

THE LIBRARY BOARD MEETING

Library of Virginia

April 12, 2021

The Library Board met electronically on Monday, April 12, 2021, via Zoom Internet Conferencing and the LVA YouTube channel live broadcast.

I. CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME/QUORUM

L. Preston Bryant Jr., chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., and confirmed that a quorum of Board members were present after taking attendance.

The following members were in attendance:

L. Preston Bryant Jr., *chair*
Kathy Johnson Bowles, *vice chair*
Laura L. L. Blevins
Paul Brockwell Jr.
Maya Castillo
Mohammed Esslami
R. Chambliss Light Jr.
Barbara Vines Little
Mark Miller
Shelley Viola Murphy
Blythe Ann Scott
Leonard C. Tengco

Board members Robert Aguirre and Marcy Sims were absent. Mr. Bryant welcomed the Board members, Board Counsel Audrey Burges, Librarian of Virginia Sandra Treadway, Library staff and Pia Trigiani, president of the Library Foundation Board, to the Zoom internet conferencing meeting.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Bryant announced that there was a change to the printed agenda; the vote on the adoption of the revised Planning for Library Excellence standards document would need to be tabled until the June Board meeting. Mr. Bryant asked for a motion to approve the amended meeting agenda. A motion to approve the amended agenda was made by R. Chambliss Light Jr., seconded by Paul Brockwell Jr., and was approved unanimously by roll call vote.

III. APPROVAL OF THE LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES OF JANUARY 11, 2021 BOARD MEETING.

Mr. Bryant asked if there were any amendments to the minutes from the January 11, 2021, Board meeting. Mr. Brockwell noted that the reference to the Court Records Project (CCP) needed to be corrected to Circuit Courts Records Preservation Program (CCRP) under the Legislative and Finance Committee section. Mr. Bryant then asked for

a motion to approve the amended minutes as suggested. Mr. Brockwell moved to approve the amended minutes, and Mark Miller seconded the motion. The January 11, 2021, Board amended meeting minutes were approved unanimously following a roll call vote.

IV. COMMITTEE AND DIVISION REPORTS

- **Archival, Collections, and Records Management Services Committee**

Archival, Collections, and Records Management Services Committee Chair Barbara Vines Little began by asking Deputy Director for Collections and Programs John Metz to give an update on the diseased microfilm project. Dr. Metz briefed the Board in significant detail on the history and current status of the diseased microfilm, the many challenges presented by the current staffing levels, the rate of deterioration of some of the acetate film, the number of items requiring duplication, and ongoing research into best practices to remediate the situation. After the conclusion of his report, Ms. Little said that there would be a meeting of key staff working on this project and any interested Board members in the near future to identify the work flows and resources that would be needed to identify all the compromised film and replace it. Mr. Bryant thanked Dr. Metz and Ms. Little, and reminded the Board that this has been a long-standing issue for which funding has been previously requested and likely will be again.

- **Education, Outreach, and Research Services Committee**

Mr. Bryant invited Education, Outreach, and Research Services Committee Chair Kathy Johnson Bowles to give the committee report. Referring to the metrics provided in the Board packet, Ms. Bowles praised the staff's successful efforts to increase outreach to the public as reflected by increasing engagement numbers. She emphasized the importance of continuing to expand and improve our digital content, access, and user experience. Through a new interface on the Library's website and a new content management system called Libguides, the Library now provides access to forty-eight database subscriptions and 140 research guides and indexes via the Library's website. Ms. Bowles also commended the staff on the Asian Pacific Islander Desi-American Project and expressed her appreciation for the Library's commitment to increasing representation of underrepresented communities in its work, building on the outreach efforts of the New Virginians program to engage new groups of stakeholders.

- **Legislative and Finance Committee**

Legislative and Finance Committee Chair R. Chambliss Light Jr. welcomed Director of Administration and Finance Connie Warne. Ms. Warne reviewed the financial reports provided to the Board in the meeting packet and stated that the Library's spending was on track with where the Library historically is at this point in the fiscal year. Mr. Miller inquired about the recently increased fees collected for the CCRP and when the Library would see those fees reflected in the financial statement. Ms. Warne explained that the increased revenue currently being collected would not be reflected in the budget and

expenditure reports until the coming fiscal year beginning in July 2021. Mr. Light asked for clarification on the \$200,000 outstanding CCRP funds in the current fiscal year yet to be distributed. Ms. Warne confirmed that those funds had been awarded but not distributed as the conservation work had not yet been completed.

- **Public Library Development Committee**

Public Library Development Committee Chair Mark Miller stated that the committee would like to postpone a vote on the revised *Planning for Library Excellence* (PFLE) standards document until the June meeting of the Board to give the committee the opportunity to meet and review the revisions. Mr. Miller then reported on a meeting that he, Library Development and Networking Director Nan Carmack, and Public Library Consultant Kim Armentrout, had with a small group of library directors and Virginia Library Association leadership to begin a discussion on the State Aid formula and whether it might be appropriate to seek a Joint Legislative Audit Review Committee (JLARC) study. The State Aid formula currently used to determine the allocation of funding to local libraries is decades old. Virginia's demographics and other key factors have changed dramatically, and he would like JLARC to evaluate whether the current formula needs to be updated to distribute funds differently to help local libraries with greater financial need. He will be calling a meeting of the full Public Library Development Committee soon to discuss this in greater depth.

