

Central Arkansas Library System

Board of Directors Meeting

April 28, 2022, at noon

Hybrid Meeting: Roberts 124 & Zoom Video Call

Board members in attendance were Stephanie Gibson-Branton, Stacey McAdoo, Brandon Grice, Audrey Evans, Andre Guerrero, Bob Brown, Marian Berry, Jennifer Jamison, Madhav Shroff, and Ryan Davis. Mandy Gill and Esperanza Massana-Crane were absent.

Staff in attendance were Nate Coulter, Jo Spencer, Lance Ivy, Lisa Donovan, Ellen Samples, Nathan Smith, Joe Hudak, Kate Matthews, Pam Rudkin, Carol Coffey, Mark Christ, Eliza Borné, Polly Deems, Jasmine Zandi, Hannah Saulters, and Katie Adams.

Also in attendance was Anna Morshedi with the Coalition for Neighborhood Libraries.

Action Items

1. Approval of Minutes

Gibson-Branton asked the Board to approve the March Minutes as corrected.

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

2. Approval of March Financials

Grice reported that as of March 31, 2022, CALS assets totaled \$106,255,239.94 with a net loss of \$912,974.27. He noted that CALS received \$250K in unrestricted funds from the Kline Foundation with plans to build a playground at Children's Library with the funds. Grice also reported that taxes were up 2.2% but collections were down year over year primarily attributed to delayed billing by the county.

Coulter commented that property values were due to be reassessed in Pulaski County in 2022. He said he is hopeful CALS will benefit from the reassessment since property values have been increasing across the country based on sales of existing homes. Evans asked if the reassessment of commercial properties impacted adversely by the pandemic would affect the potential benefits CALS could gain from the property reassessment. Grice said that commercial property values as a whole seemed to be holding steady, though it would remain to be seen how residential and commercial property values would be assessed.

Gibson-Branton filed the March 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:

- *2021 Annual Report*: Coulter highlighted the work CALS MRD put into creating the 2021 Annual Report, which included CALS-related information such as revenue & expenses, grants, circulation, outreach, volunteers, kid & adult programs, Six Bridges Book Festival, and the Rock It! Lab. He noted that the Annual Report was handy for easily sharing information about CALS and featured cover art by local artist Adaja Cooper. Physical copies of the Annual Report were circulated to the Board.
- *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Community Engagement Officer*: Coulter said that there were many quality applicants for CALS first Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Community Engagement Officer (DEICO). He added that applicants will be screened by a committee headed by Tameka Lee, CALS Director of Communications, with the goal to hire as soon as possible.
- *Kline Foundation Award Money*: In March 2022, CALS received \$250K in unrestricted funds in conjunction with the 2022 Jerry Kline Community Impact Prize from the Gerald M. Kline Family Foundation and *Library Journal*. Select staff attended a reception honoring CALS at the 2022 Public Library Association (PLA) conference in Portland, Oregon, where the check was given. Coulter reported that plans for the funds include outdoor play equipment for children at Children's Library. Donovan confirmed that, due to accessibility and budget restraints with the landscape, the new play equipment will most likely be constructed near the south entrance of Children's Library. She added that staff had surveyed the community and many were in favor of the play equipment installation.
- *Night Market at Library Square*: Benito Lubazibwa, CEO of Remix Ideas and founder of Shop Black Live, will be coordinating the return of the Night Market to Downtown Little Rock. Previously held at such locations as the River Market Pavilion and Bernice Gardens, the Night Market aims to promote small businesses like those associated with the Rock It! Lab through the opportunity to sell wares and provide an enjoyable event for the community. Currently, plans are taking shape to host the reintroduced Night Market in the Library Square parking lot in early June.
- *Election Guides*: The Arkansas Democrat Gazette asked CALS to help distribute election guides to the community for the May 24 primary. Each CALS branch will receive about one hundred copies, which will be published in a Sunday edition in early May. Election guides will be available at branches for interested patrons.

