

Central Arkansas Library System  
Board of Directors Meeting  
December 11, 2025, at noon  
Hybrid Meeting: Main Library & Zoom Video Call

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

Staff in attendance were Jo Spencer, Nathan Smith, Amanda Orgel, Ray Terry, Stu Nichols, Colin Thompson, Brant Collins, Nate Coulter, Sarah Jane DeYoung, Carol Coffey, Eliza Borné, Lily Kauffman, Ellen Samples, Elizabeth Clements, Priscilla Barnes, Leslie Blanchard, Pam Bandy, Kath Matthews, Rebecca Beadle, Joe Hudak, Glenn Whaley, Tameka Lee, and Gonzalo Hernandez.

Also in attendance were Mary Remmel Wohlleb, Jim Wohlleb, Ariana Remmel, and Bobby Roberts.

## Action Items

### **1. Approval of Minutes**

Neal asked the Board to approve the October Minutes.

Evans moved to approve the October Minutes as presented. Swindle seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

### **2. Approval of October Financials**

Spencer reported that as of November 30, 2025, CALS' assets totaled approximately \$105,172,695. The net loss through November 30 totaled \$3,955,510. Spencer noted that that number is expected and due in large part to the Main Renovation. Income through November is \$25,594,000. This is four percent over this time last year. She noted that, due to the date of this month's Board meeting, she has not received notice of what the taxes will be for the month.

Neal filed the October Financials for audit.

### **3. Approval of 2026 Budgets**

Spencer referenced the CALS Finance Committee meeting that occurred on December 8, 2025. She thanked the committee members for meeting and looking over the proposed budget.

Spencer noted that the 2026 budget is 3.2% higher than the 2025 budget, with the total being \$30,086,997. She also noted that state aid is down, due to the formula change caused by adding in additional libraries that will receive State funding.

Spencer mentioned the property adjacent to the Children's Library and Learning Center. She said that the sale of that property would give CALS revenue to work on the space for the Be Mighty staff offices and workspace.

Spencer mentioned how appreciative CALS is of the Windgate Foundation, that CALS uses for programming. She also mentioned using \$125,000 from the Mellon grant to pay for salaries for the Memory Lab staff. She also mentioned allocating \$100,000 for the Be Mighty program, which the City reimburses part of. She mentioned receiving \$250,000 from Capitol Campaign pledges and \$250,000 from the Windgate Foundation (as a matching grant). That money will be placed back into reserves.

Spencer also mentioned the 3% raise for CALS employees. She noted that this adds just over one million dollars to the salaries and benefits expenditures in the budget. Spencer noted that CALS also paying twenty-six employees at the Main library, which were not on last year's budget. Spencer also mentioned hiring four new part-time employees across the system, as well as budgeting \$80,000 for as-needed salary expenses. The health care insurance costs for CALS remained steady at 5%.

Spencer highlighted a growing expense for CALS, which is the budget for digital materials like Libby and Hoopla. The line-item for these materials is rising from \$2,800,000 to \$3,000,000. Spencer added that Overdrive checkouts for 2025 have surpassed over one million. Evans noted that this shows the demand is there for these materials.

Spencer described the operating costs and expenses and the increase in that line-item. She noted that property insurance is going up about five percent. Costs and maintenance repairs are also increasing, largely due to labor and supply costs. She noted that CALS has many older buildings with older HVAC units. Spencer described the debt services on CALS bonds as "stable."

Spencer noted the \$559,000 budget surplus, which does not include the \$500,000 from the Capitol Campaign pledges and Windgate Foundation. With that factored in, the total surplus would be roughly \$60,000. Neal thanked Spencer for her leadership in preparing the budgets.

Spencer also discussed some of the smaller CALS budgets, which include the Encyclopedia of Arkansas and the Ron Robinson theater. She noted that the revenue generated from the Robinson theater is moved to the CALS General Fund. She also mentioned the \$80,000 surplus for the Six Bridges Book Festival. She also noted a new fund, the CALS Used Book Store.

Schoff thanked Spencer for summarizing the budgets and making the presentations as streamlined as possible. Schoff made a motion to approve the CALS 2026 Budget. The

motion passed unanimously. Schoff also made a motion to approve the CALS 2026 ancillary budgets. The motion also passed unanimously.

## Information Items

### 1 . Director's Report

Coulter highlighted a few items from his written report:

- Coulter thanked Spencer and the Finance department staff for their hard work and diligence in preparing the 2026 budgets.
- Coulter mentioned a New York Times article that compared audiobook and e-book usage. Coffey added that from November 2024 to November 2025, audiobook usage at CALS grew by fifty-six percent.
- Coulter noted some upcoming retirements for CALS staff; Polly Deems will retire at the end of the month and Rebecca Beadle will retire in January 2026. Coulter thanked both staff members for their work and dedication to CALS.
- Coulter recognized McAdoo for her time on the CALS Board of Directors. Her last 3-year term expires on December 31, 2025. Coulter thanked her for her leadership as CALS Board President and presented her with a farewell book and a gift card to use at the CALS Used Book Store.

### 2. Commemoration of “Icarus and Daedalus” sculpture

- Borné made a brief presentation to the Board on the history of the Icarus and Daedalus statue. She noted that the statue was funded by Raymond Rebsamen, whose grandchildren and great-grandchild were in attendance. The statue was dedicated on the grounds of Louisiana Street library on March 9, 1967, and 300 people attended the dedication ceremony. The statue found a home outside the 1<sup>st</sup> floor when the Main library moved to the River Market. Due to the expanded Children’s area on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor with the recent renovations, the Icarus and Daedalus statue found a new home in the surface lot outside the Cox Building on November 9, 2025. Bobby Roberts called the statue the “finest piece of public art in the State.”

12/11/25

**Move to Adjourn**

Evans made the motion to adjourn. Sims seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously. Neal called the meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

*Luke Underwood*

President



Secretary