

Meeting of the Muscogee County Library Board
December 5, 2023 – 11:00 am
Columbus Public Library – Meredith Jarrell Conference Room

Members in Attendance:
Darcy Brito, Chair
LaRae Dixon Moore, VC
Todd Robinson, Secretary
Susan Berry
Sebastian Cahill
Denise Eckley
SirMichael Jones
Reggie Lewis
Beth Schwartz
Marion Scott
Tavanasha Shephard
Judy Barnett
Teasha Hollis

Also, in Attendance:
Alan Harkness, Director, CVL (Chattahoochee Valley Libraries)
Gabriel Lundeen, Deputy Director, CVL
Tracie Price, Finance/HR, CVL
Gabbi Harp, Operations Coordinator
Katie Burnett, CPL Branch Manager
Amber Brookins, Materials/Statistics Coordinator
Martha Powers-Jones, Adult Services Coordinator
Laura Ann Mann, Exe, Director of MCLF
Lizette Cruz, Administrative Specialist

- I. Call to Order - Chair Brito, called the meeting to order at 11:03 am.
- II. **Approval of the June 12, 2023, minutes.** Chair Brito asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 12, 2023, meeting. Robinson moved to approve the minutes. Motion was seconded by Eckley. Motion was approved unanimously by Brito, Dixon Moore, Berry, Cahill, Eckley, Jones, Lewis, Robinson, Scott, Shephard, Barnett, Hollis, and Schwartz.
- III. Public Comment - There was no public comment.
- IV. Muscogee County Library Foundation
Laura Ann Mann gave the Muscogee County Library Foundation update. This year's Cocktails & Comedy Fundraiser with Comedian Damon Sumner that took place in November, raised \$65,000.00. She thanked everyone who contributed to its success.

The next event hosted by the Foundation will be the Gala on January 31, 2024. Earlier that day at 1PM there will be a public author's appearance. Nina Simon, author of *Mother-Daughter Murder Night*, is traveling to Columbus at no cost to the Foundation. The Foundation will be hosting another public author's appearance on February 22, 2024, again at no cost to the Foundation. Author DéLana R.A. Dameron, author of *Redwood Court* will be appearing that day. In April, the Foundation will host a ticketed author appearance event. More information will be forthcoming.

The Friends of the Library committee hosted an end of yearbook sale this past weekend. The store made \$1,846.87 and the sale in Synovus A & B made \$3,403.51 for a total of \$5,250.38 raised. The next Friends book sale will be in February. The Foundation is currently running their end of the year letter writing campaign. They have raised \$37,000.00 so far and hope to raise about \$120,000.00 total. An unsolicited gift of \$50,000.00 was given to the South Columbus Public Library renovation project.

V. Treasurer's Report

Tracie Price covered the FY24 Period 4 financials which ended on October 31, 2023. Revenue is trending on target and expenditures are trending little low, but this cushion is built into the budget on purpose to account for any unexpected expenditures. There were no questions.

VI. Director's Report

Director Harkness introduced the new Adult Services Coordinator for the Columbus Public Library. Director Harkness informed the board of the retirement of Silvia Bunn from the MLTPL after 24 years of service. Deputy Director Gabriel Lundeen will be interim branch manager until the right candidate is found. It was suggested the library board write her a letter of recognition for her service.

Director Harkness recognized and thanked the board members rolling of the board this year, LaRae Moore, Sebastian Cahill, Marion Scott and Tavanasha Shephard. He then went over the dashboard for October 2023.

The CVL is applying for a crime prevention grant for SCPL. Some discussion was had on providing more detailed information about crime for the grant. Reggie Lewis has some statistics that might be helpful to include. He will forward that information to Director Harkness.

The foundation has raised over \$300,000 for the matching grant from the Bradley Turner Foundation Challenge grant. To get the match the library must raise 1 million. The Columbus Public Library received an estimate for replacing the failing geothermal heating system. The estimate is for \$650,000.00 but experience dictates that it will probably be much more than that amount.

VII. Branch Report

Deputy Director Gabriel Lundeen shared some patron comments. LENA Start has graduated their first Spanish speaking class in collaboration with Our Lady of Lourdes. 9 families graduated, there was a 42% growth in adult words, %15 growth in conversational turns and %12 growth in reading time with their children. These families were also shown all of the resources at the library to continue the growth with their children.

This past month across the CVL children's' departments there were 15 outreach events. There is also an increase in requests from schools and programs for outreach events. He then presented a slide show of the continuing construction at South. Construction is set to be finished by the beginning of summer.

VIII. Unfinished Business – None

IX. New Business

i. **Vote on candidates to fill 4 vacant positions coming up 2024.**

After some significant discussion, Beth Schwartz made a motion to elect Jennifer St. John, Dahmon H. King, and Mary Angela McMurphy to the Muscogee County Library to begin their terms in January after they are presented to the Muscogee County School Board at the next school meeting. Denise Eckley seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously by Brito, Dixon Moore, Berry, Cahill, Eckley, Jones, Lewis, Robinson, Scott, Shephard, Barnett, Hollis, and Schwartz. The board decided to find other candidates to recommend for the 4th open

slot and vote on those later.

ii. Vote to approve closure of the Columbus Public Library on January 31st for the Foundation Gala.

Teasha Hollis made a motion to approve the closure. Reggie Lewis seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously by Brito, Dixon Moore, Berry, Cahill, Eckley, Jones, Lewis, Robinson, Scott, Shephard, Barnett, Hollis, and Schwartz.

iii. Vote for approval of updated job descriptions:

Todd Robinson made a motion to approve the changes to the following updated job descriptions; Branch Manger I, Branch Manager II, Building Mechanic I, Deputy Director, Director, Finance and Human Resources Coordinator. Reggie Lewis seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously by Brito, Dixon Moore, Berry, Cahill, Eckley, Jones, Lewis, Robinson, Scott, Shephard, Barnett, Hollis, and Schwartz.

iv. Vote on ESPLIT recommendations

After significant discussion Denise Eckley made a motion to accept the ESPLIT recommended request after raising the amount to request for the future construction of a new North Columbus Public Library by two million to factor in the expected 10% raising costs of construction over the next 2 to 4 years. Beth Schwartz seconded the motion. Motion was approved with twelve yays by Brito, Dixon Moore, Berry, Cahill, Eckley, Lewis, Robinson, Scott, Shephard, Barnett, Hollis, and Schwartz. Jones voted nay.

v. Vote to add item to agenda

Chair Darcy Brito asked for a motion to add the following item to the agenda; Nominate and vote on board to fill the vacant officer seats of Vice Chair and Treasurer since the present vice chair and treasurer are rolling of the board. Beth Schwartz made a motion to add this item to the agenda, and Dixon Moore seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously by Brito, Dixon Moore, Berry, Cahill, Eckley, Jones, Lewis, Robinson, Scott, Shephard, Barnett, Hollis, and Schwartz.

vi. Vote on candidate to fill vacant officer positions on the Muscogee County Library Board.

After some discussion, Chair Darcy Brito made a motion to elect Denise Eckley Treasurer of the Muscogee County Library Board. Reggie Lewis seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously by Brito, Dixon Moore, Berry, Cahill, Eckley, Jones, Lewis, Robinson, Scott, Shephard, Barnett, Hollis, and Schwartz. Election of a new vice chair was postponed until January.

X. Chair's Report – Chair Brito did not have anything to report.

Next meeting is set for January 8, 2024, at 11 AM. Location:
Columbus Public Library.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:23 PM

