

Central Arkansas Library System

Board of Directors Meeting

August 22, 2024, at noon

Hybrid Meeting: Roberts Library Room 204 & Zoom Video Call

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

Staff in attendance were Nate Coulter, Tameka Lee, Jo Spencer, Ellen Samples, Gonzalo Hernandez, Eliza Borné, Candace White, Hannah Saulters, Katie Adams, Nathan Smith, Pamela Bandy, Carol Coffey, Heather Zbinden, Meredith Li, Joe Hudak, Amanda Orgel, Heather Pressgrove, Alison McKee, Brant Collins, Glenn Whaley, Shya Washington-Webb, Kate Matthews, and Rebecca Beadle.

Also in attendance were Joe Flaherty and Thomas Metthe with the Arkansas Democrat Gazette, Kyle Elmore with Forvis Mazars, Reese Rowland with Polk Stanley Wilcox, Drew Herget, and Sylvia Davis.

Action Items

1. Approval of Minutes

McAdoo asked the Board to approve the July Minutes as presented. Sims requested a correction to qualify her attendance at the July meeting as virtual.

Neal moved to approve the July Minutes pending corrections. Grice seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

2. Approval of July Financials

Grice reported that as of July 31, 2024, CALS assets totaled \$108,812,347.29 with a net loss of \$1,600,963.76. He said tax receipts were up 5.8% year-over-year.

McAdoo filed the July Financials for audit.

3. 2023 Audit Report

Spencer introduced Kyle Elmore with Forvis Mazars to present the 2023 audit report. Elmore said the audit draft was ready to finalize pending approval from the CALS board of directors. He highlighted the auditor's opinion that CALS received a clean, unmodified opinion for 2023. Elmore added that since CALS is a government entity, his team had to adhere to additional auditing standards and examine the library's systems of internal control. He said CALS received a clean report on the additional measures as well, with no major findings to report.

On behalf of the CALS Finance Committee, Grice moved to approve the 2023 audit report. Underwood seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Information Items

1. Six Bridges Lineup

Borné reported that CALS was gearing up for the annual Six Bridges Book Festival scheduled for the last week of September. She said one of the festival's core purposes was to attract touring authors to Central Arkansas, adding that more than 5,000 readers and 50 authors had participated in the 2023 festival. She shared that the CALS development team had secured over \$139K in grants to fund the 2024 festival in the form of stipends and travel costs for visiting authors.

Borné introduced Drew Herget, a contractor hired to organize the 2024 festival, to share more detailed lineup information. Herget said this year's festival lineup had a wide appeal with dozens of events highlighting individual CALS branches, local authors, and the Writers in the Schools (WITS) program. She shared that the festival's mostly in-person events would feature authors such as Ayana Gray, Toluse "Tolu" Olorunnipa, Ilyon Woo, Kevin Brockmeier, Ann Patchett, and Robin Priess Glasser.

Neal thanked Borné and Herget for their work, adding that the book festival brought many authors to the state for the first time and the event was a great tourist opportunity that underscored the merits of Central Arkansas. McAdoo asked if schools could still sign up for the WITS program. Borné said any interested schools could contact her or Herget to register.

2. Strategic Plan Committee Update

Neal updated the board on the strategic planning process, sharing that the neighborhood outreach check-ins spearheaded by Constructive Disruption would be completed by September 3. The check-ins were designed to ask patrons about the library and how they use it, including community members who have traditionally not engaged with the library. Neal reported that, to date, the consultant with Constructive Disruption has held twelve community engagement meetings with 125 participants, 40 community interviews, and a successful survey with more than 3,500 responses.

Neal said that the strategic plan committee, comprised of herself and CALS staff, were also reviewing notes on CALS's mission statement, vision statement, and statement of core values, adding that all three were strong but could be reordered for maximum effect. She said the committee was also brainstorming ways to share results of the work with frontline library staff.

3. Ceiling Project

Spencer introduced Reese Rowland with Polk Stanley Wilcox to give an update on the ceiling project for the first floor of the Main Library remodel. Rowland shared his team's vision for installing large-scale screenprints of beloved passages from books on the ceiling, with input from community members on which passages should be selected. His team hoped the installations, along with a revamped ramp and sitting platforms, would create an inviting atmosphere that

made the Main Library a destination location. Spencer encouraged board members to submit their own book passage suggestions using the link in the Director's Report.

4. New Sanders Library Manager

Bandy introduced Alison McKee, the new manager at the Amy Sanders Library in Sherwood. McKee said she was excited to join the dynamic CALS team and hoped to bring positive, engaging programs and resources to the Central Arkansas community.

5. Director's Report

Coulter shared that he had received news that Elliott had returned home from the hospital and was working tirelessly to recover from her stroke. Borné added that she was grateful for Elliott's past enthusiasm in agreeing to chair the Six Bridges Book Festival and that her team were hoping for Elliott's full recovery.

Coulter asked Shya Washington-Webb, manager of the Children's Library & Learning Center, to share about the successful back to school event hosted at the branch. Washington-Webb said that over 600 people participated in the Back 2 School Safari, which included games and activities, free dental screenings and haircuts, live animal handlers from the Little Rock Zoo, cooking demonstrations, and a school supply giveaway in partnership with Little Rock Rotary Afterhours.

Coulter welcomed Sylvia Davis, the new CALS Executive Assistant, who will take over all executive administration duties along with some project management work for Coulter. Zbinden also introduced Meredith Li, the new CALS Memory Lab Coordinator.

Coulter reported with sadness that in the last 4 months he had attended the funerals of the fathers of board members Underwood and Finkbeiner. Although he did not know either of these two men, Coulter celebrated that David Underwood and Brad Finkbeiner had both raised sons who became strong supporters of the public library which, in Coulter's view, provides insight into the character and legacy of these two fathers.

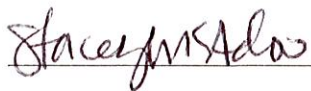
6. Other

Spencer and Whaley invited members of the board to visit a special exhibit featuring CALS-owned materials on display in the Underground Gallery at Roberts Library. Orgel also shared her excitement for an upcoming Afro-futurist exhibit in the Underground Gallery featuring artwork from local teens facilitated by CALS programmer Jet Butler.

Neal asked if the mural at the UALR Downtown campus created by Joe Jones would be available for viewing at the September CALS board meeting, scheduled to take place there. Coulter said CALS staff would arrange to have the artwork viewable.

7. Move to Adjourn

McAdoo moved to adjourn the meeting, and Davis seconded. McAdoo called the meeting adjourned at 12:56 p.m.



James McAdoo

President



Secretary