

Central Arkansas Library System
Board of Directors Meeting
May 24, 2024, at 12:00 P.M.
Hybrid Meeting: Sanders Library & Zoom Video Call

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

Staff in attendance were Nate Coulter, Jo Spencer, Ellen Samples, Kate Matthews, Tameka Lee, Gonzalo Hernandez, Will Gross, Carol Coffey, Pam Bandy, Joe Hudak, Candace White, Amanda Orgel, Glenn Whaley, Hannah Saulters, Polly Deems, Chris Ketterman, Crystal Edwards, Ginann Swindle, Mark Christ, Nathan Smith, Brant Collins, Leslie Blanchard, Dawn Perry, Anne Frymark, Jessica McDaniel, Courtney Frazier Jones, Tyler Compton and Rebecca Beadle.

Also in attendance were Joe Flaherty from the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* and Stephanie Chase from Constructive Disruption.

Action Items

1. Approval of Minutes

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

Elliott moved to approve the April Minutes. Neal seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

2. Approval of March Financials

Grice reported that as of April 30, 2024, CALS assets totaled \$107,007,346.15 with a net loss of \$3,369,729.76. Grice noted that there was a turnaround in tax collections, with collections being up 6% in May.

McAdoo filed the financials for audit.

Information Items

1. Strategic Planning Update

Chase reported that work had begun in earnest on the Strategic Planning process, with a strong focus on community engagement. Constructive Disruption is holding 'visioning cafes' at

branches, hosting listening sessions with community members and conducting community surveys. This work with the community will be their primary focus for the next couple of months.

They have also begun working with the staff and the board, having hosted a focus group with members of the board on May 22. The staff strategic planning team has already met as well. Chase said that moving into the Fall, there will be more focus on engaging with the staff.

Neal then shared a story she had heard from a patron who saw CALS as a safe and reliable place to work, and noted that she had seen many similar stories gathered by the strategic planning team that corroborated this and emphasized the value of the community engagement work that Constructive Disruption was engaged in.

2. Summer at CALS Update

Orgel gave an overview of what was planned for the upcoming Summer @ CALS, the largest program CALS hosts each year. When patrons enroll in the program, they are eligible to receive a variety of prizes including a free tote bag, tickets to a Travelers game and additional prizes when they complete reading goals. Orgel then talked about several of the performers hired including various magicians, musicians and other entertainers. These performers would supplement programs at the branches for children, teens and adults.

Orgel then talked about the program's theme of 'Adventure Begins at Your Library' and how the idea of adventure would be integrated into the various programs held over the summer. She then showed Beanstack, a program where patrons can record the number of books they've read as well as enter prize drawings. She also talked about the landing page on CALS.org where all Summer @ CALS information would be centralized.

3. Juneteenth Events

McDaniel detailed the efforts that CALS would be making to celebrate the Juneteenth holiday including programs at branches and a booth at the Mosaic Templar's Juneteenth festival, both emphasizing meeting patrons and community members where they already were. McDaniel then highlighted books the system holds that would be promoted during June as part of the celebration. She also talked about materials that the system would be distributing including worksheets and coloring books for youth and children as well as materials for adults to help them teach their own children about Juneteenth and how they can get involved in volunteer efforts.

Elliott complimented McDaniel and the community outreach department's efforts in engaging with the community at large.

4. Outreach with Pulaski County Youth Services

Jones talked about how several years ago, CALS had been contacted by Pulaski County Youth Services about a potential partnership. Jones engaged with them, leading to the system's work with the 'Little Scholars' program over the last four years. The goal of CALS' work with the program is to provide educational programming to youth who may not be able to visit a library location. This programming is focused on fostering a love of reading, education, kindness, and the library itself.

At Daisy Bates Elementary, Jones facilitates the "Walk to Read" program in partnership with the Windgate Foundation, where children move through various activities to complete the goal of "walking" five miles. Children who complete the program are rewarded with free books and a new pair of shoes and socks. At Landmark Elementary, CALS' efforts focus on encouraging health and wellness through cooking and gardening programs. Cooking programs not only teach better lifestyle habits but help students engage with cultural experiences by sharing stories and anecdotes from their own lives. Programming at Landmark will continue through the Summer as students continue to work in the CALS sponsored garden.

