

Central Arkansas Library System
Board of Directors Meeting
December 17, 2020
Zoom Video Call

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

Staff members in attendance were Nate Coulter, Jo Spencer, Lisa Donovan, Nathan James, Chris Ketterman, Kate Matthews, David Stricklin, Joe Hudak, Ellen Samples, Pam Rudkin, Polly Deems, Cathy Sanders, Tameka Lee, Kay Kay DeRossette, Mark Christ, Carol Coffey, and Elizabeth Newbern.

Also in attendance was Joe Flaherty, reporter for the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette.

Action Items

1. Approval of October Minutes

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

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

2. October and November Financials

Grice reported that as of October 31, 2020, CALS assets totaled \$106,096,003 and net losses of \$2,319,576. In this month, CALS received \$1.5M in property tax collections.

He reported that as of November 30, 2020, CALS assets totaled \$111,091,860 and net income of \$2,853,547. In this month, CALS received \$6.5M in property tax collection. November has historically been CALS biggest month for tax collections. He noted that as of December, tax collections were up 3 percent.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Grice moved that the October and November Financial Statements be filed for audit. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Approval of 2021 Budget

Spencer said that each of the funds are described in the Budget Memo that was submitted to the Board ahead of this meeting; they were also discussed in the Finance Committee meeting that was held on Tuesday, December 15. She asked Coulter to go over the highlights of his memo.

Coulter said that while he does admit the Memo was lengthy, he feels that the approval of the annual budget is one of the most important pieces of business the Board executes each year. That said, he noted the following highlights from his memo:

- CALS ends 2020 with an unexpected \$1.6M surplus that is a result of both salary expense savings resulting from furloughs earlier this year and keeping some positions open, and also a higher than budgeted increase in property tax collections.
- Overall revenue is down due to pandemic closure which caused reduced fine collection, parking fees, and retail sales.
- One unexpected source of revenue were the nonresident fees. More than 500 people paid the fee and generated \$26K in revenue.
- While CALS has worked hard to stop funding its operations using bond money, CALS does need to increase money collected for operational expenses. This could be going to the tax-payers with a proposal for a millage that does not increase taxes, but instead reallocates the amount of money that is directed towards capitol expenses versus operational expenses.
- CALS was able to reduce contract expenses this year due to closures related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- United Healthcare contacted CALS to announce a rise in premiums, so CALS has switched insurance carriers to Cigna for 2021 to keep that expense relatively stable and still provide adequate coverage to employees.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Grice moved that the General Fund & Ancillary Budgets for 2021 be approved by the Board. The motion was approved unanimously.

Coulter said that the only remaining fund is the Morris Fund, which is an endowment given to the library and intended to be used by the staff to enrich their experience at CALS. The fund generates approximately \$10K each year. Administration's only work with the fund is to transfer the amount to the Morris Fund Account. A committee of employees determines how the money is spent each year, usually for staff parties, treats & snacks, and other things that enrich employee experience at CALS.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Grice moved that the Morris Fund Budget for 2021 be approved by the Board. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Approval of Updated Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Nathan James said that upon reviewing the Diversity and Inclusion Policy recently, staff realized that the wording did not include library patrons, which was particularly important when talking about the expectation to report incidents of harassment and discrimination. The language in the policy has been changed to include library patrons in this type of reporting.

Guerrero said the one thing that concerns him about this policy is the possibility of false accusations. James said that although the procedures for reporting incidents has not been finalized, it would be expected that a certain amount of investigation would need to be done in incidents of discrimination and harassment to ensure that the claims are valid. It will also need to

be clear what steps are taken in both cases after the claims have been verified to be true. This is something CALS staff is working on, but it will be created in short order.

Bush noted that it will be important to distinguish between procedures necessary in different scenarios (i.e. employee and employee, employee and patron, or patron and patron). James said that is true and will be an important part of crafting the procedural piece of the administrative policy that will come from this.

Herrington asked for a motion to approve the updated policy as presented.