2. Campaign Committee Update

Coulter introduced Anna Morshedi, chair of the Coalition for Neighborhood Libraries, to speak about the ongoing efforts of the campaign committee to educate people about CALS capital millage election set for the May 24 primary election. Morshedi began by sharing the results of a research poll conducted in March 2022, which indicated that voters would best receive messaging promoting the election as a win-win for taxpayers and for the library. If passed, the capital millage reduction would lower property taxes while generating funds for CALS to use for system wide improvements. She added that poll participants said they would most like to see

generated funds go to the bookmobile to reach underserved communities, followed by upgrading technology infrastructure system wide, interior renovations, and support for the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies.

Morshedi reported that the bulk of the campaign committee's spending was used on three mailers targeted at high propensity voters who may or may not already be active library users. She said that the mailers would be sent out to 22K households, compared to 8K in Fall 2021. She added that, compared to the Fall 2021 campaign, the committee's focus was more about educating voters about the measure than getting people mobilized to vote since people would likely already be participating in the primary. The first mailer shared general information about how passage of the capital millage reduction would refinance library bonds, revitalize CALS, and reduce the tax rate. The second mailer reiterated the general information about the election and also featured an endorsement from Hank Kelley, CEO of Kelley Commercial Partners headquartered in downtown Little Rock. The third mailer targeted known library supporters to ward off potential confusion and ensure they understood CALS supported the capital millage reduction. The campaign committee also funded the creation of three videos to be shared on social media featuring Dr. Sybil Jordan Hampton, Hank Kelley, and Anna Morshedi. Lastly, the campaign committee will have yard signs at voting locations for early voting and election day.

Gibson-Branton asked if the campaign committee would be calling voters as had been done in previous elections. Morshedi said that, due to the large base of voters for this election, the campaign committee decided against making phone calls and instead focus their efforts on mailers. Shroff asked how CALS Board members could advocate for the election. Morshedi replied that sharing on social media and talking with friends and family about the election would help cut through the clutter of other ballot issues and clarify the library's message. Brown asked if there was any opposition to the proposed capital millage reduction. Morshedi responded that the campaign committee was unaware of any formal opposition. She added that the committee has been working to ensure library supporters were not confused about the measure but were aware that CALS supported the millage reduction.

Guerrero asked what the budget was for the campaign and if there would be a numerical identifier for the library's measure on the ballot. Morshedi replied that the campaign committee budget was \$40K, the majority of which was spent on print mailers, along with smaller portions spent on video production and consulting. Regarding numerical identifiers, Coulter said that unlike amendments, local ordinances like the proposed capital millage extension and reduction would not feature numbered identifiers, but would simply describe the proposed millage for voters to vote "for" or "against".

3. Vote on Summer Meeting Dates

Gibson-Branton noted that it was the practice of the Board to meet twice during the summer months of June, July, and August. In 2019, library staff noticed that the CALS Board consistently had problems making quorum in June, so the bylaws were amended so that only two summer meeting dates were required, and the Board would vote to decide when these two meetings would be held. Gibson-Branton asked the Board to vote on which month they would prefer not to meet this year.

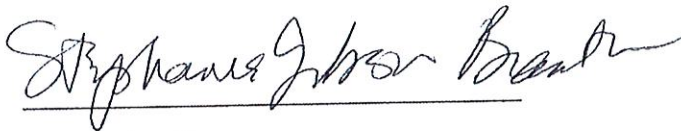
After some conversation amongst the Board members, Gibson-Branton suggested meeting in June and August and not meet in July. It was approved unanimously.

4. Other

Gibson-Branton announced that Dr. Sybil Jordan Hampton would be joining the CALS Board to fill the seat vacated by Marilyn Porter's resignation. Dr. Hampton was the first Black student to complete her education at Central High School in Little Rock. She served as President of the Rockefeller Foundation from 1996-2006 and now works as a consultant to foundations in the areas of program development, governance, strategic planning, executive coaching, and mentoring. Evans and Brown expressed their excitement about the appointment and spoke highly of Dr. Hampton. [On May 17, 2022, the City of Little Rock Board of Directors voted to approve the appointment of Dr. Sybil Jordan Hampton to the CALS Board of Directors.]

5. Move to Adjourn

Gibson-Branton called the meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.



President



Secretary