At Oak Grove Elementary, programs focus on financial education and STEAM programs. One of the highlights was the Inflation Station program where students learned about inflation by trying to spend 'money' on goods during a period of market fluctuation. Other programs at the school included egg parachutes, mosaic art programs and thanks to the Windgate Foundation, the school's first Scholastic Book Fair in five years. At Harris Elementary, interpersonal skills were combined with movement to provide a curriculum that helps teach listening and kindness to young students. Harris also has a CALS sponsored garden where produce will be picked all summer to be used in the school's kitchen for cooking classes. College Station Elementary's programs focus on art and design, integrating math and history into a comprehensive program.

Jones hopes to continue this collaboration with Pulaski County Youth Services with new initiatives, programs and partnerships to better elevate our service to youth across the county.

5. Director's Report

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

Coulter introduced Swindle and congratulated her on her retirement after 29 years of service to CALS and the people of Sherwood. Stories were exchanged by staff and board members commemorating the time that Swindle spent as manager of the Amy Sanders Library. White presented Swindle with a bouquet of flowers in a vase to thank her for her service.

Coulter informed the board of Director of Development Eliza Borné's recent surgery and expected absence for a couple of weeks. He directed any future questions about development to Saulters in the interim.

Coulter referred to the last board meeting and questions about the potential call center's impact on patrons being able to directly reach branch staff. To address these concerns, a group of staff has been convened to examine the benefits and best practices of a potential call center.

Matthews, who is leading this group, emphasized that a study of how many calls require direct response from staff at a branch will be vital in studying a call center's viability. Evans discussed how many patrons call for extensive tech help and how centralizing calls like this may help patrons get more personal assistance and prevent staff from being waylaid by longer calls.

Coulter asked Christ to talk about the progress on the memorial to black soldiers from Arkansas who served in the Civil War. Christ outlined briefly the history of the project and the work of a committee from the community who have worked the last two years to generate ideas, find a location, and consider the qualifications of artists who have expressed an interest in sculpted the memorial. He said four artists will be interviewed for the job: Brian Massey, Kevin Kresse, Vinnie Bagwell, and Colin Campbell. Formal interviews were held earlier in May and the committee will ask their top two candidates to make a more formal proposal in the next few months.

Coulter took a moment to congratulate the HR department on their creation and implementation of a new paid parental leave policy that will begin on June 1.

6. Other

Evans asked for a staff member to talk about two recent events at Ron Robinson Theater. Coulter said that over 300 people attended a talk with author Tim Alberta on May 9th, and over 250 people attended a talk with author Tommy Orange a week later. Samples spoke on the large amount of work that the programming team did to make sure the events were successful. Coulter then mentioned that both events were available to be streamed on YouTube. Samples mentioned that the Tommy Orange event would only be streamable for a couple of weeks because of restrictions imposed by the publisher.

Orgel announced that the CALS Kids YouTube channel had reached 2000 subscribers.

McAdoo thanked the staff for adding the upcoming events to the monthly board packet, Coulter said the addition was an effort from Samples and Gross.

Lee shared several draft copies of the annual report around for the board to look at.

Elliott complimented the team working on the Six Bridges Festival, saying that their work made her job as Chair of the festival a pleasure to do.

Coulter asked Finkbeiner if Perry County offered services like the Pulaski County Youth Services. Finkbeiner said that he wasn't sure but that he was similarly interested in finding out after Jones' presentation.

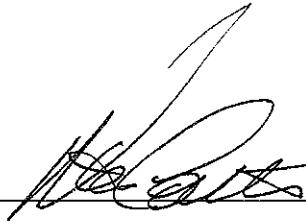
7. Move to Adjourn

McAdoo moved to adjourn the meeting; Sims seconded.

McAdoo adjourned the meeting at 1:00 P.M.

Stacey McAdoo

President



Secretary