

Central Arkansas Library System  
Board of Directors Meeting  
September 24, 2020  
Zoom Video Call

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

Staff members in attendance were Nate Coulter, Jo Spencer, Nathan James, Lisa Donovan, Kay Kay Derosette, Lance Ivy, Tameka Lee, Carol Coffey, Joe Hudak, Pam Rudkin, Kate Matthews, Ellen Samples, Mark Christ, David Stricklin, Polly Deems, Cathy Sanders, Rebecca Beadle, Candace White, and Elizabeth Newbern.

Also in attendance was Rachel Herzog, reporter for the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette; and Nathania Sawyer, private citizen.

### **Action Items**

#### **1. Approval of August Minutes**

Herrington asked for the Board to approve the August Minutes with submitted corrections.

Bush moved to approve the Minutes with corrections. Rousseau seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

#### **2. Financials and Audit Update**

Grice reported that as of August 31, 2020, CALS assets totaled \$106,866,144 and net loss of \$1,312,773. Expenses are still down as reported in August and collections from fines and fees are still down due to COVID-19. Tax receipt through September has been positive; collections are up 0.3 percent year over year.

Herrington asked what the \$112K miscellaneous income line referred to in the report. Spencer said that these items were reimbursements from the cities of Jacksonville and Sherwood for expense that CALS paid for the buildings in those cities; this happens every year. CALS also received some reimbursement from USDA for the meal service provided by the Be Mighty Meal Program.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Grice moved that the August Financial statements be filed for audit. This motion was approved unanimously.

Grice said that he heard from the auditors at BKD that the only thing added to the Draft Audit was a completed Management Letter. The Management Letter reported that it was a clean audit,

and the only addition was a note about the COVID-19 uncertainties that are expected for next year. Spencer noted that this addition was standard for almost any industry for this year impacted by COVID-19 in 2020. Herrington asked that the Board approve the final version of the Audit Report as submitted.

Brown moved to approve the final version of the audit. Grice seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

### **3. Approval of Changes to Board-Approved CALS Reopening Plan**

Nathan James said that staff realized we needed to make some additional changes to the re-opening plan based on what was done since it was Board Approved. The changes are related to the contents of both Phase 4 and Phase 5 of the plan.

For the Phase 5 section, it originally stated that CALS would return to the original operating hours pre-pandemic. That is not really accurate; it should not imply that CALS will re-vert back to exactly how CALS was operating before, since that is unlikely to be true. Phase 5 should say that CALS will no longer be operating under pandemic conditions.

Phase 4 still talks about meeting room use, which was in there originally, but it adds more information about how quickly CALS may be able to re-open meeting rooms to the public while also removing the procedural things described in the document. The edits introduced in Phase 4 puts authority in the Playbook for procedure, which should remove the necessity for the Board to continue to approve each procedural change as the pandemic conditions change and develop.

Porter moved to approve the changes to the Board-approved CALS Reopening Plan. Wright seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

## **Information Items**

### **1. Director's Report**

Coulter noted that he submitted a report in writing ahead of the meeting, but he wanted a few staff members to highlight a few upcoming events in more detail.

#### **a. CALS Voting Education Support**

Coulter invited Joe Hudak, head of the Main Library, to speak on the Library's work on Voter Education. Hudak said that CALS has been supporting voter education on several fronts and outlined details of each of these.

##### *Voter Registration*

- CALS will assist with registration and filling out voter registration applications and absentee ballot requests.

*Voter Education*

- CALS helping to push out information on ballot measures, providing sample ballots, and hosting both virtual and socially distanced events to promote voting in Central Arkansas.

*Voting*

- Several CALS locations are serving as early voting sites. All early voting sites will also serve as voting day locations as well this year.

Brown asked if CALS was doing education programs at every branch. Hudak said that CALS is doing some kind of voter education promotion at every branch, but not necessarily programs at every location. Every branch has information about how to file an absentee ballot application.

Guerrero applauded the efforts made by staff to support voter registration and education. Hudak thanked Guerrero and noted that CALS staff has a long history of wanting to support the community's effort to vote.

**b. Count-Up Math Tutoring Program**

Coulter said he alluded to this being in the works at the last meeting, but he could confirm now that CALS received a grant of approximately \$200K to support a math tutoring program from the Walton Family Foundation. He credits Mayor Scott and his Chief Education Officer Jay Barth with helping connect CALS to the Walton Foundation. The money will be used to hire a program coordinator to help organize local volunteers to provide virtual hands-on intervention for students struggling with math. Philander Smith College and UA Little Rock are assisting with designing the content and approach in addition to helping to recruiting math tutors. The LRSD is also helping us to identify students who might benefit from the resource. The Walton grant has been used to purchase access to a subscription called Brainfuse that connects students to live homework help and can assist adults with live resume review help and job search assistance.

Guerrero asked if there is going to be someone available to students who struggle with English. There are students in this category at all grade levels and not all students have Spanish as their first language which is an additional factor. Nathan James noted that Brainfuse has help available to Spanish speakers. The system connects you to a real person, and they do employ people who speak Spanish. James cannot speak to the other languages.

