

Central Arkansas Library System

Board of Directors Meeting

September 22, 2022, at noon

Hybrid Meeting: Darragh Center & Zoom Video Call

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

Staff in attendance were Nate Coulter, Jo Spencer, Lance Ivy, Nathan James, Lisa Donovan, Eliza Borné, Nathan Smith, Jasmine Zandi, Carol Coffey, Pam Rudkin, Joe Hudak, Kate Matthews, Courtney Jones, Candace White, Hannah Saulters, Katie Adams, Chris Ketterman, Mark Christ, Ellen Samples, Andre Thornton, Daelontiss Miller, Jet Tran, Bekah Smith, Danielle Afsordeh, and Cyndi Baron-Harris.

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

Action Items

1. Approval of Minutes

Gibson-Branton asked the Board to approve the August Minutes as presented.

Grice moved to approve the August Minutes as presented. Hampton seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

2. Approval of August Financials

Grice reported that as of August 31, 2022, CALS assets totaled \$106,335,142.34 with a net loss of \$2,662,953.50. He explained that revenues were down because of the timing of collections but CALS should be at a net income standpoint after the expected November windfall. He also mentioned that parking revenue was up to pre-pandemic levels and should turn a profit soon. Tax collections for August were up 11.5% compared to the previous year.

Brown commented that the net loss seemed significant. Grice responded that the current net loss was normal for August and that tax collections usually increase in September and October, making up for the loss. Coulter added that sixty percent of CALS revenue is received in May and November in conjunction with property tax collection deadlines.

Gibson-Branton filed the August Financials for audit.

3. Personnel Committee Report

Davis said the Personnel Committee met three times to consider a grievance appeal from a CALS employee who was terminated. The committee reviewed documentary and video evidence and met with the aggrieved employee.

On behalf of the Personnel Committee, Davis recommended affirming the action of termination. Hampton seconded, 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 Improvement Update:* Coulter said that Ivy assembled a committee to select an architect for the upcoming renovation of Main Library. He said the committee selected a joint venture of 3 local firms: Witsell Evans & Rasco, Polk Stanley Wilcox, and Mark Mann. Each of the firms were involved with the original construction at Main Library in 1994-1996. Ivy said the next step would be to work with the architects to find a contractor. He said the RFQ process for contractors should be completed in upcoming months.
- *Library Square Art Funded by Wingate:* Coulter asked Bekah Smith, Community Resources Programmer at Main Library, and Danielle Afsordeh, Community Outreach Archivist at the Roberts Library, to speak about an upcoming community art initiative titled *Through My Lens*. Smith said the project, sponsored by the Wingate Foundation for Arts, would begin October 14. She said one hundred disposable cameras were distributed to community members who were currently unsheltered or in transitional housing in Pulaski and Perry Counties. She said thirty-one photos were chosen for the interactive exhibit, adding that each artist was compensated for their work. The exhibit will be a multimedia experience with recorded interviews with the artists available through QR codes. Afsordeh said the photos and interviews would be archived in the Roberts Library collection.
- *Be Mighty Little Rock:* Coulter asked Jasmine Zandi, Be Mighty Project Coordinator, to speak about the Be Mighty program and the Little Free Pantries initiative at CALS branches. Zandi said CALS currently has 7 Little Free Pantries locations: Children's, Dee Brown, Fletcher, McMath, Millie Brooks, Nixon, and Terry. She said that while Be Mighty provides meals primarily for kids and teens, meal recipients often come from hungry families, so the goal of the Little Free Pantries was to support those families. The pantries are available for the community to donate to and take from as needed. She said grants have helped stock the pantries with shelf-stable goods and that staff are seeking community partners to hold food drives with the goal of keeping the pantries sustainable. Coulter mentioned that Zandi would be leaving at the end of the month to take another job. He said her talent would be missed but she would assist with finding her successor.
- *Development:* Borné reported that CALS had received a second one-year \$225,000 grant from the Wingate Foundation for Arts to be used in 2023. She said Christ sent out a call

to programmers for ideas on how to use the funds. She also said that CALS received a grant from the Hunger Relief Alliance for a fresh food refrigerator for use at a branch to increase capacity for distributing fresh meals. Borné said the development team was planning the year-end CALS Foundation campaign and wrapping up grant applications.

- *Children International Camps:* Coulter said that over the summer, CALS had a partnership with Children International ACHIEVE Summer Camps. Two library branches, Main Library and Children's Library, hosted 8-week summer day camps for children. Davis, who serves as the Director for Children International, said he was grateful to CALS and that the camps would not have happened without the cooperation of library staff to commit a considerable amount of library space. He said a total of one hundred and twenty kids benefited from the camps in 2022.
- *New Ambassador to Mexican Consulate:* Coulter said that he, Massana-Crane, and CALS Community Liaison Maria Aguilar met with the new Ambassador to the Mexican Consulate of Little Rock, Carlos Ignacio Giralt Cabrales. He said the ambassador expressed enthusiasm regarding possible partnerships with the library, including outreach via the new bookmobile and encouraging digital access to the city's Spanish-speaking community.
- *UAMS Child Development Center:* On September 14, UAMS broke ground on a new Child Development Center to be built just south of the CALS Children's Library. Coulter said the new facility would provide childcare services to the families of UAMS employees and that library staff were looking forward to opportunities to extend programming to the children served at the facility. Hampton added that the Center's focus on child development as opposed to daycare was an important distinction that library programming could help with. Coulter said that he planned to interview UAMS Provost Dr. Stephanie Gardner about the project for the CALS podcast. Brown said he would pass word of the library's enthusiasm for the project along to the UAMS Board of Advisors.

2. Other

Coulter said that the city of Little Rock plans to place a sculpture just south of Sue Cowan Williams Library in the Dunbar community. In conjunction with the sculpture, he said a new sign would also be placed highlighting the connection between the Williams Library, the Dunbar Community Center, Dunbar Middle School, Dunbar Community Garden, and Gibbs Magnet School. Davis said he appreciated the Sue Cowan Williams Library as his community branch and said he also valued the semi-formal partnership between the branch and Children International.

Coulter highlighted Massana-Crane's selection as the Women's Foundation of Arkansas's Power of the Purse Honoree for Woman of the Year in Business. She was recognized at the Women's Foundation's annual luncheon on September 21. Massana-Crane thanked Coulter and said she was honored to be recognized.

James mentioned that the new CALS app was ready and available for download. He encouraged board members to try the app and give their feedback.

Coulter said 2,000 responses have been received from a survey sent out by the CALS marketing team and Thoma Thoma, a local marketing firm.

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3. Move to Adjourn

Gibson-Branton called the meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

Handwritten signature of Stephanie Gibson Branton in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.

President

Handwritten signature of the Secretary in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.

Secretary