

**Central Arkansas Library System
Board of Directors Meeting
March 18, 2021
Zoom Video Call**

Board members in attendance were Stephanie Gibson-Branton, Audrey Evans, Bob Brown, Stacey McAdoo, Marian Berry, Brandon Grice, Andre Guerrero, Karama Neal, and John Bush. Kelly Moss, Mandy Gil, Nancy Rousseau, and Marilynn Porter were absent.

Staff members in attendance were Nate Coulter, Jo Spencer, Lisa Donovan, Nathan James, Lance Ivy, Pam Rudkin, Tameka Lee, David Stricklin, Joe Hudak, Mark Christ, Ellen Samples, Polly Deems, Carol Coffey, Kate Mathews, Kay Kay DeRossette, Leah Patterson, and Elizabeth Newbern.

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

Action Items

1. Approval of February Minutes

Vice-President Gibson-Branton, standing in for President Rousseau, asked the Board to approve the February Minutes as written.

Bush moved to approve the February Minutes as written. Brown seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

2. February Financials

Grice reported that as of February 28, 2021, CALS had total assets of \$103,311,655 and net losses of \$1,856,101. He noted that tax collections are up overall compared to 2020; however, parking lot income is still down.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Grice moved to file the February Financials for audit.

Information Items

1. Director's Report

Coulter noted that he submitted his report in writing ahead of this meeting, but had a few items he wanted to highlight:

- o *Positive COVID-19 Cases* - Last week, CALS had a few contract employees who tested positive for COVID-19. They reported that they could not smell or taste. The buildings

they worked in were cleared and sanitized promptly and there are no known cases of on-site transmission related to these cases.

- *CALS Staff COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic* – Also last week, 77 CALS staff people were vaccinated in the building during an on-site vaccine clinic provided by the Park West Pharmacy. There are additional staff members who have made appointments outside our internal clinics. According to our records, approximately one third of our staff has had at least 1 shot.
- *New CALS Development Director* – CALS has hired a new Development Director to replace Cathy Sanders, who left in January - Eliza Borné. Borné comes to CALS after working as the Managing Editor and later as Editor in Chief for the Oxford American for the past eight years. She already has plans to have CALS rollout a campaign for Giving Tuesday and a few other ideas that she has expressed to our Marketing and Resource Development Department.
- *Encyclopedia of Arkansas* – Coulter recently learned of some recent indirect praise for the EOA. Last month, the Arkansas State Parks, Recreation, and Travel Commission's advertising firm reported to the commission that the major competitor with their website, Arkansas.com, for Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is CALS's EOA. This means that when someone is searching for Arkansas-related content online, the first search result will be a toss-up between Arkansas.com and EncyclopediaofArkansas.net.
- *Jonesboro Drive Project* – Coulter said that there has been progress made on the Jonesboro Drive Project that will help develop the area, which includes the Little Rock Zoo, War Memorial Park, and the Children's Library, to make it more accessible. They are currently looking into potential funding sources and talking with local architects.
- *Millie Brooks Library Community Garden* – Coulter said that CALS completed the beds for a community garden requested by the Wrightsville Community. CALS AmeriCorps vistas and FarmCorps vistas, along with CALS Outreach Coordinator Courtney Jones, completed the work the previous Thursday.
- *New Rock It! Lab Coordinator* – Leah Patterson, the new Rock It! Lab Coordinator hired last month, was on the call to tell the Board a bit about what she is working on. Patterson is a Howard College graduate and stated that she was excited to be a part of the Rock It! Lab's mission to democratize access and capital for entrepreneurs. She stated there were three areas they were working on right now:
 - *Maker's Space* – this is planned for the bottom floor of the Cox Building and will allow entrepreneurs access to creation spaces.
 - *Co-Retail Space* – this will take up the 1st floor of the Cox Building and will provide entrepreneurs with space to sell their wares and training on how to price and present their products.
 - *Co-working Space*- this will take up some of the upper floors of the Cox building and will create space to provide workshops, trainings, and community space to allow business owners to network and continue to develop resources for their business.

Patterson said she is working on getting the mentorship program for Rock It! Lab off the ground. She also noted that the virtual programming to date has been online, but they have had a great deal of active participation so far.

- *Dr. Seuss Books* – Coulter noted after the last meeting that the publisher of Dr. Seuss's books had withdrawn six titles for problematic and racist character representations. CALS created a committee to investigate these claims and determine what action, if any, CALS should take. The committee has some preliminary findings and believe that we should not remove them from our collection, but the group is still working to determine if anything else may be required.

Brown noted that he really enjoyed the talk featuring Dr. Aleshia O'Neal and moderated by Encyclopedia of Arkansas' Guy Lancaster on the children's author Charlie May Simon. He asked if CALS had a record of how many people attended. Mark Christ, adult programming director, said he would look up that information and send it to Brown after the meeting. [Christ reported that 32 people attended the program.] Coulter added that he had received a letter this week from a library fan that similarly gave a positive review of Lancaster's work on the Butler Banner.

Evans applauded Patterson's work on the Rock It! Lab so far and said she is excited to see what comes out of this much-needed work.

2. Other

Nathan James said that he recently changed the format of the Strategic Plan Progress Report to make it easier to update, but he is still working on creating a better data input system. He plans to create a form that can help collect information and updates more easily and hopes to have this new input process started before the next meeting.

James also said that the Galleries at Library Square has been getting a fair amount of out-of-town business since its reopening earlier this year. He said the store would be increasing their hours of operation in the near future as a result of increased business. He noted that CALS is also planning to launch a new website for the Galleries that will have the capability to offer online sales of both books and art. James added that as a part of the redesign of the retail space, the Galleries staff removed the large partitions in the main space, so they had to find a new place to display wall art. Concordia Hall has now been designated as the Galleries show floor.

He said that one last thing worth mentioning is that the staff has been working on a new way to present our statistics and numbers – in a infographic style. This will mean Board members will see fewer numbers in these reports going forward, but they will hopefully be more meaningful and memorable to the Board and make them easier for you to share amongst your community when promoting the library.

Gibson-Branton asked for a motion that the meeting be adjourned at 12:27 p.m.

Berry moved to adjourn the meeting. Brown seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

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President



Secretary