Brown said he was interested to learn that the Walton Family Foundation was involved in this and asked if it was limited to only math assistance or if students could receive assistance with other subjects. Coulter said that they were specifically interested in providing support to Little Rock area students in math through CALS Count-Up but AR Reads also received a grant to help with reading tutoring.

Guerrero said that the roll-out and access is just as important. He asked what the roll-out plans were. Coulter said that there are plans to push-out public service announcements, reach out to schools, and spread the word any way we can.

Rousseau said she was thrilled about this program and the resource. She noted that the principal's cabinet tutors and she can help get access to kids who tutor and that need volunteer hours.

**c. Millie Brooks Micro-Tech Library**

Stricklin said that Courtney Jones, Jessica McDaniel, Pam Rudkin, Maria Aguilar, and he have been working to reach out to the Wrightsville community to discover what CALS can do better there. CALS has been concerned for some years about whether the library is serving the needs of this community. This group has been surveying community members, and what they said they need is something more like a business center and an area where kids could gather.

The small space at Millie Brooks Library is useful so it is being reconfigured. The collection will be removed – a browsing shelf will stay and a hold shelf – but also use this as a place to do some special programming. On October 13, CALS will be doing a soft-open of the new library.

Stricklin also noted that the Economic Impact Statement that was distributed to the Board ahead of the meeting was a result of the work of the Boyette Group. The Group was asked before the pandemic to help CALS survey the economic impact that the library has had on this economic statistical area. The bottom line is that over a period of approximately ten years 2010 – 2019, the total economic impact of CALS on all investment and business activity is a little over \$1B.

Guerrero asked who has received this document to date. He said that it should be sent to city leaders and CALS supporters around our service area. Stricklin said that the CALS Board is the first group to see this report, but that Guerrero is correct that their city leaders and supporters should and will be given copies of it as well. It demonstrates that the tax investment that our taxpayers have made has paid off.

Brown said that he heard recently that the Hawkins Unit had received support through the library for inmates to read stories to their children. He asked if there are plans to do similar things in Wrightsville with their Prison Unit. Nathan James approached us asking about getting some shelving to them, which CALS plans to do. He also knows that Courtney Jones is in touch with them about some further ways CALS can support them.

**d. CALS Six Bridges Book Festival**

Brad Mooy, Six Bridges Book Fest Director, said that there will be 75 presenters, 61 authors, and more than 50 ways to engage this year. Ninety-eight-percent of the festival will be on Zoom or through a virtual format. From faith to rage baking, the history of fugitivism to the history of merpeople, the last trial of Harper Lee to the last work of Prince, the spirituality of Mr. Rogers to the evolution of Eminem, the fest has it.

Mooy said that there are also 10 authors doing virtual visits to schools this year through the Arkansas' Writers in the Schools Program (AR WITS).

He said that the festival is running for eleven days this year instead of the usual four, and there are fewer concurrent sessions so much more opportunity for people to attend all events that may be of interest to them.

Banned Books Week starts next week (September 27 to October 3). The Crazy Free Book Give-away Program has already given away all 50 copies of the autobiography Malcolm X memoir that was available on a first come first serve basis. The writing contest entries are due tomorrow (September 25, 2020). Winners will be announced next week. CALS will be showing a documentary next week about the life of Malcolm X.

Mooy said that there will be several interesting programs coming up:

- The Heartbeat at Wounded Knee - will feature David Troyer on October 29<sup>th</sup>.
- Life of Klansman - Edward Ball discusses his memoir about his grandfather who was a Ku Klux Klan member. This program will be on December 10.
- The Ruthless Ladies Guide to Wizardry – this will be a talk given on January 24 by C.M. Wagner.

Brown asked when Tim O'Brien was doing his presentation. Mooy said he is speaking on Saturday, October 10 at 7 p.m. Brown asked if in light of recent racial justice conversations, the Elaine Massacre was getting additional attention this year. Mooy said there was a conversation about that specific topic about a month ago through the Butler Center, but that specific event will not be discussed at the Fest. However, he said that several authors are looking at racial strife.

Rousseau asked if it was possible to get digital promotional materials for her to circulate amongst parents, students, and staff at LR Central High School. Lee and Mooy told her that it was possible, and that information would be sent after the meeting.

## **2. Other**

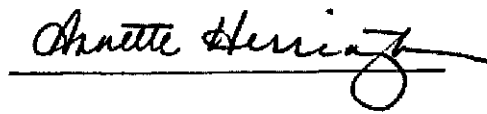
Guerrero asked if there was any kind of archive where presentations that CALS was given permission to record might be accessible to the public. Nathan James said that many, although

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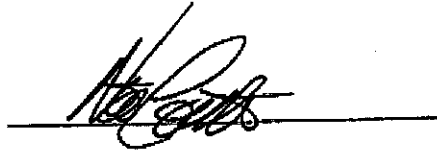
not all, are accessible on CALS YouTube channel. He said we are working on ways to make this more findable on the website and in the CALS Catalog.

Herrington asked for a motion that the meeting be adjourned at 1:03 p.m.

Rousseau moved to adjourn the meeting. Wright seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.



President



Secretary