

## THE LIBRARY BOARD MEETING

Library of Virginia

September 14, 2020

The Library Board met electronically on Monday, September 14, 2020, 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 immediately took an attendance roll call of the Board.

The following members were in attendance:

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

Mr. Bryant noted that a quorum of the Library Board was present and commented that Board member Robert D. Aguirre would be joining the meeting later.

Mr. Bryant welcomed the Board members and all present on the Zoom internet conferencing meeting.

### II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Bryant asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda. A motion to approve was made by R. Chambliss Light Jr., seconded by Kathy Johnson Bowles, and the agenda was approved unanimously.

### III. APPROVAL OF THE LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES OF JUNE 26, 2020 BOARD MEETING.

then asked if there were any amendments to the minutes from the June 26, 2020 meeting. As none were offered, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Laura L. L. Blevins moved to approve the minutes, and Mark Miller seconded the motion. The June 26, 2020 Board meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

#### IV. COMMITTEE AND DIVISION REPORTS

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

Archival, Collections, and Records Management Services Committee Chair Barbara Vines Little began her report by expressing her delight that the Library of Virginia has joined FamilySearch as an affiliate library, which will make FamilySearch's vast array of digital genealogical resources available to Library patrons. She then highlighted the work that Ancestry has done to scan microfilm of the Library's early vital records to add to the modern records held by the Department of Vital Statistics that are already available through Ancestry.com. She stated that the work appears to be on track to have all of the Library's vital records online by September 2021. She also complimented the Circuit Court Records Program staff for their continued indexing of chancery records during the pandemic and for transcription approval work completed by teleworking staff, which have made records stored in our collection much more accessible. Ms. Little then invited State Archivist Mike Strom to update the Board on the progress being made with the processing and releasing of the gubernatorial records of former Governor Douglas Wilder. As of September 14, 46 percent of the records have been processed; with the additional staff assigned to the project from other departments in the Library, Mr. Strom reported his confidence that the collection will be completed and made available to the public by January 1, 2021. He stated that he is also keeping Governor Wilder's staff regularly updated about the progress the Library is making.

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

Next, Mr. Bryant invited Kathy Johnson Bowles, chair of the Education, Outreach, and Research Services Committee, to give the committee report. Ms. Bowles commended the Library staff for their work, dedication and flexibility in being able to shift quickly from in-person to online programming to engage with our audiences during the pandemic. She specifically called out the online 2020 genealogical workshop series, which covers topics such as using census records, finding female ancestors, identifying maps that may be helpful in genealogical research, and locating African American ancestors in records from 1865 to 1880. Ms. Bowles made special note of the work that has gone into the current *We Demand: Women's Suffrage in Virginia* exhibition, which commemorates the 100th anniversary of woman's suffrage with the passage of Nineteenth Amendment. While the exhibition is again open to the public, she encouraged all to watch the videos the staff have made about the exhibition that highlight some of the lesser-known aspects of the women's suffrage movement in Virginia, in particular the role of women of color in the movement. She also reported that with libraries and other venues across the Commonwealth reopening, several of the Library's traveling exhibitions were back on the road.

Ms. Bowles reported that the Library had been able to resume its interlibrary loan program now that libraries through which we loan and borrow material had reopened. Though the Library has reopened to the public there are still many patrons not able to

come physically for research and the Library has seen a 35 percent increase in written requests for research assistance compared to 2019. Ms. Bowles stated that the Reference staff have been going above and beyond by conducting more in-depth research than normal to accommodate remote customers.

Ms. Bowles invited Gregg Kimball, Public Services and Outreach Division director, to share some programming highlights. Mr. Kimball reported on this year's *Datathon* which the Library is cosponsoring with the Commonwealth's Chief Data Officer, Carlos Rivero. This will be a completely virtual and live-streamed event with over thirty teams. The focus will be working with open data to develop innovative solutions to assist communities during the coronavirus pandemic. Mr. Kimball invited Education and Outreach Manager Catherine Fitzgerald Wyatt to speak about several other upcoming programs. Ms. Fitzgerald Wyatt shared information about the development of additional online content tied to our current exhibition and about a webinar presented by David Rencher of FamilySearch in honor of the Library's new status as a FamilySearch affiliate library. She also reported on the 11th Annual Anne and Ryland Brown Teacher's Institute, which was totally virtual this year and had forty participants. The keynote address was given by Dr. Hasan Kwame Jeffries from Ohio State University, who has developed a framework for teaching about slavery in K-12 classrooms. In his presentation, he and co-presenter Chris Matthews, a fourth grade teacher from the Norfolk public schools, discussed the challenges in teaching this difficult subject. Other presenters discussed the Reconstruction and Jim Crow eras, segregation, and the history of Danville, Virginia.

