

## Central Arkansas Library System

### Board of Directors Meeting

December 15, 2022, at noon

### Hybrid Meeting: Darragh Center & 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, Sybil Jordan Hampton, Esperanza Massana-Crane, and Audrey Evans. Mandy Gill and Ryan Davis were absent.

Staff in attendance were Nate Coulter, Lisa Donovan, Tameka Lee, Eliza Borné, Jo Spencer, Lance Ivy, Nathan Smith, Carol Coffey, Pam Rudkin, Joe Hudak, Kate Matthews, Candace White, Hannah Saulters, Katie Adams, Mark Christ, Andre Thornton, April Smith, Brad Mooy, Glenn Whaley, and Polly Deems.

Also in attendance was Paige Eichkorn from the Arkansas Democrat Gazette.

#### **Action Items**

##### **1. Approval of Minutes**

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

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

##### **2. Approval of October and November Financials**

Grice reported that as of November 30, 2022, CALS assets totaled \$113,556,631.55 with a net income of \$7,004,601.60 for the month. He reported the net income for the year is \$4,420,380.05 primarily from the tax revenue collected in November. He said the finances were in line with the budget.

Gibson-Branton filed the October and November Financials for audit.

##### **3. Amendment to CALS Matching Plan**

In December of 2021, the CALS Board voted to increase the match from 2 percent to 3 percent, with hopes that the match would be increased to 4 percent during the next budgetary cycle. On behalf of CALS, Spencer asked the Board to approve a resolution that would amend the CALS Matching Plan to increase the match from 3 percent to 4 percent of employee contributions to their 457 retirement accounts. The resolution would also abolish the six-month service requirement wait period. Spencer said the additional percent would be an additional \$75K expense, but it would be a nice increase to overall staff compensation. In regards to the service requirement, Spencer said that since

employees were vested in the plan upon employment, employees would benefit from the removal of the six-month service requirement and immediately start participating.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Grice moved to increase the CALS Matching Plan from 3 percent to 4 percent as presented. Berry seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

#### **4. Approval of 2023 Budgets**

Spencer said that each of the funds were described in the Budget Memo that was submitted to the Board ahead of this meeting. They were also discussed in the Finance Committee meeting that was held on Wednesday, December 14. She and Coulter highlighted key details of the budget:

- **General Fund Revenues:** Property taxes accounted for 88 percent of library funding in the 2023 budget, which was down from 91 percent in 2022. Coulter attributed this to the diversification of resources including state revenues and grants. For 2023, total budgeted revenues were up 8.5 percent or \$2.36M. Of that amount, \$1.1M was attributed to a forecasted increase of property tax collections in Little Rock, Maumelle, and Pulaski County; \$325K was attributed to an increase in interest investment income; \$159K was attributed to an increase in budgeted grant revenues; \$114K was attributed to an expected increase in state aid; and the remainder was attributed to higher transfers from the retail operations of Ron Robinson Theater and the Galleries & Bookstore.
- **Grant Income Line:** Spencer said grants accounted for \$975K in revenue for 2022. She forecasted a small increase for 2023. Brown inquired about CALS's major grant donors for 2022 and 2023. In response, Borné listed the following:
  - \$293K from the Arkansas Department of Health supporting the social workers in the Community Services Department
  - \$250K in unrestricted funds from the Gerald M. Kline Family Foundation
  - \$250K from the SBA grant supporting the Rock It! Lab
  - \$150K from the ESSER III Grant supporting the Count-UP program
  - \$80K from the National Endowment for the Humanities
  - \$75K from the City of Little Rock supporting Be Mighty
  - \$40K from the National Recreation and Parks Association
- **General Fund Expenses:** For 2023, total budgeted expenses were up 6.4 percent or \$1.6M. Coulter said that salaries and benefits account for 62 percent of total expenses, which is a smaller amount of the budget than previous years. Spencer said the salaries and benefits line item would increase 6.5 percent, or \$729K, in 2023. This represented a budgeted 4 percent merit raise for employees and raising the base wage to \$15/hour. Other expenses included:
  - *Materials Expenses:* Materials expenses were budgeted flat for 2023. Spencer said the collections budget for 2022 would not be spent entirely, though efforts were being made to make the budget more efficient and effective. Coulter said library staff would work to ensure collections



received a more robust portion of the budget. He said materials/collections made up roughly 9 percent of CALS budget in as opposed to an average of 11-12 percent seen at other libraries.

