

Central Arkansas Library System
Board of Directors Meeting
June 24, 2021
Hybrid Meeting: Zoom Video Call and In-person
(In-person: Main Library's Darragh Center)

Board members in attendance were Nancy Rousseau, Brandon Grice, Marian Berry, Audrey Evans, Susana O'Daniel, Andre Guerrero, Marilyn Porter, Stacey McAdoo, John Bush, Stephanie Gibson-Branton, Bob Brown, and Jennifer Jamison. Mandy Gill was absent.

Staff in attendance were Nate Coulter, David Stricklin, Jo Spencer, Lance Ivy, Joe Hudak, Nathan James, Carol Coffey, Mark Christ, Eliza Borné, Kay Kay DeRossette, Pam Rudkin, Ellen Samples, Candace White, Kate Matthews, Lisa Donovan, and Elizabeth Newbern.

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

** It should be noted that there were technology issues related to the hybrid nature of this meeting that delayed the meeting start 30 minutes. Even after meeting start, communication between attendees on Zoom and attendees in-person was not as clear as it would normally have been.**

Action Items

1. Approval of the May Minutes

Rousseau asked the Board to approve the May Minutes with minor corrections submitted ahead of the meeting.

Evans moved to approve the May Minutes. Berry seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

2. May Financials

Grice reported that as of May 31, 2021, CALS assets totaled \$106,546,793 with net income of \$4,396,060. He said the rise in net income is due in large part to tax collections being up. May is second largest month for tax collections each year. Grice also said that to date tax collections are up 8.3 percent over the same time last year.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Grice moved to file the May Financials for audit. It was approved unanimously.

3. Approval of Updates to the Rules of Conduct

Donovan said that there are three updates to the Rules of Conduct that library staff are seeking Board approval for, which are as follows:

- 1) CALS staff would like to update rule number 1 to read: "Persons who break any local, state, or federal law while using library resources or facilities shall be immediately removed from the library and may be charged under appropriate ordinances, statutes, etc."
 - a. Previously, this rule read: "Persons who deface or mutilate any library property shall be immediately removed from the library. It is the policy of the Board that such persons be prosecuted under appropriate statutes. This especially applies to anyone guilty of defacing or mutilating books, periodicals, or other collections."
- 2) CALS staff would like add rule number 20 which will read: "Patrons must have completed 5th grade in order to be at the library without a caregiver. Caregivers must be at least 16 years of age."
 - a. This rule is in addition to rule 21 and 22, which give more information about unsupervised person on the library property in given situations.
 - b. This recommendation has been discussed at length with staff across the system and there was a preference for a grade level restriction rather than an age limit since it ensure that classmates have the same level of access, even if they are not the same age.
- 3) CALS staff would like to strike the COVID-19 rules that were implemented in 2020, since they are no longer enforceable due to changed state and local rules.

Donovan asked if there were any questions about these changes.

Evans said that she was concerned that the restriction was determined by age rather than behavior. She worried that children would think they were not welcome in the library. Donovan said that this rule was largely being proposed due to safety concerns from the staff who have had numerous encounters with young children (five- and six-years-old) coming to the library after school and having their eight-year-old sibling or cousin be the only person acting as a caretaker. Our staff do not feel that this is a safe situation for the children especially when large numbers of them are going to CALS locations after school (85+ come to our libraries after school in some cases). This rule is an effort to ensure the safety of these younger children rather than to restrict access to the library. Guerrero also noted that he was concerned about this issue. O'Daniel said that she was of two minds on this issue, but really appreciated the discussion trying to help outline this.

Rousseau suggested that the 2nd update required additional discussion and would be tabled until a Committee could meet to discuss the issue in more detail. [An Ad-Hoc Committee was formed and met to discuss this issue in July 2021; a proposal was made and approved over email in early August 2021.]

Rousseau asked for the Board to approve the 1st and 3rd updates that were proposed above.

Berry moved to approve the 1st and 3rd updates to the Rules of Conduct. Evans seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Information Items

1. Director's Report

Coulter noted that he had submitted a report to the Board members ahead of the meeting, but wanted to highlight a few things:

- **Millage Campaign** – Coulter asked David Stricklin to speak briefly on this. Stricklin said this is only for Board members who reside in Little Rock and in the interest of keeping this brief he planned to submit further discussion to Board members via email. CALS is hoping to do an election this fall and in order to do that we need to petition the City of Little Rock. Board members are permitted to solicit these petitions since this is not advocating to vote one way or the other, it is just an attempt to get this on the ballot in the fall. CALS needs one hundred signatures to file the petition; Stricklin said his aim is to get two hundred just to ensure all bases are covered and all are valid. He needs these submitted back by July 15. To be a valid signatory on the petition, signers need to be a registered voter in Little Rock who pays property taxes.
- **Grant Update** – Coulter invited Eliza Borné, our Development Director, to speak briefly about some of the grants CALS is pursuing. Borné said that there are several grants CALS is Pursuing right now:
 - **Emergency Library Funding** - the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), CALS was eligible for \$262,221 distributed by the Arkansas State Library (via the Institute of Museum and Library Services –IMLS- distribution). There are a number of deadlines over the summer. By the first deadline, we submitted an application for \$72,000 of our allocated funds for defibrillators (AEDs), outdoor furniture, and book club kits.
 - **Emergency Connectivity Funds** - this is also part of the ARPA, which aims to provide access to computers, modems, Wi-Fi hotspots and tablets to close the digital divide. CALS will be applying for that program.
 - **Social Worker Pilot Program** - There is another IMLS grant related to pandemic response. We are applying to fund a part-time social worker pilot program at the Children's Library.
 - **Support for CALS Rock It! Lab** - The SBA has a program called the community navigator pilot program and we are working on grant in partnership with the AR Small Business and Technology Development Center at UALR to support the CALS Rock It! Lab program.
 - **National Endowment for the Humanities** – in May, CALS applied for a grant offered through the stimulus to support the Encyclopedia of Arkansas.

- Summer Vista Workers – Coulter wanted to mention that CALS has a number of Summer AmeriCorps Vista Workers who have been very busy helping us distribute summer meals through the Be Mighty Program, help us sign-up for nutrition education, and many other duties as assigned.

2. Other

Coulter asked the Board to join him in welcoming Jennifer Jamison who was recently appointed as the Jacksonville representative. After Kelly Moss, who formerly held the position, resigned earlier this year, Jamison agreed to be appointed. Jamison is a teacher in the Jacksonville North Pulaski School District. Jamison thanked Coulter for the warm welcome and expressed her excitement to serve on the CALS Board.

Rousseau asked if the Board would consider having a completely in-person meeting for the meeting in August.

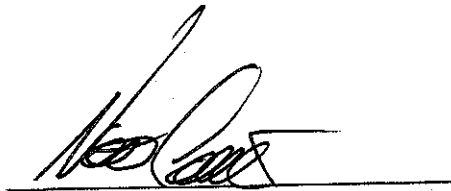
Berry moved to hold an in-person meeting in August. Evans seconded the motion, and it was approved. [After the meeting some reservations about this decision were expressed. In July there was also a dramatic increase of COVID-19 cases in the state of Arkansas associated with the delta variant. Board members have agreed that a fully in-person may not be wise in August due to these changes in circumstances and have agreed to a hybrid set-up, which has been improved from the previous meeting.]

Rousseau asked if there were any final points of business. No one had anything else.

Rousseau moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:30 p.m.



President



Secretary (Executive Director)