

Central Arkansas Library System

Board of Directors Meeting

October 24, 2024, at noon

Hybrid Meeting: Cox Building & Zoom Video Call

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

Staff in attendance were Nate Coulter, Tameka Lee, Jo Spencer, Ellen Samples, Gonzalo Hernandez, Eliza Borné, Jericka Handley, Hannah Saulters, Katherine Blake, Linda Ellis, Nathan Smith, Pamela Bandy, Carol Coffey, Bekah Ervin, Jennifer Cordell, Maria Aguilar, Joe Hudak, Brant Collins, Polly Deems, Katie Adams, Nathan Smith, Elizabeth Clements, Leslie Blanchard, Heather Pressgrove, Rebecca Beadle, Mark Christ, Sarah Jane Rawlinson, and Glenn Whaley.

Also in attendance were Matt Kouri with Good Works Strategic Advisors, Joe Flaherty with the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Stephanie Chase with Constructive Disruption, and Bobby Roberts.

Action Items

1. Approval of Minutes

McAdoo asked the Board to approve the September Minutes as presented.

Underwood moved to approve the September Minutes as presented. Grice seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

2. Approval of September Financials

Grice reported that as of September 30, 2024, CALS assets totaled \$105,894,172.22 with a net loss of \$4,712,346.13. He added that tax receipts were up 6.3% through October.

McAdoo filed the September Financials for audit.

Information Items

1. Presentation of the New CALS Mission, Vision, and Values Statement

McAdoo invited Stephanie Chase with Constructive Disruption to update the board on the ongoing strategic planning process and introduce the proposed mission, vision, and value statement revisions for board discussion and approval. Chase shared that the mission, vision, and value statements were intentionally broad, covering the library's overarching focus as opposed to specifics. She noted that within the strategic planning committee's proposed revisions, the mission and vision statements received the most notable updates while the core values received a light refresh.

Underwood asked how the committee settled on the phrase “We provide superior service” in the proposed core values. He clarified that the word “superior” felt like a comparative or competitive word that did not fit with the library’s function. Sims agreed that a different word choice could fit better. Neal, who served as the board’s liaison to the strategic planning committee, said that the phrase was originally “We provide superior customer service”. She said the committee did not examine the word “superior” in as much depth since they were focused on removing the word “customer”. Neal suggested “excellent” or “exceptional” as alternatives to “superior”, and the board concurred. Chase said that she would take the suggestion to the strategic planning committee and present a revised proposal to the board in December.

In closing, Chase said that next steps in the strategic planning process included self-directed engagement opportunities for the rest of 2024, additional community engagement sessions in January 2025, and staff engagement sessions. She said her team hoped to present the complete strategic plan to the board in April or May 2025.

2. African American Civil War Sculpture Project Update

Coulter introduced Bobby Roberts, former Executive Director of CALS, to update the board on the efforts to create a statue commemorating African American soldiers who fought for the Union during the Civil War, including approximately 5,600 soldiers from Arkansas. Roberts shared that the sculpture committee chose Vinnie Bagwell, an African American artist from New York, to complete the sculpture. He said that the committee had a site for the sculpture in mind and that Ronnie Nichols, a Civil War re-enactor and Arkansas native, will serve as the model for the statue. CALS put up \$150K for the statue, with an additional estimated \$75K needed for ancillary costs, which Roberts said would be raised by the sculpture committee with Borné’s input. Roberts said he hoped the sculpture would be completed in time for Main Library’s reopening.

Neal thanked Roberts and the sculpture committee for their work on the project, sharing that her ancestor had been a Union soldier from Arkansas. McDaniel and Christ also voiced their appreciation for Roberts and the project as a whole. Thompson added that he expected the sculpture to be a big draw for the community.

3. Director’s Report

Coulter highlighted a few items from his written report:

- **Jacksonville Health and Wellness Fair:** Coulter asked Beadle to update the Board on the Jacksonville Health and Wellness Fair hosted at the Nixon branch. Beadle said that the event was a success, with over one hundred participants. She noted that the area has limited resources, so the Fair helped to connect members of the community with resources and programming at the Nixon branch. She added that the Windgate Foundation provided funding for the event.

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- **Six Bridges Book Festival:** Coulter invited Samples and Borné to discuss the recent Six Bridges Book Festival. Samples called this year's Festival a success, noting that this year saw the highest number of Writers in the Schools visits. Borné mentioned receiving great feedback from the attendees, with praise for the moderators and for the staggered sessions. This year's participation surpassed 2023 participation.
 - **Matt Kouri:** Coulter introduced Matt Kouri from Good Works Strategic Advisors, who will be working with staff in the coming months to strengthen the library's internal organization. Kouri thanked Coulter and the Board, noting his previous work in Little Rock with Our House. He said he looked forward to working with CALS staff to assess the efficiencies within the organization.
4. **Other:** In response to a question from Sims, Borné updated the Board on the CALS Foundation's Giving Tuesday plans. Borné hoped the CALS Foundation's year-end fundraising campaign, including Giving Tuesday, would raise between \$80,000 and \$100,000 through its direct mail appeal, social media promotion, and email campaign. Polly Deems updated the Board on November's Used Book Sale, which will be held November 14-16, 2024. Coulter recognized two employees prior to their last day with CALS. Candace White has served as CALS HR Manager for seven years. She is leaving CALS to travel and explore new opportunities. Mark Christ is retiring after six years of service to CALS as the Head of Adult Programming. Lee updated the Board on The Day of the Dead celebrations on November 1, which will include a parade and food trucks. Spencer noted an optional tour of Main at the conclusion of the meeting. McAdoo noted that there would be no November meeting, and the December meeting would take place on December 12, 2024, at noon at Williams Library.

5. Move to Adjourn

McAdoo called the meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

Stacey McAdoo

President



Secretary