

Auburn Public Library Advisory Board Minutes from June 21, 2022

The Auburn Public Library Advisory Board met at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, June 21, 2022, in the Library Program Room. The following individuals were present:

Board Members	Marcia Boosinger, Chair Bonnie MacEwan, Vice Chair Betty Burgess Karen Herring Daniel Surry
APL Staff	Tyler W. Whitten, Library Director Ashley Brown, Public Services Librarian Manager Leslie Johnston, Collection Development Librarian Cynthia Ledbetter, Engagement and Outreach Librarian Brandon Rowland, Digital Services Librarian

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Boosinger at 10:01 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- The minutes of the May 17, 2022, meeting were distributed to Board members in advance of today's meeting. Surry moved to approve the minutes as written. MacEwan seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

CITIZENS' COMMUNICATIONS

- There were none.

LIBRARY SERVICES PRESENTATION

- The Library Management Team conducted a tour of the Library facility for members of the Board, with each division head discussing workflow, opportunities, and challenges within their areas.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Ledbetter shared impact stories, including a submission from a mother who began attending Outdoor Story Time in the fall of 2020, as a way to get out and attend events with other families safely. Taking advantage of opportunities for her 2-year-old to grow with other children was important to her, and she expressed appreciation for the efforts APL put into crafting enriching activities that community members could attend under difficult circumstances.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- Whitten provided an update on the results of the recent 2022 Citizen Survey and the proposed FY23-24 Budget Document, which is currently under consideration by the City Council.
 - From the Citizen Survey, Whitten noted that the Library received high marks, when rated against other City of Auburn services, with programs for children being cited by citizens as the highest development priority for the Library in the coming cycle.
 - Whitten noted that, while the Citizen Survey had not yet been completed when the Library Management Team prepared the budget request for FY23-24, the results of the survey reinforce the need for items staff elected to include in the budget request. This suggests that Library staff are building and sustaining strong collaborative relationships within the community that yield valuable information regarding needs.
 - The Library Management Team included the following special items in the FY23-24 budget request, some of which are critical if programming for children is to be expanded beyond current offerings:
 - An additional full-time Programming Specialist for Engagement and Outreach
 - Additional funds for temporary, seasonal employees who assist with programs, such as Library Aides
 - A van to be used by Engagement and Outreach in offsite programming, which will enable staff to begin regular visits to daycares, Head Start, Auburn City Schools, and the APL@Boykin micro-library.
 - A renovation of the public restrooms to bring the facility into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
 - Herring pointed out that visits to facilities such as daycares are an important component in programming expansion, and Ledbetter spoke to tentative plans being made by Engagement and Outreach staff to utilize these new resources, should they be funded.
 - Board members also expressed a desire to tour the APL@Boykin micro-library and talk with staff at the Boykin Community Center regarding how Board members can help to raise awareness about Library offerings and foster partnerships.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT

- Boosinger mentioned an article that Whitten had discovered on the EveryLibrary website (<https://www.everylibrary.org/>) that discussed research showing that reading fiction can help to cultivate empathy and compassion for those who are different from the reader and can allow readers to experience the trials and triumphs of others at a safe distance through characterization. Seeing the perspectives of others can, therefore, help us relate to each other in positive ways.
 - Board members agreed, and Surry mentioned that nonfiction can also be powerful in this regard.
- Prior to the meeting, Boosinger had encouraged Board members to review the opinion piece "The Battle for the Soul of the Library" by Stanley Kurtz, which was published in the New York Times on February 24, 2022. The article discusses the

importance of recapturing library neutrality with regard to building collections, programs, and services, in an effort to help us cope with our differences.

- Board members agreed that remaining neutral and ensuring that the Library and its holdings are representative of the entire community is the best path to continued success. Boosinger mentioned that Whitten's written responses to recent concerns about specific Library holdings and programs were in line with this philosophy.
- The opinion piece also discusses the concept of the "woke librarian," and Board members cited the need for librarians to put their personal feelings aside when performing their professional duties and serve the entire community, rather than being caught in the political fray. Board members also stated that the term "woke" has taken on a somewhat negative connotation, as its meaning can be highly subjective.

PARKS, RECREATION, AND CULTURAL MASTER PLAN

- Whitten provided updates on progress for the proposed neighborhood library at the City's Donahue Drive property, including the presence of the Library facility in the first phase of the development, as outlined in the capital improvement plan of the FY23-24 proposed budget.
- Whitten also stated that progress meetings for the project have transitioned to a biweekly schedule, as the programming stage matures. The direction taken from here will depend on the outcome of the City Council's upcoming vote on the proposed budget.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Whitten presented an update on Library activities since the last meeting and a statistical report, with the statistical report showcasing charts that further incorporate feedback from Board members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Earlier in the meeting, Whitten cited a popular quote urging librarians to "give 'em what they want" with regard to satisfying community requests for library resources and the responsibility of Library staff to ensure that all community members experience adequate representation within the Library's collections. After an online search, Brown reported that the quote and philosophy were attributed to noted librarian Charles Robinson.

ADJOURNMENT

- There being no further items of business, the meeting adjourned at 11:51 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tyler W. Whitten