- **Legislative and Finance Committee**

Legislative and Finance Committee Chair R. Chambliss Light Jr. invited Librarian of Virginia Sandra Treadway to review the financial reports in the Board packet as Deputy for Administration Connie Warne was not able to attend the meeting. Dr. Treadway relayed that the Library closed out the fiscal year that ended on June 30 on track. In reviewing the current year's budget and expenditures, Dr. Treadway commented that as usual the expenditures for July appear high as they include the one-time annual payment of rent to the Department of General Services and the issuance of the first quarter state aid payment to Virginia public libraries. This year's budget information also reflects funds removed from the approved budget as passed in April by the General Assembly. These un-allotted funds were a result of the economic impact of the pandemic based on projected revenue shortfalls. The Library's appropriation was reduced by \$1 million in state aid to local libraries and \$400,000 requested for the processing of gubernatorial records.

Mr. Light then turned to the one action item from the Legislative and Finance Committee, approval of the 2020-2021 Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant budget. Dr. Treadway gave an overview on the history of the LSTA grant for new Board members and stated its primary purpose was to support statewide library services. The funds are distributed to each state based on population, and the funding is dependent upon annual appropriations from Congress. The federal funding year is from October 1 to

the end of the following September, and this year's grant to Virginia is a little over four million dollars. After brief discussion, Mr. Light asked for clarification of the voting procedure for the electronic meeting. Audrey Burges, assistant attorney general, confirmed that all voting in the electronic meeting must be by roll call vote, but indicated that Mr. Bryant could confirm the unanimous approval of the earlier votes taken today by a verbal confirmation now. Mr. Bryant asked for a verbal confirmation by the Board members present on both the approval of the agenda for today's Board meeting and the minutes of the June 26, 2020 meeting, which were both verbally confirmed as approved unanimously. Mr. Bryant then took a roll call vote to approve the LSTA Grant Budget, which was approved unanimously. Absent from the meeting and vote at this time were Board members Robert D. Aguirre and Leonard C. Tengco.

- **Public Library Development Committee**

Public Library Development Committee Chair Mark Miller expressed his enthusiasm for leading this committee for the coming year and shared with the Board some of the topics relating to the certification of librarians and to the state aid formula that he hopes the committee might explore. Mr. Miller then asked Library Development and Networking Division Director Nan Carmack to update the Board on the Library's distribution of funds for libraries received through the CARES Act.

Dr. Carmack reported that Virginia received \$770,000 for public libraries through the CARES Act. To qualify for these funds a library must be located in an area that has high poverty, high unemployment, and low broadband accessibility. The top three regions that met these criteria were southern Virginia, southwestern Virginia, and parts of the Eastern Shore. Twenty libraries met one to three of the grant criteria; all but two have submitted grant applications which are in process. Dr. Carmack provided examples of how some localities were utilizing these funds to meet constituent needs, including purchasing vehicles to provide mobile internet access points, providing hotspots and chrome books to students and loaning laptops to the public, and installing lockers with wifi connectivity in various locations without internet service to boost availability. These solutions are temporary band-aids to help citizens during the public health emergency and underscore the significant inequity of broadband access for many across Virginia. As the grant funds have to be expended by September 30, 2020, sustainability of programs is of concern, and libraries will be looking at writing new grants and finding community partners to continue some services once the federal funding runs out.

Mr. Miller commented that this heightens the urgency to reevaluate the formula used for allocating state aid. The current formula distributes funds to localities based on population rather than factoring in economic need. He also mentioned that the American Library Association is looking at working with the U.S. Department of Defense to provide telehealth options for veterans via libraries as veterans living in rural areas often lack internet access. Dr. Carmack wrapped up her report stating that the Library is also working towards a collaborative model with the Virginia Workforce Development Board, the Virginia Employment Commission and the Small Business Development Center to

help meet the needs of the many people who are or will be looking to find jobs due to the economic impact of the pandemic. Libraries are a crucial hub for that support.

- **Report of the Foundation**

Mr. Bryant asked Foundation Executive Director Scott Dodson to speak next. Mr. Dodson noted he had just celebrated his one year anniversary at the Foundation and congratulated the Library Board for reaching 100 percent participation with the Foundation's annual fund. Being able to show that commitment by the Board to prospective donors goes a long way in supporting fundraising efforts. He reported the Foundation ended the past year with a slight deficit due to fluctuations in the market late in June, but the market has recovered since then and has been positively impacting the Foundation's investments. Fundraising efforts are going well to date, showing significant improvement from the same time period last year. Because of those positive trends the Foundation has been able to increase program funding as well as make strategic investments in Foundation work. In addition to increasing funding of current programs, the Foundation is looking to seek funding targeted for specific projects. An example of this is the current work with the Collections team to raise funds to conserve and digitize all the Jefferson Hotel architectural drawings.

Among the strategic investments the Foundation has made to increase its bandwidth for development are retaining the Curtis Group, a fundraising consulting firm out of Norfolk to help with building a state wide fundraising infrastructure; contracting with a grant writer to build our grant portfolio; and hiring a full time Assistant Director of Development, Elaine McFadden, who was the Director of Corporate & Foundation Giving at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture. The Foundation is also working with Library staff to raise funds for a digital studio to meet the growing need for high quality digital programming and to support a Diversity Fellowship and Internship program to attract people of color into positions in the library and archives field.

