



Library Board of Trustees

Library Board of Trustees Meeting

Independence Regional, 6000 Conference Drive, Charlotte

Friday, August 11, 2023, 9:00am – 4:00pm

Trustees Present

Ailen Arreaza
Peggy Brookhouse
Dr. Stacey Brown
Jon Buchan
Joe Helweg, Chair
Dr. Kimmerly Martin
Tracy Montross
Dr. Amy Hawn Nelson
Charles Thomas
Dr. Ricky Woods

Staff Present

Karen Beach
Rachel Bradley
Jenni Gaisbauer
Krystel Green
Anne Mavian
Caitlin Moen
Angie Myers
Emery Ortiz
LaJuan Pringle
Marcellus Turner

Others Present

Library Foundation Board
Selena Giovannelli, Second Vice Chair
Tom Fay, Seattle Public Library
Mary Jo Giudice, Dallas Public Library
John Szabo, Los Angeles Public Library

Absent

Preethi Srinivasan

Welcome and Housekeeping

Charles Thomas welcomed everyone to the August Board of Trustees Retreat at 9:00am.

Mr. Thomas provided the following information:

- Why we have retreats
- Schedule for the day
- Introduction of Rachel Bradley, New Library Administration Coordinator

Board Icebreaker Exercise

Dr. Amy Hawn Nelson facilitated an icebreaker exercise with the attendees of the retreat. Dr. Hawn Nelson asked the group to write down some things that they know now and what they wished they would have known before joining the board or the library. Board members and staff shared their thoughts on what they wish they understood about the library before joining the board or becoming an employee. The attendees discussed how important libraries are to the community, the special relationship Charlotte Mecklenburg Library has with Mecklenburg County, the resources and programs that the library offers, the relationship between the Library and the Library Foundation, etc.

2023-2024 Board Committee Assignments

Mr. Thomas reviewed the committee assignments for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. The board briefly discussed meeting schedules, public noticing of committee meetings, and committee member duties.

BOARD COMMITTEES	SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITIES	CHAIR	MEMBERS	STAFF LEAD
Executive	Make decisions on behalf of the Board of Trustees as needed. Manages agendas and properly timing of topics for the full BOT meetings. Review, consult, and advise the strategic direction and planning process.	Charles Thomas	Tracy Montross Dr. Amy Hawn Nelson Joe Helweg	Marcellus Turner
CML Foundation Board*	Consult, advise and oversee fundraising and awareness strategies and activities of the Library Foundation that support the Library.	Gene Cochrane	Charles Thomas Marcellus Turner	Jenni Gaisbauer
Program of Service	Review, consult, advise and oversee the Library's programming and service offerings to ensure they improve lives and build a stronger community. Oversee prioritized actions in support of CML's Racial Equity Framework and Implementation Plan.	Dr. Amy Hawn Nelson	Ailen Arreaza Dr. Stacey Price Brown Ashley Hardee, <i>Ex Officio</i> Deb Jung, <i>Ex Officio</i> Sarah Brown, <i>Ex Officio</i>	Caitlin Moen, Future DEI Office
Finance	Consult, advise and oversee Library financial practices, transactions, decisions, and funding sources and trends.	Preethi Srinivasan	Peggy Brookhouse	Angie Myers,
Governance	Recommend Library Trustee candidates based on regular review of the Board's and organization's current and future governance needs. Oversees and leads advocacy initiatives. Leads annual CML CEO Evaluation.	Tracy Montross	Joe Helweg Charles Thomas	Marcellus Turner
ImaginOn Management	Oversee management and activities at ImaginOn jointly with our partner, Children's Theater of Charlotte.	Dr. Kimmerly Martin	N/A (<i>contract calls for one representative from CML BOT</i>)	Jenni Gaisbauer
Real Estate	Consult, advise and oversee Library real estate strategies, planning, practices, transactions, and decisions	Jon Buchan	Dr. Ricky Woods George Sistrunk, <i>Ex Officio</i> Walker Morris, <i>Ex Officio</i>	David Dillard

*Included Foundation Board to reflect linkage.

