

Central Arkansas Library System
Board of Directors Meeting
December 16, 2021, at noon
Hybrid Meeting: Darragh Center & Zoom Video Call

Board members in attendance were Nancy Rousseau, Brandon Grice, Audrey Evans, Andre Guerrero, Stacey McAdoo, John Bush, Bob Brown, Stephanie Gibson-Branton, Jennifer Jamison, Mandy Gill, and Marian Berry. Marilynn Porter and Esperanza Massana-Crane were absent.

Staff in attendance were Nate Coulter, Jo Spencer, Lance Ivy, Tameka Lee, Joe Hudak, Pam Rudkin, Carol Coffey, Mark Christ, Eliza Borné, Kay Kay DeRossette, Ellen Samples, Courtney Jones, Polly Deems, Jasmine Zandi, Tyler Compton, Lisa Donovan, Nathan Smith, Joseph Cole, Elizabeth Newbern, and Katie Adams.

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

Action Items

1. Approval of Minutes

Rousseau asked the CALS Board to approve the October Minutes as corrected.

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

2. Approval of October and November Financials

Grice reported that as of October 31, 2021, CALS assets totaled \$102,832,764.51 with a net income of \$522,563.92. He noted there was nothing major to report and that some property tax income revenue helped with the net income for October.

As of November 30, 2021, CALS assets totaled \$107,826,034.87 with a net income of \$4,981,329.90. Grice noted that much of the net income could be attributed to final property tax receipts in November. Tax receipts for the year were up 2.86 percent from 2020.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Grice moved to approve the October and November Financials and have them filed for audit. Brown seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

3. 2022 Budget

Coulter said he would attempt to streamline information lined out in the Budget Memo — submitted to the Board ahead of the meeting and discussed in the Finance Committee meeting held Monday, December 13, — but he felt it was important to be transparent and accountable in the wake of the successful millage election this fall, where 71 percent of voters elected to give

CALS more money in the form of property taxes. That said, he noted the following highlights from his memo:

- **2021 Ended with a Surplus** – CALS ended the 2021 fiscal year with a \$262,531 surplus. CALS had budgeted a \$680,269 deficit for the year, due to uncertain revenue projections for 2021. However, tax revenues remained steady, so there was an unexpected windfall that allowed CALS to cover the deficit. The projected deficit never materialized since 2021 property tax revenues were up 2.8 percent.
- **Budgeting with Conservative Growth Projections** – Ninety-one percent of CALS income comes from property taxes. CALS is budgeting with an expected 2 percent growth in property tax collection; this is a conservative forecast and lower than the county's projected 2.5 percent growth forecast. The millage increase passed by Little Rock voters in the fall is expected to add \$2.4 million to CALS General Fund. Before the millage passed, CALS planned to budget \$19,691,518 for 2022 with a conservative projection of 2 percent growth in tax collection revenue. The additional \$2.4 million from the millage makes the total \$21,419,107. Additional growth in revenue comes from state aid, grants, rental income, and fines and fees outlined in the memo.
- **Planned Expenditures for CALS Millage Revenue** - The \$2.4 million generated by the voter-approved millage increase will be primarily applied to three sectors:
 - *Salaries and Benefits* - In line with CALS millage campaign promises, approximately \$800,000 will go to increasing staff salaries. Minimum wage will increase to \$14/hour (originally \$13/hour but increased after a cost-of-living survey). Previously, an independent consultant found that CALS was approximately 9% off the national average for compensating library staff, so that too will be adjusted with the \$800,000 increase.
 - *CALS Collection* - An additional \$800,000 will go toward collections costs. Five hundred thousand dollars will be earmarked for books and downloadable materials, while the remaining \$300,000 will supplant expiring bonds and relying on unexpected surpluses to supplement the collections budget.
 - *Deferred Maintenance and Technology Upgrades* - The remaining \$800,000 will go to deferred maintenance and technology. \$435,000 will be used for furniture, fixtures, computer replacements, and other hardware updates. \$360,000 will go to improving security and upgrading CALS IT regimen. Security will be brought entirely in-house in 2022, so CALS will save on contract security expenses.
- **Realized Energy Savings for CALS** – Spencer mentioned that energy saving investments have saved CALS approximately \$175,000 to date. Coulter added that savings from a solar energy partnership with Entergy will begin once construction on the solar array has been completed.