Mr. Dodson shared the Foundation is also working to support projects the Library would like to undertake in connection with the 50th Anniversary of Virginia's Constitution coming up next year and thanked Mr. Bryant for taking a leadership role in that endeavor. Mr. Dodson concluded his report by sharing an outline of the upcoming Literary Awards, which this year would be totally online. The event will take place over a five-day period and include three panels with the finalists, the Art in Literature: The Mary Lynn Kotz Award program, and the main Literary Awards evening on Saturday night, October 17, 2020, with featured speaker Douglas Brinkley, U.S. presidential historian and best-selling author. An additional feature throughout the five days of events will be short videos of selected Library staff to promote a broader understanding of all the Library does and the difference staff make in the lives of patrons through the work done here.

- **Report of the Librarian**

Mr. Bryant thanked Mr. Dodson and invited Librarian of Virginia Sandra Treadway to give her report. Dr. Treadway shared that the Library was still navigating the new normal and striving to find the right balance between virtual and in-person interaction, communication, and engagement with patrons. The focus continues to be on keeping staff and patrons safe. The current policies have been working well and she anticipates them continuing at least until the end of the year. Dr. Treadway commended the Library's Facilities and Housekeeping staff for their tireless efforts to keep the building clean and sanitized. She spoke briefly about the status of the budget being considered in the current special session of the General Assembly, expressing concern that the \$400,000 requested for the processing of backlogged gubernatorial records remains in the budget but just for this year. She invited Mr. Bryant to speak further on the budget and the 50th Anniversary of Virginia's Constitution.

- **Report of the Chair**

Mr. Bryant shared some highlights from the state budget shortfall and projections for the next eighteen months for the Commonwealth. If the House and Senate cannot come to a decision on the budget in the current special session, he stated that the budget will revert to what was passed in March earlier this year. Mr. Bryant then discussed the 50th Anniversary of Virginia's Constitution ratified in 1971, which will take place in 2021. The significant revisions to the 1902 constitution that took place in 1971 brought Virginia in line with passage of civil rights legislation at the national level. The Governor's Office has identified an informal working group of interested parties who are planning events to commemorate the anniversary. The group includes Virginia Humanities, University of Virginia law professor A. E. Dick Howard who was involved in drafting the 1971 constitution, and the Library of Virginia. Ideas being considered range from a Teacher's Institute, online exhibits, travelling exhibits, workshops with the State Bar Association, law school programs, and community engagement through public events.

Mr. Bryant then indicated the Board would be voting on two action items and explained the process and order they would be taking the roll call votes, who would be voting on which items and when, as outlined in the Library Board Bylaws. The committee assignments he had made for this year were before them in the Board Meeting packet and the first action item was to have the existing Executive Committee, consisting of Mr. Bryant, Ms. Bowles, Ms. Scott, and Mr. Light, nominate the proposed slate of Nominating Committee members, which Mr. Bryant recommended consist as follows:

Blythe Ann Scott, Chair  
Marcy Sims  
Mohammed Esslami  
Robert Aguirre  
Paul Brockwell

Mr. Bryant then asked members of the Executive Committee for a motion to approve the proposed slate of Nominating Committee members. Ms. Bowles made the motion and Mr. Light seconded the motion. A roll call vote was then taken of the four Executive Committee Members present, Mr. Bryant, Ms. Bowles, Ms. Scott, and Mr. Light; the motion passed unanimously.

Next, Mr. Bryant addressed the newly appointed Nominating Committee members for a motion to nominate the Board Officers and the three other board members proposed below as the slate for the Executive Committee:

L. Preston Bryant Jr., Chair  
Kathy Johnson Bowles, Vice Chair  
R. Chambliss Light Jr.  
Blythe Ann Scott  
Shelley Viola Murphy

Ms. Scott moved that the slate of officers and members of the Executive Committee be accepted as proposed and Mr. Esslami seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken of the entire Board. The motion was approved unanimously. Leonard Tengco did not vote as he had left the zoom meeting at the time of the roll call vote.

**V. OLD OR NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Bryant asked whether there was any old or new business to be discussed. Mr. Esslami inquired about the Bylaws Committee that he is chairing this year, and it was suggested that the Librarian's office send an electronic copy of the most recent Bylaws to all the Board members. Dr. Treadway also inquired as to whether there had been any comments or questions submitted from the public. Nancy Orr, executive assistant to the Librarian of Virginia, confirmed that there had been no inquiries or comments submitted from the public. Mr. Bryant suggested that the Library Board Bylaws be posted on the Library of Virginia's website as well.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Mr. Bryant thanked everyone for their dedication and attendance. He asked for a motion to adjourn, which was given by Mr. Brockwell and seconded by Ms. Scott. The motion to adjourn passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 11:38 a.m.