Dr. Carmack reported that the PFLE standards updates were approved last year, however, those updates had failed to take into consideration diversity, equity, inclusion, and access language as standards for public libraries. The current draft reflects those updates and have been affirmed by Virginia's public library directors at their meeting on April 8. Dr. Carmack then reported on the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds that the Library of Virginia is distributing to Virginia library systems. Using statewide data, the Library has allocated the CARES Act funds to those local libraries who are in areas with low broadband connectivity and high unemployment and poverty levels. All the grants to selected public libraries have been allocated and the Library is working with local library directors to ensure proper expenditure of the funds. Dr. Carmack shared some examples of how those funds are being spent: the Petersburg Public Library is equipping their public transportation with wi-fi so buses across the city offer mobile internet access points for riders, and the Lonesome Pine Regional Library system has invested in a bookmobile which also provides a wi-fi hotspot accessible through the bookmobile routes throughout the communities. The Library has also received almost \$3.8 million in ARPA funds, which, Dr. Carmack noted, will present a challenge to libraries to expend within the parameters and time frame allowed, September 2022. However, Library Development staff are working closely with stakeholders to identify the best ways to spend those funds with an eye towards their specific needs.

Public Library Consultant Kim Armentrout reviewed the list of upcoming waivers to be voted on at the June Board meeting. Unsurprisingly, due to the COVID-19 closures last year, many library systems experienced general decreases in expenditures. Ms.

Armentrout first discussed the technical waivers, which recognize the normal fluctuations that come with the regular business cycle (one time expenditures, computers purchases, HVAC upgrades, staff vacancies, and the like). These drops in expenditures also include staff resignations, furloughs, layoffs, and procurement supply chain issues. Currently there are no expected non-technical waivers, which are generally waivers related to around serious budget cuts. There are two libraries on the list of Failure to Meet 50% of the Median local per capita support, Massanutten Regional Library and J. Robert Jamerson Memorial Library. These libraries were also hit hard by COVID-19 closures, which made meeting their plan goals impossible. Both libraries are also experiencing transitions in leadership. Ms. Armentrout indicated that her recommendation to the Board in June would be for these two libraries to develop new spending plans, along with issuing warning letters to both libraries and their localities to make them aware that this is a recurring problem. Two local libraries fall under the Failure to Meet Two-Thirds From Taxation category, Highland and Northumberland. The calculation for State Aid was revised two years ago to disallow common governmental funds from the expenditure calculations. We recommend that these two libraries be given until next year to adjust to the new expenditure reporting and then be re-evaluated.

Ms. Armentrout wrapped up her report by sharing that the Library was very fortunate this past year to see an increase in State Aid funding approved by the General Assembly. She acknowledged the hard work of the Virginia Library Association in advocating for these additional funds. In November the General Assembly released an additional \$1 million for public libraries that had already been appropriated but which had been on hold. The other frozen part of that biennial budget was an additional \$1 million for 2022 and beyond. State Aid is currently funded at a little more than \$18 million and distribution of the funds will begin July 1st. At the June Board meeting the allocations of these funds will be put before the Board for approval. Mr. Bryant shared that the ARPA requires localities to have spent these funds by September 2022, which as Ms. Armentrout noted presents some challenges to the localities. The Library of Virginia is working with localities on how they may make best use of these funds within the time and parameters outlined in the legislation.

- **Report of the Foundation**

Mr. Bryant asked Library Foundation Board President Pia Trigiani and Foundation Executive Director Scott Dodson for their report. Ms. Trigiani thanked everyone for all they do for the Library. Reflecting briefly on her own fond memories of bookmobile excursions growing up, she suggested it might be a worthwhile project to highlight the first bookmobile driver – a feature, for example, on James Barner who drove the first bookmobile in Big Stone Gap in Wise County. She also shared that the Library Foundation Board is in the process of concluding work with a consulting firm, The Curtis Group, which has been helping the Foundation evaluate its staffing and overall fundraising capacity. One of the key strategies they are looking at is working more closely with Library staff to identify projects that which will lend themselves to targeted fund raising sponsorship with patrons and donors. The Foundation added a staff member to help with grant writing which will provide time and expertise to work on funding these

special projects. One of the most important events on the horizon of course is to celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the Library in 2023 and Ms. Trigiani looks forward to the collaboration of both boards in a conversation on how best to celebrate the Library's bi-centennial.

