

Central Arkansas Library System

Board of Directors Meeting

August 24, 2023, at 11:00 A.M.

Hybrid Meeting: UALR Downtown & Zoom Video Call

Board members in attendance were Stacey McAdoo, Ryan Davis, Audrey Evans, Madhav Shroff, Brandon Grice, Bob Brown, Jennifer Jamison, Alexis Sims, and Luke Underwood. Sybil Jordan Hampton, Dustin McDaniel, Andy Gill and Esperanza Massana-Crane were absent.

Staff in attendance were Jo Spencer, Gonzalo Hernandez, Eliza Borné, Lisa Donovan, Nate Coulter, Carol Coffey, Joe Hudak, Hannah Saulters, Mark Christ, Heather Zbinden, Amanda Orgel, Ellen Samples, Kate Matthews, Leslie Blanchard, Pam Rudkin, Polly Deems, Tameka Lee, Brant Collins and Will Gross.

Also in attendance was Joe Flaherty with the Arkansas Democrat Gazette, Stuart Mackey with the Hathaway Group, Reese Rowland with Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects and David Johnson the director of the Fayetteville Public Library.

Action Items

1. Approval of Minutes

McAdoo asked the Board to approve the August minutes as presented.

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

2. Financial Report

Grice reported that for the month of August, 2023, CALS assets totaled \$107,527,770.13 with a net loss of (\$1,566,791.35). He said that tax collections were up 8.7%, and noted that October and November were typically the months where we could expect the largest draw.

McAdoo filed the August Financials for audit.

3. Approval of Update to Board Policy #301

Coulter began by noting that this was a follow up to the last month's meeting, and a couple of changes had been made to the proposed policy after feedback from board members Gill and Sims.

Blanchard then spoke about the changes which include stipulations such as that when an item is reviewed as part of the appeal process, it may not be reviewed again for a period of five years. Blanchard had reviewed the policies of other libraries and found that a five-year period was about the average.

Sims then asked about whether the library had a definition for what a patron being in “good standing” means, Blanchard then said that it meant a patron regularly renewed their card, lived in our service area or paid their non-resident fee and didn’t have fines over \$100.

Evans moved to accept the revisions and Brown seconded. The changes were approved unanimously.

Information Items

1. Main Remodel Design Update

Spencer introduced Rowland, the lead architect for the remodeling of Main, who came to present renderings that showed the plans for the updated building floor by floor. Rowland explained that the firm was reaching the end of the Design and Development phase which puts their progress at around 60%. Rowland said that the firm should have the complete file packet submitted by November to CDI. Spencer said that CDI would be pricing the construction out over the next 3-4 weeks and that would be the last step needed before they got the green light.

Rowland then went on to present the renderings of Main. He detailed the firm’s philosophy on how to connect the area to the community, how to make the space more accessible for the public and how to better visually signify the areas of the building. He then went on to describe the changes being made to each floor of the building, starting on the first floor, then the basement and then working up through each floor.

After going through the renderings, Evans asked Rowland how we know we can afford everything shown with the allotted money. Rowland explained that when CDI was hired as the contractor, the architects, CALS and CDI came together and put together a wish list of everything that CALS would like. Then, CDI and the architects worked together to price out everything and bring back to CALS a list of what would actually be feasible within their budget. Evans then asked how they knew that the contractor’s stated prices would reflect the actual costs. Rowland responded by explaining that while there’s no way to be 100% certain, the architects and CDI worked closely going back and forth to price everything as accurately as possible.

Sims then asked about how the new design’s extra public service desks and entrance would affect staffing and whether the architects had consulted security about the extra entrance. Rowland then responded that most of the service areas are just moving where staff currently work to other areas of the building.

2. Fundraising for Main Remodel

Borné began by highlighting the massive increase in space devoted to youth services in the remodeled Main, 17,000 sq ft, almost a 60% increase. Borné then talked about how the majority of the remodel would be paid for with taxes, but that CALS was also considering doing a modest fundraising drive to help raise extra funds. Borné mentioned that the library worked with Library Strategies over the summer in order to help set up a feasibility committee for endeavors like this, from the interviews Library Strategies did, they determined that a \$1.5 Million campaign would be possible. Borné would like to continue to engage with Library Strategies for the next few

months in order to better prepare CALS for the campaign. This engagement was already approved by the CALS Foundation Board.

Borné then introduced Johnson, the director of the Fayetteville Public Library, who was invited to talk about that library's experience with fundraising campaigns and to give more insight into how to go about these sorts of campaigns. Johnson then went on to talk about how the FPL just completed a \$50 Million campaign in order to expand their facilities. Johnson then talked about how after a bond, FPL still needed to raise \$23 Million. He then went to talk about the challenges that they experienced in their campaign, with issues such as the pandemic and donors not coming through at the level they expected.

Johnson then offered hope, talking about how comparatively small donors ended up being a much larger force in driving donations to the fund, with FPL's "Ground Game" being what really helped them reach their goals. He believes that community engagement ended up being key to the success, and local citizens getting inspired by their involvement in the campaign can help inspire excitement for the future. Johnson emphasized that a big part of successful campaigns/solicitations is to create a narrative around the project where the donor can see where their donation is going to.

Brown asked if FPL felt limited to their local counties as part of the campaign, or if they reached out throughout the state. Brown then asked if Johnson thought CALS should focus locally or statewide. Johnson said he did focus on FPL's local service area, and that it worked pretty well for them. After this, Brown asked about whether Walmart could work as a donor given their statewide presence. Johnson said that Walmart has a strict plan on where their donations will go each year.

3. Hillcrest Hall Update

Mackey from Hathaway Group informed the Board that the local Masonic chapter had approved the purchase of the property. He thinks that they didn't take the vote until they received approval from the national organization, but he's still waiting on confirmation of that. Hathaway Group is making all of the preparations for the sale based on that. Mackey said the farthest date out for the sale is November 9th with a good chance they'll close before October 15th. They've reached out to the Hillcrest Merchants and Residents Associations and other building tenants and they all were comfortable with the sale. The only people who weren't were others whose bids weren't accepted.

4. Director's Report

Coulter didn't have anything to report but did recommend that board members visit the Six Bridges Book Festival. Coulter also congratulated Borné on her being honored by the Central High Foundation as a distinguished alumnus.

5. Other

Underwood asked if any of the proceeds from the sale of Hillcrest Hall could go towards Main's renovation. Spencer said that it hadn't been earmarked for anything specific yet, and that it could potentially contribute to the renovation.

McAdoo also recognized that it was Davis' birthday that day.

Evans mentioned a positive article in that day's Democrat-Gazette about board member Esparanza Massana-Crane.

Nate Coulter also spent some time highlighting the UALR Downtown space the meeting was in and recommended that future discussion about meeting times should be had.

6. Move to Adjourn

McAdoo moved to adjourn the meeting, it was seconded by multiple people. McAdoo called the meeting adjourned at 12:07 P.M.

President

Secretary