

Central Arkansas Library System

Board of Directors Meeting

February 22, 2024, at 12:00 P.M.

Hybrid Meeting: Children's Library & Zoom Video Call

Board members in attendance were Ryan Davis, Joyce Elliott, Karama Neal, David Finkbeiner, Audrey Evans, Luke Underwood, Alexis Sims, Dustin McDaniel, Brandon Grice, Madhav Shroff, Jennifer Jamison, and Esperanza Massana-Crane. Stacey McAdoo was absent.

Staff in attendance were Nate Coulter, Jo Spencer, Ellen Samples, Kate Matthews, Tameka Lee, Eliza Borné, Gonzalo Hernandez, Will Gross, Carol Coffey, Jessica McDaniel, Pam Bandy, Polly Deems, April Smith, Nathan Smith, Dre Thornton, Shya Washington-Webb, Mark Christ, Hannah Saulters, Brant Collins, Jessica Frazier-Emerson, Chris Ketterman and Joe Hudak.

Also in attendance was Joe Flaherty from the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* and Reese Rowland from Polk Stanley Wilcox.

Action Items

1. Approval of Minutes

Davis asked the Board to approve the January minutes as presented.

Sims moved to approve the January minutes as presented. Underwood seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

2. Approval of December Financials

Grice reported that as of January 31, 2024, CALS assets totaled \$110,493,450.25 with a net loss of \$938,204.41. He noted that this was a standard loss for January, which is historically a slow month for tax collections. Property tax receipts through February were up about 4.3%.

Davis filed the financials for audit.

3. Approval of Board Policy #600

Borné asked that the board re-examine the current naming policy so it would be clearer for those who might donate to the Main Library's capital campaign. The revision's goals are to establish clear and consistent guidelines and expectations, to create a positive naming experience for donors, staff and the board, and a resilient policy that can be referred to far in the future.

Shroff asked Borné to elaborate on how the policy would affect buildings being named. Borné described the policy and how it guaranteed a building would retain the name for 30 years, a subunit in a building would retain the name for 20, and a fixture would retain the name for 10 years or the useful life of the item. Shroff then asked how this would affect current spaces and if

names would be grandfathered in. Borné answered that there were already named spaces in Main and the intention was to carry forward those names into the new building.

Borné then explained that while spaces in other branches would be brought before the board for a vote, she is asking the board to approve the donation levels for Main ahead of time to be able to offer potential donors a clearer idea of what their donation can do.

Sims asked for clarification on a section of the new policy that said that the “board and/or executive director” would approve names and asked why it is not just and. Borné agreed and amended that section to just say and.

Elliot then asked to strike the part of the new policy that stated we would only select quality people to name our facilities afterwards, noting that the CALS Board and staff were already going to do that, and that by specifically naming it in the policy we may be implying to some people that we could potentially lower our standards to name sites after certain people. After some discussion it was agreed that the sentence qualifying that would be stricken and the amendments proposed earlier would be made.

Neal moved to approve the policy. Shroff seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Information Items

1. Update on Strategic Planning

Coffey gave an update on the strategic planning process and showed a timeline of all aspects of the plan’s creation. She then told the board that Stephanie Chase would be at the next meeting and would lead a community mapping exercise where board members would help identify individuals and community groups who could help contribute to the plan. Coffey also wants to schedule a focus group for board members in April.

2. Black History Month Programming Recap

McDaniel gave an overview of all of the Black History month programming CALS did in the month of February, emphasizing the increased focus on outreach to Black communities. These programs included history-focused programs on canning and paper-making art, and story times with local authors and artists. She also wanted to highlight the Black Family Expo which had over 100 attendees.

3. Big Read Preview

Christ talked about the \$20,000 grant CALS received to host programs around the Tommy Orange book “There, There”. CALS is partnering with the Sequoia National Research Center, the Historic Arkansas Museum as well as the American Indian Center of Arkansas to host these programs. There are over 40 events planned to celebrate the Big Read including writing workshops, lectures and over 20 book clubs. Tommy Orange himself will be giving a talk on May 16. The system has purchased 500 copies of the book to give away, and Christ brought several to give to the board members.

4. Director's Report

Coulter highlighted a few items from his Director's Report.

The first was several films being shown in the Ron Robinson Theater, including a documentary on Bayard Rustin as well as the popular art gallery documentaries. Sims also brought up the possibility of hosting some of those films at a time that would be accessible for homeschoolers.

Coulter then shared copies of all his Director's Reports from 2023 with the board, encouraging everyone to read it and help keep staff accountable for things mentioned that haven't been addressed yet.

Coulter then congratulated Shroff on the birth of his first child and shared pictures of her with the group.

After the regular business of the meeting was concluded, Davis asked that the board be allowed to enter executive session, everyone but the board members left the room.

After the executive session was adjourned, McDaniel brought up that he enjoyed visiting the branches and requested that at future meetings the branch manager tell the board some information about the branch and what is happening there. Sims then asked if there was any update about how the network disruption affected the system. Spencer responded by saying that all books have been checked in, but that we may need some more time before there is a full picture of the effects of the disruption.

5. Move to Adjourn

Davis moved that the board adjourn the meeting, Sims seconded the motion and Davis called the meeting adjourned at 1:08 p.m.

President

Secretary