Education and Advocacy Deep Dive

Ms. Tracy Montross lead a discussion regarding why Charlotte Mecklenburg Library needs an advocacy action plan. Ms. Montross reviewed what advocacy means; informing government of the needs and concerns of the library community, providing library supporters with up-to-date information on government actions or proposals, and building coalitions and mobilizing stakeholders to further library interests. Ms. Montross welcomed the three guests who joined the meeting via Zoom call and MT introduced Mary Jo Giudice, the Director for Dallas Public Library, Tom Fay, the Executive Director/Chief Librarian for Seattle Public Library, and John Szabo, the City Librarian for Los Angeles Public Library. MT informed the board members and staff that these guests have strong library systems and have been working hard on advocacy and education in their respective communities. Ms. Montross requested that each guest give a brief overview of their library system and how they advocate in their specific community.

- Ms. Giudice has been with Dallas Public Library for almost 20 years and has been Director for 10 years. Dallas Public Library is part of the City of Dallas and Ms. Giudice reports to the City Manager. The advisory board for the library is appointed by city council and is not a governing board. This advisory board is the key to advocacy when it comes to working with city government and are the conduit to city council members. The board meets monthly with Ms. Giudice and then they take the library message to City Hall. Ms. Giudice explained that Dallas Public Library is funded through the city and does not have an increment tax. The city funds books, bodies, and buildings and so the library utilizes corporation funding, Friends of the Dallas Public Library funding, and grants to support any programming and initiatives.
- Mr. Fay has been with Seattle public Library for 8 years and has been Chief Librarian for just over 2 years. Seattle Public Library is a part of the Washington state government and in the city charter. Mr. Fay stated that he does not report to the Mayor directly and the library is not a part of the Mayor's executive team. Funding is still provided through the general funds of the City and they provide authorizations for levies when the library is in need. Mr. Fay also explained that Seattle Public Library's board of trustees has full fiduciary and policy setting power, separate from the City. Like Dallas Public Library, Seattle Public Library relies on the Library Foundation, the largest public library foundation in the country, to provide funding for library programming. Mr. Fay mentioned that there is also a Friends of the Library group that is considered the library's education and grassroots awareness organization that assists with the grassroots advocacy components.
- Mr. Szabo stated that the Los Angeles Public Library serves the City of LA and are a department of the city government. He also mentioned that the library is in the city charter which makes the Los Angeles Public Library quasi-independent but are still considered under city government. Mr. Szabo is City Librarian and an appointee of the Mayor of Los Angeles as is the library's board of commissioners. There are five members on the library board, and it is a governing board that has the power to set policy, approve budgets, and help craft the vision and mission of the library. The funding of the library is not a parcel tax but is determined by a formula that is a set percentage in the city charter and is based on the property values in the city. Mr. Szabo explained that Los Angeles Public Library also has a Foundation that helps fund a lot of the library programming and provide flexibility to procure things through the Foundation when it is not possible through the City's budget. The library also has 79 Friends of the Library groups that support specific branches but also provide support for various library collections. These groups are focused more on advocacy in the communities rather than raising significant amounts of money. Mr. Szabo emphasized that these individuals are library ambassadors and help carry forth the message of how important the library is, and the great work being done.

Ms. Montross lead a discussion with all three guest speakers about what Friends of the Library groups do for the public libraries they work with. Some of these groups support specific library branches while other Friend groups are larger and act like a Foundation for the library. The speakers also explained the important role these Friend groups play in advocating for the library in government and community settings as well as how they often support and champion their local library staff. The guests also discussed other avenues, such as social media, that their libraries use to advocate and educate the public on the important work the libraries are doing within their local communities. Ms. Montross asked the guests to speak about how education, advocacy, marketing, and communications feed into their libraries' strategic direction. Ms. Giudice, Mr. Fay, and Mr. Szabo spoke about the importance of making sure that the Foundation group, the Friends groups, and the library were all the same page regarding the overall strategic direction so that when these groups are out in the community advocating and educating, the message mirrors what the library is also communicating. The group also briefly discussed the intersection of advocacy for the library and the current national debate on the topic of intellectual freedom. At the conclusion of the conversation with Ms. Giudice, Mr. Fay, and Mr. Szabo, each gave their final advice on how to effectively educate and advocate for the library and the community. After, speaking with the three guests, board members and staff briefly discussed the history of Friends of the Library groups and the Library Foundation in relation to Charlotte Mecklenburg Library and how these organizations operate and advocate in the community.