Mr. Dodson shared that things are looking promising for the Foundation in their fundraising and donor expansion even though this past year was a bit of a hiccup for all the reasons one could imagine. The Foundation is currently about 10 percent ahead in unrestricted giving for the year and about 55 percent ahead in restricted giving. The Foundation's endowment currently stands at about \$4.5 million, which reflects positive market conditions over the last few months that have provided close to a \$900,000 increase from where the endowment stood end of the fiscal year in June 2020. He confirmed what Ms. Trigiani had already shared about adding Foundation staff who round out their fund raising expertise and increase their bandwidth. Currently the Foundation has about \$200,000 to \$225,000 outstanding proposals they are waiting to hear about and are entering hitting the fourth quarter of the fiscal year with several direct asks and appeals going out soon. He also shared that Library Board members could expect to be hearing from him or other Board members soon in order to help the Foundation reach its 100 percent participation goal by both boards as well as help with special projects.

Mr. Dodson noted a 15 percent increase in the Foundation's donor base this year, in part because of they have been more proactive in reaching out to Library patrons. He thanked and encouraged everyone on both boards for their efforts to advocate on behalf of the Library with their peers, networks, and communities. In closing he encouraged all to check out the Virginia Shop. Courtney Bryce, the new retail operations manager has been doing amazing work by bringing in unique produces produced by Virginia artists and artisans.

- **Nominating Committee**

Mr. Bryant invited Blythe Scott to provide an update to the Board from the Nominating Committee. Ms. Scott reported that the Nominating Committee did not yet have a slate of nominees to present to the Board. She is working with Dr. Treadway as well as reaching out to the Secretary of the Commonwealth's office about the six Board positions – three whose terms expired on June 30, 2020, and three that will expire at the end of June 2021 – that have yet to be named or reappointed. She plans on meeting with Nominating Committee members prior to the June Board meeting and intends to have a slate of proposed officers for the Board to review before that meeting.

- **Report of the Librarian**

Dr. Treadway expressed the hope that, with pandemic conditions beginning to subside, we would be able to see Board members again in person in the coming months. She shared that in addition to the increase in State Aid provided by the General Assembly, the Library was pleased to receive funding for three additional positions in State Records devoted to the processing of gubernatorial records. She reminded the Board that the new

funding for State Aid, while important, still falls far short of the \$27 million that libraries would receive if the formula was fully funded, so there is still a lot of work to do to close that gap. She also noted that the General Assembly approved a 5 percent pay increase for state employees. Finally, she mentioned legislation requires all state agencies to create a strategic diversity, equity and inclusion plan, which the Library has begun work on. The state has provided templates and guidelines to ensure that the plans that are developed will align with the administration's priorities.

The patron reservation system being used to schedule patron's research on site is continuing to go well. Dr. Treadway noted that the Library of Congress was not yet open to the public and many other state archives still aren't open to researchers, so those coming in to use the Library of Virginia's resources have been appreciative of access and have been cooperating with all COVID-19 requirements. She expressed the hope that we will soon be able to fill some vacancies in our public services area and that Mr. Kimball and his team are in discussion about when we might be able to add additional service days and hours as we look forward. Most Library staff have either been vaccinated or will be getting vaccinated soon, which we anticipate will be very helpful. Dr. Treadway confirmed what Mr. Bryant had previously commented on about ARPA funds which must be expended by September 2022, creating a challenge for localities within the parameters and time frame allowed by the legislation. As these funds come through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), IMLS is being very helpful and as flexible as they can with the parameters Congress has set for them. The Library will also be working closely with IMLS this coming year as it is time for IMLS to make a periodic site visit to assess how the Library is administering the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) program. The site visit will be partly virtual this year and then in person later in the year.

Dr. Treadway then announced that State Archivist Mike Strom would be leaving the Library to become the State Librarian of Nevada. She wished him much success in his new role and invited him to say a few words. Mr. Strom thanked the Board for their support of the archives program and said that he was glad for the opportunity to have been a part of their successes while he was here and wished all the best. Mr. Bryant thanked Mr. Strom for the great work he has done and wished him success in his new position.

Dr. Treadway shared in closing that Governor Northam personally called to thank each person on the team that processed former Governor Wilder's papers this past year, and she drew everyone's attention to a press release in the Board packet issued in February by the Governor's Office acknowledging by name each Library staff member who provided documents, images, and other research assistance for the second published report on systemic bias in Virginia law. Dr. Treadway expressed how appreciative she is that the Governor knows and values what the Library of Virginia is doing and that he has taken time to say thank you.

- **Report of the Chair**

Mr. Bryant thanked the Library leadership and staff for their continued work to serve the public under these challenging pandemic conditions and also thanked the Foundation leadership and staff for all that they continue to do.

Mr. Bryant remarked that the planning for the addition to the State Records Center continues, and that the Library is working closely with the Department of General Services to move this important capital project forward. He acknowledged with appreciation the Governor and his team for also having supported and retained the funding for that and the General Assembly for having approved it in this past legislative session. In closing, Mr. Bryant noted that the next Board meeting would be June 28, 2021, where the Board would be electing a new Board Chair and Vice Chair and that the Nominating Committee would be meeting some time before then to put forward a proposed slate of officers. He assured the Board they would be notified of the committee's recommendations well in advance of the June meeting.

V. OLD OR NEW BUSINESS

None.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business put forward, Mr. Bryant adjourned the meeting at 11:07 a.m.