. ahead of next month's meeting on Thursday, August 27 to discuss and evaluate Executive Director Coulter's performance this past year. The Committee will discuss their finding in an Executive Session after the August meeting ends.


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French asks that any direct reports of Director Coulter please fill out the evaluation survey sent out last week.

She said that the auditors from the firm BKD will also be joining us to present their findings during the August meeting. There will be a Finance Committee meeting ahead of the August Board Meeting; the specific date will be announced in coming weeks.

Herrington called the meeting adjourned at 12:52 p.m.

Rousseau moved to adjourn the meeting and Wright seconded the motion.



President



Secretary