Role of Trustees	Role of Foundation
In official capacity, Trustees can only engage in nonpartisan, informational advertisements, rather than partisan promotions of a specific viewpoint	Because the Foundation is a 501(c)(3), there are strict limitations on the type and amount of advocacy allowed
May not use CML resources (such as official e-mails, library printers, etc.) to engage in partisan activities	The Foundation may not engage in partisan advocacy related to the <u>election of officials</u> ; generally, such advocacy would have to be nonpartisan and informational in nature
As an individual, Trustees are free to engage in campaign activities, as long as they do not hold themselves out as a Trustee while doing so	The Foundation could lose its tax-exempt status if it engages in too much advocacy, which is measured by the IRS under a specific test.
Use of Cardholder Information: Library cardholder contact information cannot be shared with the Foundation or the Trustees in their individual capacities. CML may use this information for nonpartisan, informational purposes only.	In contrast to the CML and Trustees, the Foundation may engage in partisan advocacy for <u>ballot measures</u> (however there are limits to the amount of advocacy they may engage in)

MT introduced West Boulevard Branch Manager LaJuan Pringle, and Mint Hill Branch Manager Anne Mavian. Mr. Pringle serves as Chair of the NCLA (North Carolina Library Association) Advocacy and Legislation Committee and Ms. Mavian serves as Chair of the NCLA Intellectual Freedom Committee. Mr. Pringle and Ms. Mavian discussed their thoughts on education, advocacy, and intellectual freedom. They spoke about the significance that social media can play in getting the message of the library out to the public and how library volunteers are an invaluable resource. Mr. Pringle and Ms. Mavian explained they utilize their volunteers, local leaders, and organizations to help bring attention to their community events, programming, and library branch in general.

Ms. Montross shared a tentative list of advocacy and education goals for the library. Board members briefly discussed these goals and provided feedback and suggestions for clarity.

Advocacy and Education Goals

- Position CML as a trusted community organization and effective steward of tax-payer resources.
- Cultivate relationships with elected officials and deliver on constituent expectations for CML and its branches.
- Advocate for increased public funding to meet the needs of a growing community (operations, programming, real estate).
- Promote New Main Library's value proposition as public commons in Center City
- Defend CML, its staff, and cardholders against specific legislative threats
- Mobilize stakeholders to advocate for CML, including potential ballot referendums
- Position CML as a leading entity to achieve other community needs (i.e., workforce, digital inclusion, out-of-school time, arts and culture, etc.)
- Increase CML's visibility as a leader among its peers and trade associations

Ms. Montross shared some initial short-term advocacy and education objectives for the board and provided suggestions on how the board can get organized to meet these objectives. Board members and staff discussed advocating for more funding and support from Mecklenburg County. Ms. Montross reviewed the draft calendar for 2023-2024 advocacy engagement and the next steps for the board.

FY24 Short Term Objectives

- Create Ad Hoc Committee to build Advocacy Action Plan
- Elevate the Board's voice with funding partners
- Supplement SLT engagement with Mecklenburg County
- Leverage the Board's network to increase CML visibility with local, state, federal partners
- Anticipate defensive positions and strengthen Board's preparedness in crisis communications

FY24 Getting Organized

- Assign Trustees a relationship with elected official(s) for FY24; schedule touchpoints
- Form Ad Hoc Advocacy Committee comprised of Trustees, Foundation Board members, and qualified volunteers.
- By July 1, the Ad Hoc Committee will:
 - Outline specific goals/objectives, aligned with the Board's Strategic Direction
 - Solicit best practices from ALA and other systems
 - Benchmark existing Marketing/Communications, Education, and Community Awareness initiatives
 - Create Advocacy Action Plan with a schedule for year-round engagement
 - Recruit supporters to accomplish the strategies
 - Identify gaps in funding to advance the Action Plan

