



MINUTES

ATTENDEES

Present at the meeting were: Board Members Viki Brown (President), Susan Kiefer (Vice President), Marta Tarantsey, and Kevin Keating. Marissa Barrientos Shepherd joined virtually at 4:13.

Additional attendees: Kari May (Library Director), Kelda Vath (Assistant Director, Support Services), Joan Vigil (Assistant Director, Public Services), Brynn Fogerty (HR Manager), Heather Scott (Finance Manager), Ryan Bradley (Marketing Manager), Hannah Harding (Legal Counsel), and Valor Nowak (Executive Assistant)

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

President Brown called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m. Roll call was taken, and the Land Acknowledgement read.

CONSENT AGENDA

Director Keating noted that a correction was needed to the fiscal year in the minutes for the June 26th work session.

MOTION: Director Kiefer moved to approve the items for the consent agenda as amended, and to approve the agenda. Director Tarantsey seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously. Resolution 2025-01: To Authorize Checking Account, Designated Personnel and Signers, and Resolution 2025-02: To Authorize LGIP Account, Designated Personnel and Signers were passed by unanimous roll call votes.

ORAL REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM AUDIENCE

The Board heard from eight community members, six of whom spoke in support of public art and beauty in community spaces, and to preserving the water feature at the Medford Library. There was also a joint statement made on behalf of the JCLS BIPOC, Disability, and LGBTQIA+ Affinity groups in support of the Pride Banner remaining on display in the Ashland Branch.

NEW BUSINESS

Ashland Pride Banner – Viki Brown

Director Brown began by summarizing the background for this agenda item. During the July Board meeting, the JCLD Board heard public comments from patrons regarding Library Director Kari May's decision to remove the Pride banner from the Ashland Library. Staff representing the Queer Affinity Group shared a statement as well, asking the Board to reconsider the decision to have the banner removed. In the process of reconsideration, the Board reviewed e-mail correspondence from members of the public and JCLS staff and heard public comments at the July 19 Board meeting. The Board held a Work Session to review policies and discuss the matter on July 29, 2024.

During the discussion at the Work Session, the Board reached consensus that the Pride banner hanging in the stairwell constituted a display and should not have remained in place for years as a more permanent installation. On behalf of the Executive Committee, Director Brown recommended that the Board uphold Library Director Kari May's decision to remove the Pride banner display from the Ashland Branch Library.

Motion: Director Keating moved to uphold Kari May's decision to remove the Pride Banner from Display from the Ashland Library. Director Kiefer seconded the motion.

Director Kiefer voiced her concern that the removal of the banner from display is being seen as an indication that the Library is no longer in support of the LGBTQ community and wants the Library to be publicly perceived as welcoming to all people.

Director Tarantsey commented that she would be voting against the motion and explained that policy analysis found that the banner being on permanent display was not addressed clearly by any JCLD policy, and with the context of community feedback and testimony, she wished to see the library err on the side of real and perceived inclusion.

Director Brown then noted that the Board understands that this decision is impactful for marginalized groups and read a statement committing to their support. In particular, she wanted to assure members of public and JCLS staff that a decision to remove the banner does not constitute any wavering of support for libraries that are welcoming and inclusive, and that the Board values the diversity of the workforce, including LGBTQ+ individuals and other marginalized groups. She stated that the Board is committed to assuring that libraries are safe spaces for all people to utilize for their social, educational and vocational needs.

Library Director May then read a statement on behalf of Library Administration recognizing and committing to serving marginalized groups. She noted that recognition and accurate representation of LGBTQ+ people in JCLS branches are important aspects of creating safe public spaces for people of many intersectional identities. Such spaces must be maintained in the face of multiple forms of violence carried out against marginalized communities in Jackson County and across the country. She stated that she is dedicated to creating a library space that is safe and welcoming to everyone.

Director Keating commented that he appreciated that May gave thoughtful consideration to the matter, and that he felt it was clear to the community the libraries were welcoming to all.

With Directors Brown, Kiefer, Shepherd, and Keating voting in favor and Director Tarantsey voting against the motion passed by majority vote.

Policy Review: Intellectual Freedom Policy

Assistant Director of Support Services Kelda Vath presented an overview of the proposed revisions that had been made to the Intellectual Freedom Policy. The Policy, first adopted by the Board in 2016, was reviewed and updated to provide more context, put it into the standard policy format, and include direct links to the referenced statements.

After a brief discussion of minor grammatical changes, Director Keating asked if there are any other JCLD policies that link to other organization's statements. Vath clarified that the linked statements had been reviewed to ensure that they were up to date, and that if any further updates were made by the relevant organizations, such changes would be brought before the Board for consideration.

Director Tarantsey asked to add a hyperlink to the ALA Intellectual Freedom Toolkit Glossary in the policy. Director Keating asked about the differences between the Library Code of Ethics and the Oregon Government Ethics. Vath explained that the Library Code of Ethics is specific to libraries and their staff and has been a foundational tenet for the profession for many years. The Intellectual Freedom Policy codifies Jackson County Library Services' commitment to intellectual freedom, a fundamental principle of librarianship in the United States.