- *Operating Expenses:* Operating expenses were budgeted at a slight increase of 6.2 percent or \$360K, accounting for capital expenses such as planned HVAC and roofing projects. CALS debt service was projected to remain the same.
- **Other Budgets:** Spencer briefly highlighted the budgets for the Butler Center, Ron Robinson Theater, Galleries & Bookstore, and Emmett Morris Fund. She pointed out that the finance team had only budgeted five months for the Galleries & Bookstore at Library Square since it would be closing in early 2023 in anticipation of the expected Main Library renovation. She said the space on the first floor of the Roberts Library will house public services to patrons during the remodel.

## 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:

- **Bonds for Capital Improvement Update:** Coulter asked Ivy to update the board on the planned capital improvement projects made possible by Little Rock voters approving bond refinancing in May 2022. Ivy said RFQs for contractors for the Main Library renovation were due December 9 and that six finalists had been selected. He said presentations by the candidates were being planned for January.
- **Back of House Items:** Coulter asked Coffey to speak about a number of topics:
  - *Tech Cards & Circulation:* Coffey explained that CALS issues Tech Cards to students at local schools, which allow them to access the library's digital offerings. Compared to other library card holders, Tech Card holders made up a sizable percentage of unique monthly users to Freegal, a music streaming service CALS provides. Coffey said the usage pattern mimics the school year, with the number of Freegal users dropping during the summer. She reported that CALS negotiated a new contract with Freegal which was favorable for the library.
  - *Catalog Update:* Coffey reported that CALS staff would be looking at options regarding the recent switch to a new catalog. Some patrons and staff have reported difficulty with the new system, so administrative staff wanted to make sure CALS is providing the best service possible.
  - *Communico:* Coffey reported that CALS would be signing an agreement with Communico to provide integrated events and meeting room calendar software. Programmers will be able to set up online events and book the meeting room in a single process. Patrons will also be able to see the meeting room calendar and will be able to request to book a meeting room through the web. Smith and Lee mentioned the benefits this service will bring to booking Digital Literacy Guide appointments and providing templates for the Marketing Department.

- **Board Retirements:** Coulter thanked outgoing Board members Stephanie Gibson-Branton, Andre Guerrero, and Marian Berry for their years of service. He said the library is a better place as a result of their thoughtful, inclusive contributions. 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. Comments from President**

Gibson-Branton thanked the mayor of Maumelle for appointing her to the interesting, rewarding, sometimes challenging work of serving on the CALS Board of Directors. She said she looked forward to seeing the great things CALS would do in the future. Guerrero said he was grateful and honored to have served on the Board. He said he enjoyed every meeting as a source of good news about what library staff were doing to support and engage the community. Berry said serving on the Board had been an extremely rewarding experience. She applauded library staff for making CALS such a wonderful organization.

## **3. Other**

Gibson-Branton asked Staff members and visitors to leave so that the Board could go into Executive Session.

The Board returned from Executive Session at 1:06 p.m. The Board members stated after discussion in Executive Session their intention to give Director Coulter a total 10 percent pay raise. Gibson-Branton pointed out that 6 percent of the raise reflected merit increases that the Executive Director had not received for two-and-a-half years and the anticipated 4 percent merit increase for all staff in 2023.

Gibson-Branton announced that Stacey McAdoo, current Board Vice-President, agreed to take up the mantle of Board President in 2023. Ryan Davis agreed to serve as Vice-President. Brandon Grice agreed to continue serving as Board Treasurer.

Gibson-Branton asked the Board to vote to approve the proposed slate of officers.

Berry moved to elect the slate of Board officers as nominated. It was approved unanimously.

## **4. Move to Adjourn**

Gibson-Branton called the meeting adjourned at 1:07 p.m.

  
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President

  
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Secretary