

Central Arkansas Library System
Board of Directors Meeting
October 22, 2020
Zoom Video Call

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

Staff members in attendance were Nate Coulter, Jo Spencer, 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, Savannah Herrera, Brad Mooy, 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 September Minutes

Herrington asked that the Board approve the September Minutes with submitted corrections.

Grice moved to approve the September Minutes as corrected. Wright seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

2. Financials

Grice reported that as of September 30, 2020, CALS assets totaled \$106,123,282 and net losses of \$2,033,309. This has been consistent with previous months. Tax collections have been up approximately 1.5 percent year to date. Collections are expected to be up in November since October is one of the highest collections months each year.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Grice recommends that the September Financial Statement be filed for audit. The motion was approved unanimously.

Information Items

1. Director's Report

Coulter noted that most of his updates to the Board were included in the report he submitted ahead of the meeting, but here are a few highlights:

- *CALS Strategic Plan* – Some progress towards strategic plan goals has been slowed by the pandemic, but CALS has continued to push to work on several goals. A complete update of CALS Strategic Plan progress will be sent out ahead of the meeting in December.
- *2021 Budget Preparation* – As of October 15, property tax revenue has been steady so staff is hopeful that this revenue source will remain consistent with budgeted income through the end of the year. We will have a better idea of that once November revenue is reported. CALS will have some savings this year from staff furloughs that will help offset the loss of other revenues. CALS' budget for 2021 will be presented at the Board's next meeting in December.
- *Health Insurance* – United Health Care contacted CALS notifying us that they would have to raise our premiums by 25 percent in 2021. Spencer and CALS insurance agent are in shopping for other carriers to find a way to hold that number down.
 - Guerrero asked if CALS was working with a consultant or insurance broker on this issue. Spencer said that CALS has a broker, an agent at Meadows, Adams & Lee that CALS pays a flat fee for assistance on these issues.
 - Porter asked if CALS has a concierge doctor through the insurance, that helps streamline health records and doctor visits for staff. Spencer said that CALS did not have that service. Rousseau noted that it is an expensive service, that would likely not be affordable for CALS.
- *Wrightsville Reopening* – Thanks to the hard work by David Stricklin, Jessica McDaniel, Courtney Jones, Pam Rudkin, and Maria Aguilar, the Wrightsville Microtech Library reopened last week and has already seen some folks coming in to use the computers. Coulter noted the staff is planning a similar re-assessment of the services offered at the Children's Library in 2021.
- *Count Up Coordinator* – He asked the Board to welcome Savannah Herrera, CALS newly hired Count Up Coordinator. Her office is located at Children's Library. Before she came to CALS, she was working at the AR Regional Innovation Hub. Herrera thanked Coulter for the introduction and said that she was still in the process of building the program and welcomes any questions, comments, or suggestions from Board members as she gets started.
 - Guerrero said that he knew of all kinds of materials available from community partners that provide assistance to language minority students in the area. Herrera said she would be interested in getting access to those materials and thanked Guerrero for mentioning them.
- *Cox Building* - CALS has plans to consolidate the Galleries and the Bookstore by end of 2020. The combined business will all move to the space currently occupied by the Galleries. This leaves the Cox Building open for other uses. CALS is currently looking at ways to develop the space for local entrepreneurs in conjunction with the work being done through CALS' new Rock It! Lab. Coulter noted that Jimmy's Serious Sandwiches would not be coming back to their space after closing down at the beginning of the pandemic.
- *Economic Impact* – CALS is looking at ways to disseminate this comprehensively throughout the community. Coulter said that Tameka Lee and David Stricklin are working with Thoma Thoma to devise a distribution plan.

- *Early Voting* – Voting has started at seven CALS libraries this week. There were long lines on Monday and shorter ones on Tuesday. There have been some challenges managing this higher traffic initially, but overall, it has been taken in stride by staff.
- *Six Bridges Book Festival* – Coulter asked Fest Director Brad Mooy to present his stats from the festival. Mooy said that despite a lot of pivoting this year – new name, new schedule, moving the dates – CALS was able to host the first virtual Six Bridges Book Festival to great success! A total of 1762 people attended over a 10 day period. There were 780 book giveaways, 564 people voted for the Tasty Reads Contest and a four-year-old won the junior competition. Mooy said that David Treuer’s talk on his book *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee* will take place on Wednesday, October 29 at 6:30 p.m. virtually over Zoom. He encouraged the Board Members to attend. Porter thanked Mooy for all his hard work.
- *Staff Day* – On Columbus Day/Indigenous People’s Day, CALS was closed to celebrate Staff Day. Coulter said that during his tenure CALS has held this celebration periodically. It was not held last year. This year CALS invited three African American directors from libraries around the country – Roosevelt Weeks from the Austin (TX) Public Library, Rose Dawson from the Alexandria (VA) Public Library, and Sonia Alcantara-Antoine from the Newport News (VA) Public Library, to speak to the staff. It was an opportunity for staff to see that libraries across the country are experiencing similar issues related to the pandemic and also touch on racial justice issues relating to the field of librarianship. CALS also hosted guest talks from a security expert, Dr. Steve Albrecht, and mental health professional, Dr. Sufna John.
- *Staff Advisory Committee* – CALS recently formed a Staff Advisory Committee after concerns were expressed at a recent Coffee with Nate that lower level staff do not provide much input in operational and policy decisions. The Committee’s first task was to evaluate the quarantine period that is currently required by our procedures for library materials. After much consideration, the Committee recommended that the Administration reduce the number of quarantine days from four days down to two days. This change is expected to make this process less stressful to staff and library patrons who both expressed concerns.
- *Safe Routes to Parks* – Kay Kay DeRossette said that through Be Mighty Little Rock CALS has been working with the Parks Department to create safer pedestrian routes to parks and libraries. There was a walking/biking lane blocked off temporarily by orange cones starting at 12th Street connecting through the Little Rock Zoo and on to Fair Park Blvd. There were many pedestrians and bikers that used the path but more work needs to be done to find a more permanent solution.

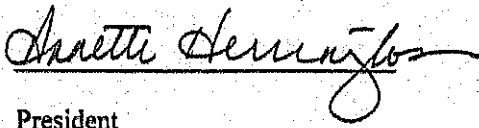
2. Other

Herrington reminded the CALS Board that it does not meet in November due to the Thanksgiving holiday. The next meeting will take place in December and is when the 2021 Budget will be presented and proposed for approval. Herrington recommended Thursday, December 17 as the date to hold the next meeting. There was no opposition to this proposed date, and it has been set as the next meeting date.

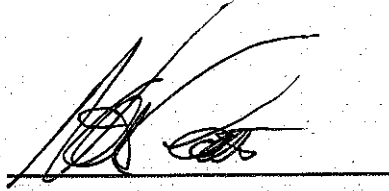
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Herrington asked for a motion that the meeting be adjourned at 12:42 p.m.

Porter moved to adjourn the meeting. Gibson-Branton seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.



President



Secretary