

Library Advisory Board Minutes: February 13, 2024For Multnomah County Library Advisory Board

The Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB) met virtually on Tuesday, February 13, 2024. The meeting began at 5:04 pm.

Board members present were: Cassie Duprey, David Jarvis, Domiè Newton, Gabie Mbenza-Ngoma, Hazel Burke, Jade Chan, Kate Fleming, Kelsey Fong, Kristi Ketchum, Mabel Reed, Madison Riethman, Nikia Kae Solbjor, and Taryn Sauer.

Clare Wilkinson, Lizzie Martinez, and Megan Parrott were unavailable.

Staff members present were: Annie Lewis, deputy director; Carly Hollabaugh, project manager; Elizabeth O'Neill, library project management & program evaluation manager; Katie Shifley, finance and facilities manager; Johnette Easter, HR director; Kirby McCurtis, location services director; Maddelyn High, management analyst; Shani Fox, data analyst; Shawn Cunningham, director of communications and strategic initiatives; Sonja Ervin, equity and inclusion manager; and Vailey Oehlke, director of libraries.

WELCOME & CHECK-IN

Meeting attendees joined the virtual meeting either via video or phone and participated in a warm-up exercise in virtual breakout rooms.

BOARD BUSINESS

Meeting minutes for the January 9, 2024 meeting were approved.

LAB liaison Maddelyn High shared that longtime LAB member, Lizzie Martinez, is moving to ad-hoc status on the board; and that Danielle Pacifico-Cogan stepped down.

Committee updates:

- The Finance Committee had its last meeting on February 7, and will hold worksessions in March. The committee will bring a draft memo to the March LAB meeting for review, input, and approval.
- The Equity Committee is still forming, and is working to schedule a second meeting to narrow its focus.
- Membership Committee work will begin shortly. This recruitment cycle, there are two youth positions to fill (Hazel Burke and Mabel Reed are outgoing) and two regular positions (replacing Pacifico-Cogan and Martinez, whose term comes to an end in June).

LAB Co-Chair Megan Parrott offered to help coordinate an Everybody Reads book club for

interested LAB members. Several folks expressed interest, and High said she would pass names along to Parrott for follow-up. High also noted that invitations to this year's Everybody Reads author lecture will be sent soon via email. For folks who can't attend in person, the lecture is recorded by Literary Arts.

In response to a question about available formats for Everybody Reads selections, several Executive Management Team members shared how this process works with publishers, and that different rights/terms have to be negotiated for different formats like large print and digital formats. The availability of large print copies was raised as an equity issue. Library staff noted this, and shared that there are circulating large print copies of this year's selection, and that many folks choose to use audio or ebook formats if large print copies aren't available (the font size on ebook titles can be increased).

UPDATES FROM LIBRARY LEADERSHIP

Library Director Vailey Oehlke shared highlights from the Director's Report and recent systemwide updates, including:

- Reaching a few bond-related milestones – the Operations Center being fully operational, and pouring of the primary concrete slab at the new East County Library
- MCL's ranking of [7th highest Overdrive circulation](#) in the world! Because demand for digital materials continues to increase (starting sharply during the early pandemic), and the library has to rent and cannot purchase digital content, this issue is a consideration for the library's collections budget.
- Submission of the library's draft Fiscal Year 2025 budget

Various staff members also highlighted upcoming events — in particular, a Lunar New Year celebration at Gresham Library; and Black History Month programming all month long.

PATRON SURVEY

Three staff members from the library's Office of Project Management & Program Evaluation (OPME) team — Elizabeth O'Neill (manager), Shani Fox (data analyst), and Carly Hollabaugh (research evaluation analyst) — joined the meeting and introduced themselves.

OPME staff gave an overview of their team's work, which includes project management; data management, analysis, & reporting; evaluation; systems strategy; and more. This team's work is governed by library executives and guided by a racial equity prioritization process that helps MCL prioritize and align different systemwide projects. Currently, OPME team members are coordinating over 60 systemwide projects.

The team also shared some context and history about the library's existing patron survey, which has been conducted almost every year since 1999. The survey is designed to take the pulse of library users and to gauge user satisfaction. As it's currently structured (10 questions), the survey allows MCL to track trends over time, but there is room to improve for richer data collection and to make survey feedback more actionable. Based on analysis of the most recent patron survey, OPME is working on a redesign and new approach for the survey — splitting the survey into two

types (one more broad and quantitative, and one more focused and qualitative). The idea is that each type of survey will be conducted and analyzed in alternate years. Adding a qualitative component will allow the library to collect stories to better understand the library's impact (the "how" and the "why").

O'Neill invited LAB into the survey design process, outlining a plan for involvement, including advice on new and different avenues for survey outreach; helping to provide and influence content; and testing the survey tool. Partnering with LAB will allow library staff to bring patron voice into the survey design process. Several folks volunteered to be further involved in this work (Nikia Kae Solbjor, Taryn Sauer, Kristi Ketchum, Gabie Mbenza-Ngoma, Kate Flemming, and Clare Wilkinson). O'Neill will reach out to this group of LAB members separately, and as the redesign project progresses, information will be shared back with the entire board.

Oehlke noted that OPME is a newer library work team, one that brings the expertise needed to help get the best results from the patron survey. This team is fairly unique in terms of public library systems, and Oehlke shared appreciation for their work and for the impact it will undoubtedly have. Oehlke also thanked LAB members who are able to dedicate additional time to support this project. The new survey is expected to launch in 2025.

ACTION ITEMS + CLOSING

The meeting adjourned at 6:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Maddelyn High, director's assistant
Multnomah County Library, Oregon