

Central Arkansas Library System

Board of Directors Meeting

May 26, 2022, at noon

Hybrid Meeting: Darragh Center & Zoom Video Call

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

Staff in attendance were Nate Coulter, Jo Spencer, Lance Ivy, Lisa Donovan, Nathan James, Tameka Lee, Ellen Samples, Nathan Smith, Joe Hudak, Kate Matthews, Pam Rudkin, Carol Coffey, Mark Christ, Amanda Orgel, Glenn Whaley, Hannah Saulters, Katie Adams, Fran DeLacey, Joshua Murdock, Josh Stallings, and Isaac Jimenez.

Also in attendance was Joe Flaherty from the Arkansas Democrat Gazette and Benito Lubazibwa, CEO of ReMix Ideas and Director of Advancing Black Entrepreneurship.

Action Items

1. Approval of Minutes

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

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

2. Approval of April Financials

Grice reported that as of April 31, 2022, CALS assets totaled \$104,554,530.81 with a net loss of \$1,702,292.45. He mentioned that the May reporting of taxes was up 9% compared to April.

Gibson-Branton filed the April Financials for audit.

3. Recommendation of Bond Underwriter

On May 17, 2022, the bond underwriter committee met to discuss the selection of the bond underwriter for the then-proposed capital bond refinance. [On May 24, 2022, Little Rock voters approved the proposal to refinance CALS capital millage bond.] Grice said the committee considered three candidates—Crews, Stephens, and Carty and Company—and ultimately found Crews to be the best fit for CALS. He mentioned that Crews worked directly with the City of Sherwood on the capital bonds for the Amy Sanders Library. Spencer affirmed that she heard good feedback from Crews work on the Sanders Library bonds. She said that, although both Stephens and Crews are highly qualified, CALS has

used Stephens for three of the four past bond issues so the committee felt that Crews should be used this time.

Grice moved to recommend Crews be hired as bond underwriter for the refinance and issuance of the capital improvement bonds. Berry seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

4. Update to Board Policy 300

Coulter gave a brief introduction to Board Policy 300, CALS guideline for materials selection. James said that he, Leslie Blanchard (Collection Development Manager), and the Collection Development team had worked together to update the policy in the wake of a recent increase in book banning efforts targeting public libraries. A straightforward change he mentioned was updating the non-discrimination language in the policy to match CALS official non-discrimination policy. He also suggested taking out much of the day-to-day operation language in favor of more general policy statements and directives. James said Hampton had contacted him with suggestions for improving the language of the revised policy and suggested waiting to vote on the revisions until Hampton's recommendations were implemented. Coulter and Gibson-Branton recommended the issue be tabled until Hampton and James could complete the suggested changes.

Berry moved to table voting on Board Policy 300 until the next meeting. Evans seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

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:

- *Capital Millage Tax Extension and Reduction Election*: Coulter reported that Little Rock voters approved the proposal to extend CALS capital millage bond in exchange for reducing the rate of mills collected. The result was a net-zero change in library-related tax costs for Little Rock property owners when combined with the operational millage increase approved by voters in November 2021. He said CALS carried every precinct in Little Rock, with a 68% overall approval rate. The project funds generated by the refinancing of the bonds will be used to update Main Library and other branches and to purchase a state-of-the-art bookmobile for outreach to parts of the community where access to libraries is a challenge.
- *High Profile Speakers at CALS*: Coulter asked Mark Christ, Head of Adult Programming, to speak about upcoming high profile programs at CALS. Christ said that Dr. Imani Perry, author of *South to America: A Journey Below the Mason-Dixon to Understand the Soul of a Nation* would be at Ron Robinson Theater on May 26, with Cherisse Jones-Branch moderating. He also mentioned an event on June 6 featuring Jonathan Martin, New York Times best-selling author of *This Will Not Pass: Trump, Biden, and the Battle for America's Future*. Other highlighted events included photographers Sebastián Hidalgo and Josué Rivas

on July 28 and law professor Kimberly Wehle on October 23. Christ said he was finalizing the Darragh Lecture and hinted that it would be impressive.


- *Summer Reading Club*: Coulter asked Ellen Samples, Youth Services Coordinator, to speak about the 2022 Summer Reading Club (SRC) program, “Oceans of Possibilities”. Samples was excited to report the return of a substantial amount of in-person programming for this year’s SRC. She said programmers and patrons were thrilled to engage in-person following the restrictions necessitated by the pandemic. Online registrations have begun and whole families are encouraged to participate. Performers such as musicians, magicians, puppeteers, and the staff with the Museum of Discovery are scheduled throughout the summer. Samples also highlighted a new fundraising partnership with Community Bakery involving ocean-themed sugar cookie kits for children to decorate with edible watercolors, with five dollars from every kit supporting the Friends of CALS.
- *Butler Center*: Coulter asked Glenn Whaley, Roberts Library manager, to speak about upcoming projects of the Roberts Library and Butler Center. Whaley began by sharing that plans are in place for the Butler Center to partner with the City of Little Rock’s Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission to rebrand the Butler Center’s Black Lives Matter project as “Tales by the River: Black Lives Matter”. The partnership will hopefully expand the project and help Butler Center staff to capture the stories of underrepresented groups in Little Rock. Whaley also highlighted several upcoming programs in branches such as a Cooking Up History recipe program at Dee Brown in August that will display the Butler Center’s impressive collection of Arkansas cookbooks. Within the building, Whaley said yearbooks from twenty-five different schools have recently been digitized to the highly popular online yearbook collection. She also reported progress on a digital downtown mapping project focusing on residential homes in the early twentieth century. Staff were also working to purchase portable scanners for use at local festivals and outreach events.
- *Night Market at Library Square*: Benito Lubazibwa, founder and CEO of ReMix Ideas and Director of Advancing Black Entrepreneurship, spoke at length about the Night Market at Library Square planned for June 4 on the CALS Main Library surface parking lot. Lubazibwa described the Night Market as a platform for local entrepreneurs to test their ideas, receive feedback on their products, and encourage the community to buy local. He announced the theme of “Why Reading Matters” for the June 4 Night Market in honor of the library location. CALS venues such as the Galleries & Bookstore at Library Square and the Ron Robinson Theater planned to be open for profit. James added that publicity from the event would help put Library Square on the map as a destination location. Lubazibwa also invited Board members to attend the Rock It! Lab business incubator program graduation celebration on June 2. Twenty-six entrepreneurs from underrepresented communities participated in the six-month Rock It! Lab program aimed at democratizing entrepreneurship in Arkansas.
- *Be Mighty Summer Associates*: Samples introduced four AmeriCorps Summer Associates who planned to assist with the Be Mighty meal program at various CALS locations: Isaac Jimenez at Dee Brown Library, Joshua Murdock at Main Library, Josh Stallings at McMath Library, and Fran DeLacey at Terry Library. Samples said the Summer Associates would work closely with Jasmine Zandi, CALS Be Mighty Specialist, to serve meals and assist with projects relating to food, nutrition, and outreach.

2. Other


Gibson-Branton welcomed Dr. Sybil Jordan Hampton as the newest board member to the CALS Board of Directors. On May 17, 2022, Hampton was approved by the City of Little Rock Board of Directors to fill the vacancy left by Marilyn Porter. Hampton said that it was a privilege to join the library board and that she was excited by the vote of confidence CALS received in the capital millage election.

3. Move to Adjourn

Gibson-Branton called the meeting adjourned at 12:49 p.m.



President



Secretary