

## Central Arkansas Library System

### Board of Directors Meeting

October 27, 2022, at noon

#### Hybrid Meeting: Children's Library & Zoom Video Call

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

Staff in attendance were Nate Coulter, Nathan James, Lisa Donovan, Tameka Lee, Eliza Borné, Nathan Smith, Carol Coffey, Pam Rudkin, Joe Hudak, Kate Matthews, Candace White, Hannah Saulters, Katie Adams, Mark Christ, Amanda Orgel, Maria Aguilar, Andre Thornton, Shya Washington-Webb, Jet Butler, Mary Lamb, Camille Davis, Jakeob Ward, April Smith, Brian Martin, Laura Hodo, and Polly Deems.

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 September Minutes as presented.

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

##### **2. Approval of September Financials**

Grice reported that as of September 30, 2022, CALS assets totaled \$104,740,402.64 with a net loss of \$4,434,181.72. He attributed the loss to the flow of tax dollars still being received and said he expected a large receipt for October. He said there was a 13% increase in collections year-over-year for October and mentioned that some bonds are beginning to mature so CALS will see interest income on reserves.

Gibson-Branton filed the September Financials for audit.

#### **Information Items**

##### **1. Digital Literacy Guide Report**

Coulter introduced the CALS Digital Literacy team: Jakeob Ward, Digital Literacy Guide stationed at McMath Library; Camille Davis, Digital Literacy Guide stationed at Dee Brown Library; April Smith, Digital Literacy Specialist stationed at Main Library; and Nathan Smith, CALS Digital Programming Coordinator. Coulter also shared testimonials from patrons praising

the team's efforts to meet the community's digital assistance needs. Funded by a grant from the Windgate Foundation, the Digital Literacy Guides assist patrons with all kinds of digital and technology questions.

Ward said that the Digital Literacy Guides helped patrons with a wide range of technology and digital issues. Though stationed at home branches, Ward said the guides travel to most CALS branches for assistance sessions with patrons. He said the feedback the guides have received has been encouraging. Davis added that the guides enjoy what they do and are excited to help close the digital literacy gap in the CALS service area. Nathan Smith also expressed enthusiasm for digital classes and professional development for teachers curated by April Smith.

Brian Martin, branch manager of Dee Brown Library, and Laura Hodo, branch manager of McMath Library, said the guides have been a huge help. They said library staff are able to manage the flow of patron needs more efficiently since the guides are available to help patrons with lengthier digital needs, freeing up time for library staff to attend to other duties like programming and reports. Hodo said the majority of patrons at her branch need digital help and the guides have eased the pressure on her staff in meeting that demand. She shared testimonials from McMath staff reporting that they have been able to help more people since the guides can invest time in assisting patrons with lengthier issues while front desk staff can help other patrons who come to the library. Martin and Hodo agreed that CALS could use more Digital Literacy Guides.

Nathan Smith reported that CALS has been able to purchase new audio/visual equipment as the library's virtual and digital needs have shifted throughout the pandemic. He said his team was able to create professional quality livestreams and virtual programs for the Six Bridges Book Festival and other community events, including the October 10 mayoral forum which had 2,500 views on Youtube. Berry and Borné endorsed the quality of virtual programming for this year's Six Bridges Book Festival. Coulter asked about the average number of virtual attendees streaming or watching festival content. Smith said it varied widely depending on the session.

## **2. 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:

- *Hispanic Heritage Month & Dia los Muertos*: Coulter asked Maria Aguilar, CALS Community Liaison, to speak about Hispanic Heritage Month celebrations at the library. Aguilar said that throughout September and October thirty programs were executed across CALS branches with support from the Windgate Foundation. She said around five hundred people attended the programs virtually and in-person. Aguilar encouraged the Board to attend the Dia Los Muertos festival planned for November 1 in the alley between Roberts Library and Ron Robinson Theater, which she projected would draw around six hundred to one thousand attendees. Guerrero thanked Aguilar for her oversight of these programs and her support of Spanish-speaking CALS patrons through her efforts to bring the Universidad Comunitaria literacy and skills program to Little Rock.

- *Employee Recognition Awards*: Every year, employees across CALS nominate and vote for the winners of three different employee award categories. Coulter recognized the three winners announced at the 2022 CALS Staff Day:
  - Shya Washington-Webb, branch manager of Children’s Library, was the recipient of the 2022 Employee of the Year Award. Washington-Webb shared that in-person programming was picking up at Children’s Library with STEM, literacy, art, and cooking programs as well as hands-on programs featuring the teaching garden and bee hives. She also highlighted the Oliver Jeffers: 15 Years of Picturing Books exhibit on display at the Children’s Library gallery from October 20 to December 29. The display was organized by the National Center for Children’s Illustrated Literature and sponsored by the John & Robyn Horn Foundation, the Windgate Foundation, and the Rodger S. & Barbara Ann Kline Foundation.
  - Jet Butler, teen programmer at Main Library Level 4, was the recipient of the 2022 Unsung Hero Award. Butler said that their primary programming focus is Teens 4 InQlusion, a space for teens of all genders and sexualities to engage in community and receive support. They have facilitated inclusive programming at several branches including a teen Pride disco, teen Pride fest, an inclusive clothing closet, an outreach partnership with Arkansas Children’s Gender Clinic, and DIY pronoun pin programs at several branches. They also announced the launch of an inclusive reading lounge supported by a \$2,500 grant from NAMI Arkansas. The reading lounge will provide teens with their own personal copies of LGBTQ+ reading material to foster representation and support for these teens outside of the library. Guerrero and Evans applauded Butler and the active leadership of CALS in LGBTQ+ programming and advocacy, highlighting the constellation of leadership and resources dedicated to supporting and defending the LGBTQ+ community in Central Arkansas.
  - Mary Lamb, clerk at Terry Library, was the recipient of the 2022 Super Clerk Award. White said that Lamb has worked for CALS since 2016 as one of the system’s longest tenured clerks. White recognized Lamb for her hard work, her excellent training of new clerks, and her generous and positive spirit.

### 3. Other

Coulter highlighted an article in the *Jonesboro Sun* regarding the proposed measure to decrease the Craighead County Public Library by half. He encouraged board members to remind any acquaintances in Craighead County that support for their library was on the ballot. [On November 9, 2022, voters in Craighead County approved a millage reduction measure to cut library funding by one half, from two mills to one.]

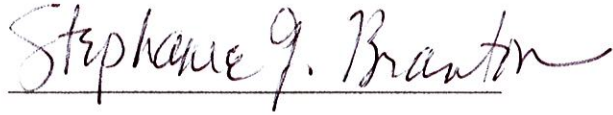
Gibson-Branton said that it was the practice of the Board to skip meeting in November and meet early in December. Gibson-Branton asked the Board to vote on which date in December they would prefer to hold the year’s final meeting.

After some conversation amongst the Board members, Gibson-Branton suggested meeting on Thursday, December 15 at noon. It was approved unanimously.

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**4. Move to Adjourn**

Gibson-Branton called the meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.



President



Secretary