

Central Arkansas Library System

Board of Directors Meeting

January 26, 2023, at noon

Hybrid Meeting: Darragh Center & Zoom Video Call

Board members in attendance were Stacey McAdoo, Brandon Grice, Bob Brown, Luke Underwood, Jennifer Jamison, Madhav Shroff, Alexis Sims, Sybil Jordan Hampton, Esperanza Massana-Crane, Andy Gill, Dustin McDaniel, and Audrey Evans. Ryan Davis was 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, Candace White, Amanda Orgel, Katie Adams, Colin Thompson, Kelli Marks, Rebecca Beadle, Jet Butler, Brant Collins, Mark Christ, Glenn Whaley, and Polly Deems.

Also in attendance was Joe Flaherty from the Arkansas Democrat Gazette, Jodie Spears from Thoma Thoma, and a group of approximately thirty community members including Richard Prewitt, Renee Williams, and Mike Poe.

Action Items

1. Approval of Minutes

McAdoo asked the Board to approve the December Minutes as presented.

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

2. Approval of December Financials

Grice reported that as of December 31, 2022, CALS assets totaled \$112,213,045.48 with a net income of \$3,264,902.89. He said net income was higher than usual due to an extra \$3M in collections, which he attributed to the early payoff of the capital bonds. The bond funds will go toward the projected renovation of Main Library. Grice also reported that January collections were down 21.2% but he expected them to correct later in the year.

McAdoo filed the December Financials for audit.

3. Approval of Port Lease Agreement

Coulter reported that Ivy and Spencer searched extensively for a rental property to house approximately fifty administration and back-of-house staff during the fourteen to eighteen months that Main Library would be closed for renovation. Ivy said he and Spencer were able to find an appropriate property at 7773 Sloane Drive near the Little Rock Port Authority. He reported the building had plenty of office space for staff and enough room to host the quarterly used book sale. Ivy asked the board to approve a one-year lease of the Sloane property with

1/26/2023 2

options to extend and termination rights after the first year. Coulter added that the Port board approved the lease in the previous week.

Underwood moved to approve the Port lease agreement as presented. Shroff 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:

- **Contractors for Main Library Renovation:** Coulter asked Ivy to speak about the contractor selection for the Main Library renovation. Ivy said a committee met with six local contractors, each of whom were great candidates and several of whom CALS has worked with on past projects. [After the meeting, it was announced that the committee selected CDI contractors to helm the Main Library renovation.]
- **Williams Library Renovation:** Coulter reported that Williams Library staff and patrons met with architects from AMR to discuss remodel plans for that branch. The architects interviewed staff and patrons who regularly visited the library for input on improvements to the branch. Suggestions included moving the entrance to the west side of the building and giving staff more work space.
- **Black History Month Programming at CALS:** Coulter asked Lee to speak about upcoming CALS programs celebrating Black History Month. Lee directed the board to the CALS website for a comprehensive look at BHM programming at CALS. She highlighted the Black Family Expo at the Pankey Community Center on February 11, which would promote the recording and digitizing of local family history through the CALS Memory Lab. Another project highlighted by Lee was the online Lost West Ninth Street exhibit curated by the Butler Center at the Roberts Library, a project to digitally reconstruct the primarily Black business district and neighborhood of West Ninth Street destroyed by the mid-1960s construction of Interstate 630. She also noted the Black History Month Family Celebration at Children's Library scheduled for the end of the February. Coulter added that news regarding a public art commission in connection to Black History Month would be announced soon.
- **CALS Memory Lab:** Coulter asked Glenn Whaley, manager of the Roberts Library, to speak about the CALS Memory Lab. Whaley said that CALS received a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to fund equipment and staff training for the creation of the DIY Memory Lab. She said the Lab included a high-powered scanner and a computer for digitizing VHS and phone video. Patrons can make an appointment to use the Memory Lab on the Roberts Library website. Whaley said hundreds of photos have already been digitized using the Lab.
- **Pulaski County Community Village:** Coulter asked Rebecca Beadle, CALS social worker, to speak about the Pulaski County Community Village project, which aims to revolutionize the city's approach to the unsheltered community. She said the project was based on the successful Community First! Village in Austin, Texas. Beadle said Pulaski County Judge Barry Hyde purchased one hundred and fifty acres that will be managed by

a 501(c)(3) organization. Services provided will include mental and physical health services, and residents will have to apply and pay rent to live in the micro-home community. Beadle said that CALS had an opportunity to be strategically involved with the initiative, adding that she was serving on the Education & Workforce Committee and Coulter was a member of the Village's board.

- **Welcoming Newly Appointed Board Members:** Coulter introduced four new CALS board members—Dustin McDaniel (Pulaski County), Andy Gill (Perry County), Luke Underwood (Little Rock), and Alexis Sims (Maumelle). Each board member thanked Coulter and briefly introduced themselves with information about their career and their connection to CALS. McAdoo thanked the new board members for their service.

2. Other

McAdoo said there were three individuals—Richard Prewitt, an artist who sold wares in the Galleries; Renee Williams, owner of Gallery 26 and past exhibitor at the Galleries; and Mike Poe, a local filmmaker—who asked in advance to address the board with their concerns regarding the closure of the Galleries & Bookstore at Library Square.

Prewitt, Williams, and Poe each thanked the board and staff for allowing them to speak. They shared concerns that, during the bond election that generated funds for the renovation of Main Library, there had been no mention of the closure of the Galleries, nor did they feel the community had been given opportunity to address the board or weigh in on the issue. They said the Galleries promoted Arkansans' creative expression and that the outlet was not just profitable for local artists, but a hub for the artist community. They asked the board and staff to consider alternatives to closing the space permanently.

Evans said that the board took seriously the concern that community members did not feel they had a chance for input. Lee said public meetings were being scheduled for community members to give input regarding future possibilities for the Library Square campus. Spencer said that any future iteration would need to be more cost effective to better steward taxpayer dollars. She said that, since 2016, the Galleries had lost over \$1M, primarily due to CALS footing the bill for staffing. Evans said the staff and the board were committed to dialogue regarding a cost effective solution. Hampton and McDaniel agreed that the concerns expressed were not taken lightly and that the board would look into the situation thoughtfully.

1/26/2023 4

3. Move to Adjourn

McDaniel moved to adjourn the meeting. Hampton seconded the motion, and McAdoo called the meeting adjourned at 1:01 p.m.



President



Secretary