Director Kiefer recommended that the Board approve the policies, noting that they provide a strong foundation for Library services. Director Tarantsey thanked Vath for her work and commented that she saw the value in such a robust policy.

Motion: Director Kiefer moved that the Intellectual Freedom policy be approved as amended with the suggested edits. Director Keating seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Policy Review: Oregon Government Ethics Law Policy – Kari May

Director May briefly summarized the Oregon Government Law policy and shared that, upon reviewing the

policy, staff concluded that it is redundant, as all public officials and public employees are bound by ORS Chapter 244, and the Ethics portions of the JCLS Employee Handbook and Board Governance Policy Handbook cover the same areas. JCLD legal counsel confirmed this recommendation.

Motion: Director Keating moved to rescind the JCLD Oregon Government Ethics Law Policy. Director Kiefer seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

It was noted that the ORS is cited in the Board Governance Policy. Director Keating asked if the Library's Ethics Policies are more stringent than what is required. They comply with the law, but they are not more stringent than it.

REPORTS

Library Director – Kari May

Director May introduced Bear Creek Area Manager Kristin Anderson, who presented on the art and skill of Readers' Advisory and why it is a vital library service. She also highlighted some of the services that JCLS offers related to readers' advisory in branches and online. May noted that JCLS Discovery was a service that began during the pandemic and has since become a staple of individualized patron services. The JCLS App features curated lists by genre as well.

May announced that Jonathan Eviston, author of *Lawn Boy*, will be visiting JCLS in September during Banned Books Week. She invited the Board to attend his discussion. She then highlighted some items from the report, such as the tenth anniversary party and Summer Reading Program events. Brown noted that the Cultivating Companions program was getting started at Eagle Point, and that she is excited to see how it goes. She also expressed appreciation of the Phoenix Branch's school outreach, and for the Digital Services Cybersecurity Classes.

Director Keating asked if there was anything planned for National Friends of the Library Week in October. May noted that Friends usually planned any activities related to the week, but that a proclamation would be read. Friends are also included in appreciation events during National Volunteer Week in July.

Director Shepherd noted that she would like to see more programming aimed toward working families and young adults, noting that programs are generally held during working hours. May responded that the Program Optimization Project Taskforce is working on analyzing program offerings and will be making recommendations on changes and opportunities across the system.

Statistical Report and Strategic Plan Update – Kelda Vath and Regina Mannino

Kelda Vath and Data and Analytics Specialist Regina Mannino presented an overview of FY24 Year-End statistics and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to the Board. JCLS has seen increases in all areas of performance, and in some areas is performing better than national trends.

Mannino then presented statistics related to Strategic Plan Goals. The Board briefly discussed the presentation and mentioned that they would like to see more comparative data from pre-pandemic years.

Director Keating left the meeting at 6:00.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

none

COMMITTEE AND BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Policy Committee – Kari May

Director May shared a summary of the committee's meeting. Both Board members were absent, so the staff committee members present collaborated to ensure that the policies were ready to distribute to the committee prior to the Board meeting. They reviewed the schedule for bringing policies for review over the next year.

Data and Metrics Committee – Marissa Shepherd

Director Shepherd shared that the committee reviewed the statistics prior to the meeting, and that they had discussed adding per-capita metrics. She noted that the committee is interested in seeing statistics that can provide a narrative for the library and the direction of the strategic plan.

Advocacy Committee – Viki Brown

Director Brown shared that the committee received background to advocacy efforts. The committee will be working on cultivating library champions and developing an advocacy action plan, which includes arranging speaking opportunities for Board members at local city council meetings.

Relationship Committee – Susan Kiefer

Director Kiefer shared that the relationship committee met in the prior week and discussed the potential joint Board meeting, the tentative date for which is November 4th. The agenda would include the presentation that Directors Auer and May gave at the International Library Fundraising Conference. Director Tarantsey noted that she has a conflict on the proposed date, and a new poll will be sent out shortly.

United for Libraries Virtual Conference Report – Viki Brown

Director Brown noted that the conference was very valuable and proposed that the Board discuss the conference more in depth at a future meeting. May proposed that she and Brown work together to suggest sessions for members to watch for future discussion.

Board Member Reports

Director Shepherd asked if a study session could be held to inform the board regarding the water feature in Medford. May noted that the feature was an agenda item for the following week's Facilities Committee meeting. Shepherd expressed interest in attending the Facilities Committee Meeting. May said that additional board members would be welcome, and because a quorum of the Board might be present, notice will be issued.

May invited the Board to the Medford/Jackson Chamber Excellence Awards Dinner on September 12th.

FUTURE MEETINGS/EVENTS/OBSERVANCES

September 18, 2024: JCLD Regular Board Meeting

ADJOURN

President Brown adjourned the meeting at 6:32 p.m.

/s/ Val Nowak
Recording Secretary