Berry moved to approve the updated Diversity and Inclusion Policy. Rousseau seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

5. Approval of Updated Code of Conduct Policy

Donovan said that CALS Administration had recently reviewed the Rules of Conduct Policy to ensure that staff are able to consistently and fairly enforce the rules and that they reflected current operational procedure. All edits in the document were noted in the handout distributed ahead of this meeting, but she noted that the following summarized the changes:

- Made the introductory paragraph easier to understand.
- Replaced the term “banned” with “removed from the library” in several instances.
- Changed the language about indecent exposure and made it broader.
- Replaced “inappropriate behavior” in restrooms.
- Reworded the language about personal hygiene.
- Removed confusing language about how many warnings a patron gets.
- Combined 2 rules re: harassing.
- Added COVID-19 rules.

Guerrero asked if the COVID-19 Rules, mentioned at the bottom of the page, were easily enforceable for staff when dealing with children or a hostile patron. Donovan said that while there have been a few incidents, for the most part, patrons have been happy to comply with our COVID-19 rules. For the occasions when patrons do not want to wear a mask, staff have been instructed to figure out what the patron needs and work to deliver that to them curbside. In terms of children visitors, there have been very few due to our requirement that children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. This means that concerns about children not complying with mask wearing really have not come up due to the reduced volume of child visitors. Nathan James added that both of these suggestions, among others, are included in the staff playbook.

Bush moved to approve the updated Code of Conduct Policy. Wright seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

6. Election of 2021 Board Officers

Herrington said that the proposed slate of officers for 2021 is as follows:

Nancy Rousseau – President
Stephanie Gibson-Branton – Vice-President
Brandon Grice – Treasurer

French moved to elect the slate of officers for 2021. Porter seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Information Items

1. Director's Report

Coulter said that he submitted his report in writing ahead of the meeting, but he wanted to speak a bit on a few highlights:

- COVID-19 – there have been two back-to-back staff cases in the same department at the Main Library. While this was cause for concern, based on the information administration has gathered from other staff in the department, he feels confident that these cases were unrelated and there is no evidence of transmission on-site. The Fifth floor of the Main Library is closed today to compensate for being short staffed in the affected department.
- Meal Programs – Coulter asked Kay Kay DeRossette, Be Mighty Program Coordinator, to speak briefly on this. DeRossette said that meal service is currently provided from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Monday through Friday and from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Saturdays at Children's, Dee Brown, Fletcher, Main, McMath, Nixon, Rooker, Sanders, Terry, and Willams (which serves from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on weekdays). To date, CALS has served 172,947 meals in 2020. She said that the online giving campaign provided funds to purchase 8,803 adult meals throughout the pandemic; there are currently no funds to continue this service. DeRossette also added that the Roberts Nutrition Fund and CARES Act Funds allowed CALS to purchase 550 boxes of food that could provide meals to feed 1,925 people.
- Election 2020 – Coulter asked Joe Hudak, head of the Main Library, to speak briefly on this. Hudak said that more than half of the 110,284 Pulaski County resident who voted early, voted at a CALS Library. He noted that Terry Library, which was an early voting site for the first time this year, saw the largest crowds with over 12K people visiting over the early voting period. In total, 59,104 people voted at a CALS Library during the 2020 election.
- Staff Bonuses – Coulter said that Administration had decided to use some of the surplus from this year to provide bonuses to CALS staff that make below a certain amount for all the hard work they put in amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Full-time employees will receive a \$500 bonus and part-time employees will receive \$250.

2. Other

Coulter wanted to pause and thank outgoing board members Annette Herrington, Sheila Wright, and Sarah French for their years of service on the CALS Board of Directors. He said all three

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members have been valued members of the Board for the past six years and he will be sad to see them go.

Each outgoing Board Member was presented with a gift certificate to The Galleries at Library Square as a thank you from the Administrative Staff.

Porter mentioned a project she had been working on this past year, lining up this year's New York Times and Wall Street Journals to see this year in newsprint. She suggested that this might be an interesting idea for an exhibition. Coulter said he would mention this to the Art Director Colin Thompson and Outreach Coordinator Heather Zbinden to see if this is something the Roberts Library might be able to pursue.

Herrington asked for a motion that the meeting be adjourned at 1:11 p.m.

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



President



Secretary