

Central Arkansas Library System

Board of Directors Meeting

May 22, 2025, at noon

Hybrid Meeting: Nixon Library & Zoom Video Call

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

Staff in attendance were Nate Coulter, Jo Spencer, Tameka Lee, Ellen Samples, Kate Matthews, Hannah Saulter, Nathan Smith, Pamela Bandy, Eliza Borné, Carol Coffey, Joe Hudak, Elizabeth Clements, Ray Terry, Brant Collins, Sarah Jane Rawlinson, Leslie Blanchard, Amanda Orgel, Heather Zbinden, Stu Nichols, Shya Washington-Webb, Jennifer Cordell, Leland Goston, Maria Aguilar, April Hicks, Lily Kauffman, Sarah Griffiths, Mekkos Barbee, and Glenn Whaley.

Also in attendance were Stephanie Chase with Constructive Disruption, Joe Flaherty with the Arkansas Democrat Gazette, and Caroline Derby with KATV Channel 7 News.

Action Items

1. Approval of Minutes

Neal asked the Board to approve the April Minutes.

Shroff moved to approve the April Minutes as presented. Davis seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

2. Approval of April Financials

Spencer reported that as of April 30, 2025, CALS' assets totaled approximately \$105,450,254. Net losses totaled \$3,655,598, year to date. Tax receipts as of May 2025 were \$7,300,000. That is due to the mortgage receipts from the escrow amounts, which contribute to the large collections in May. That totals over \$12,040,000 for 2025, which is 7% over the previous year.

Neal filed the April Financials for audit.

3. Pigeon Abatement

Coulter asked the Board to consider Avian Flyway's proposal for pigeon abatement at the Roberts Library. Neal noted that while the option is expensive, its guaranteed success is encouraging. Evans asked if Main might experience similar problems if the pigeons simply move from one location to another. Both Neal and Coulter said this was unlikely, due to the lack of I-beams on the building. Sims asked if Avian would cover the new entrance on the west side of the Roberts building. Bandy stated that it would. Sims made

a motion that the CALS Board accept Avian Flyway's pigeon abatement proposal. The motion was seconded by Swindle and passed unanimously.

4. Adoption of the Strategic Plan

Neal thanked Chase and the CALS staff for their work and engagement. Neal reminded the Board of the goals stated in the Strategic Plan, the new Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Core Values. Schroff made a motion to adopt the Strategic Plan. Evans seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. Evans thanked Neal for her work on the Plan.

Information Items

1. Summer @ CALS

Orgel updated the Board on the Summer @ CALS program. Registration begins on Tuesday, May 27, and this year's theme is "Color Our World." Last year's total registration numbers were 10, 852, the highest post-Covid number. Orgel said she hopes that this year will see registration numbers closer to the pre-Covid numbers, which would be about 14,000 registrations. Orgel mentioned programming and events for Summer @ CALS, which includes: two library nights at Dickey Stephens Park, more events with Big Poppa Bubble, and various magic and music shows. Orgel distributed Summer @ CALS t-shirts for Board members.

2. Director's Report

Coulter thanked April Hicks and the Nixon Library staff for hosting this Board meeting. Coulter noted that Nixon has the second highest Wi-Fi utilization in the System. Nixon has had 251 programs so far in 2025, with approximately four thousand people participating. Coulter also introduced Cassandra Kwarteng, the new PR Specialist in the Communications department. Coulter also introduced Goston, who is enrolled in a Master of Library Science program. Goston has completed twelve hours towards his MLS degree and is eligible to receive a state scholarship stipend from the Arkansas State Library.

Coulter highlighted a few items from his written report:

- **CALS Right of First Refusal to Purchase 319-323 Clinton Ave:** Coulter informed the Board that Tim Heiple, the owner of this property, intends to sell. Heiple has a Right of First Refusal Agreement with CALS. The agreement states that Heiple offers to sell the property to CALS for the same price as offered by an interested buyer. CALS has forty-five days to consider the offer. At present, CALS is not interested in buying the building. Coulter asked the Board to authorize the CALS administration to let the agreement lapse after forty-five days. Davis made a motion for CALS to bypass its Right of First Refusal. Sims seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

- **Stone Ward:** Nate informed the Board that the Stone Ward agency had been chosen in the recent RFP request. Coulter noted that Stone Ward's office is downtown and close to Main. Coulter added that he believes Stone Ward will be a dependable partner in seeing the River Market grow and thrive. Lee added that Stone Ward is enthusiastic about working on Main's reopening.
- **Rock Paper Run:** Neal thanked staff for hosting and participating in the rescheduled Rock Paper Run event, held with the North Little Rock library. Neal also thanked staff for the success of the recent Used Book Sale. Borné thanked Kauffman for her work in coordinating the Sale. With regards to grants, Borné added that federal grants recently cancelled are not within the CALS budget.
- **Programming:** Samples updated the Board on the upcoming Bike Rodeo at the Dee Brown library, in partnership with Recycled Bikes for Kids. The program offers bicycles and helmets to children and teaches bicycle safety courses.
- **Next Board Meeting:** Neal reminded the Board that customarily, the Board does not meet one month over the summer. Many Board members shared their availability over the summer. The consensus was that many Board members will miss the scheduled June meeting due to conflicts. Neal asked for a motion to skip the June 26, 2025, meeting. Finkbeiner made a motion to skip the June meeting. The motion was seconded by Evans and passed unanimously. The next Board meeting will be July 24, 2025, at the Cox Building.

Move to Adjourn

Neal called the meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.



President



Secretary