Rousseau complimented Coulter and Spencer for preparing the budget and explaining it in laymen terms.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Grice moved that the General Fund Budget be approved by the Board for 2022. Brown seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Grice moved that Subsidiary Fund Budgets, such as the CALS Foundation and Six Bridges Book Festival, be approved by the Board for 2022. Brown seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

4. Proposal to Amend CALS Matching Plan

On behalf of CALS, Jo Spencer asked the Board to approve a resolution that would amend the CALS Matching Plan to increase the match from 2 percent to 3 percent of employee contributions to their 457 retirement accounts. CALS puts 8 percent into pension plans for full-time employees. With the optional Matching Plan, CALS proposed matching up to 3 percent of what employees contribute, allowing employees to have 11 percent put into their CALS retirement accounts. For comparison, APERS currently puts 15.42 percent into their employees' retirement plans. If the budget allows next year, CALS hopes to increase the amount to 12 percent to remain competitive. Currently 118 employees participate in the Matching Plan; increasing the match amount would hopefully incentivize more employees to save for retirement.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Grice moved to increase the CALS Matching Plan from 2 percent to 3 percent as presented. Evans and Brown seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Information Items

1. Director's Report

Coulter highlighted a few items from the written report he submitted to the Board ahead of the meeting:

- *COVID-19* – Ron Robinson Theater is scheduled to reopen in January with proof of vaccination required for larger program settings. CALS is slowly rebounding in terms of physical circulation and traffic in buildings, but the number of programs has not rebounded. There are plans to cautiously proceed with more programming in 2022.
- *CARES Act Funding* – A significant amount of funds that were earmarked for libraries in Arkansas have yet to be allocated by the state. If the funds are not allocated by the end of the year, they will go back to the federal government. CALS is working with the Arkansas State Library and the State Officials to secure the funding allocated to our library system.
- *Count UP* – Coulter introduced Tyler Compton, new Count UP coordinator, and asked her to give an update on the program. Compton said former Count Up coordinator Savannah Herrera left the program in great shape and she is excited to grow the program. She has been busy training volunteer students and matching students on the waitlist to tutors. The program will have a new funding source in the spring, transitioning from the Walton Foundation to the ESSER Grant. [The Arkansas Department of Education's Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, and Arkansas State University and its sponsored

initiative, the Arkansas Out of School Network, awarded \$150,000 to CALS in American Rescue Plan ESSER III grant funding. The grant will support Count UP as well as spring break and day camps at the library on days the LRSD is closed.] Priorities for the program moving forward include recruiting more tutors and building up curriculum resources for the tutors. Feedback from end-of-semester surveys has been overwhelmingly positive from tutors, students, and parents.

- *Board Retirements* – Coulter thanked outgoing Board members John Bush and Nancy Rousseau for their years of insightful, unique, and spirited contributions. He said Bush and Rousseau were steady, reliable Board members and both would be missed. Each outgoing member of the Board was presented with a gift certificate to the Galleries and Bookstore at Library Square as a thank you from Administrative staff.

2. Other

Coulter announced that Stephanie Gibson Branton, current Board Vice-President, agreed to take up the mantle of Board President in Rousseau's stead. Stacy McAdoo agreed to serve as Vice-President. Brandon Grice agreed to continue serving as Board Treasurer after his reappointment by the City of Sherwood.

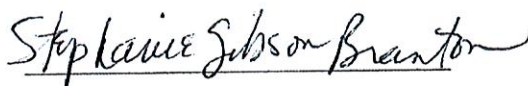
Rousseau asked the Board to vote to approve the proposed slate of officers.

Evans moved to elect the slate of Board officers as nominated. Grice seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

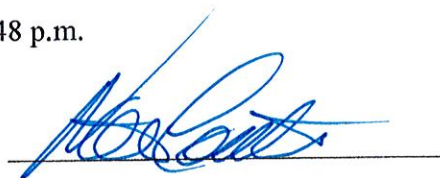
Coulter mentioned that the City of Little Rock would vote soon to appoint two new Board members to take over Bush and Rousseau's seats. [On December 21, 2021, the City of Little Rock Board of Directors approved the appointment of Ryan Davis and Madhav Shroff to the CALS Board of Directors.]

3. Move to Adjourn

Rousseau moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:48 p.m.



President



Secretary