Calendar of Advocacy Engagement

2023-2024	Advocacy Action
August	Retreat Presentation / Assign relationship with County Commissioners
September – October	Trustees meet with their assigned County Commissioner to review FY23 Impact
November	Recognize County Manager and elected officials at Verse & Vino
December	Annual CML presentation to BOCC (CEO/Board Chair) Promote County Survey to cardholders; mobilize speakers for BOCC Public Hearing
January	CML Letter from CEO/Board Chair to Manager & BOCC with CML budget priorities ahead of County Budget Retreat (Finance/Governance Committee) BOCC Budget Public Hearing #1
February	Trustees communication to BOCC in support of CML budget priorities
March – April	Mobilize Library supporters to speak at BOCC Public Hearing on FY25 Budget
May	BOCC Public Hearing #2 on FY25 Budget
June	Thank You to BOCC and Manager via direct mail, social media, Foundation newsletter **Approve FY25 Advocacy Action Plan**

Next steps

- Select a County Commissioner
- Confirm approach w/ Foundation Board
- Form AdHoc Committee
- Progress report at October & December Board meetings
- Commit to execute on proposed *Short-Term Action Plan*

Working Lunch Discussion on Next Steps for Intellectual Freedom

Understanding SB90 and its challenges

Ms. Caitlin Moen provided an update on SB90 to the board. Ms. Moen informed the board members of the origin of the NC Senate bill and how it was edited and expanded in ways that would significantly impact public libraries if passed. Ms. Moen stated that the bill was pulled from the public hearing of the committee because it was substantially different than the original version. The newly edited version is not expected to be brought out of committee again, but a similar bill came out of the NC House committee approximately six months prior. Both the House bill and the Senate bill introduced measures that would remove the legal protections for librarians and teachers who provide materials deemed harmful to children. Both bills removed this legal protection for the organization as well as the individual. The Senate bill, if passed, would have removed the library record confidentiality for children, allowing parents to access the child's full record. Ms. Moen explained that this removal of protection would violate one of the founding tenants of libraries which is confidential library usage. Also included in the bill was a requirement to move materials deemed harmful to children to an area restricted from children. However, some main points of public libraries are to be publicly accessible, to encourage intergenerational usage, and to be welcoming. Ms. Moen explained that children's library cards are not automatically restricted, but a parent does have the right to request their child's card to be restricted to only allow children's material to be checked out.

Role of the board in supporting Intellectual Freedom to staff, public, other NC libraries

MT led a discussion with board members regarding how they can support Intellectual Freedom. Board members discussed advocating for Intellectual Freedom on a personal level as individuals and speaking on a professional level as board members of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library. MT explained how board members' public advocacy for Intellectual Freedom is important to show library staff that they are supported, and the community is clear on where the Library stands on the subject. Dr. Ricky Woods asked about the responsibility board members have toward educating new members who may be appointed in the future about the important work of advocating for intellectual freedom. MT briefly discussed how board members could inform potential new members about the important work of the library and commitment to intellectual freedom that is required. The board members also discussed the legal options available if bills like SB90 are passed in the future and encroach on the Intellectual Freedom of public libraries. MT requested that the board create a small committee to write a statement about Intellectual Freedom. This statement will be posted on the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library website so that it can be accessed easily by the public. Mr. Jon Buchan, Dr. Amy Hawn Nelson, Dr. Kimmerly Martin, and Ms. Ailen Arreaza agreed to create a draft statement for full board review. MT showed the board two examples of Intellectual Freedom statements, one from Davidson College and one from the Toronto Public Library. He also pointed board members to where the Library's Materials Selection Policy on the library website. Ms. Montross suggested that the statement be released at the same time that the board rolls out their advocacy action plan. Board members and staff discussed a possible timeline for completing and releasing the statement.

Communications Protocol and Management

Ms. Krystel Green discussed talking points for board members who receive media inquiries and interview requests to speak about Intellectual Freedom in relation to Charlotte Mecklenburg Library. Ms. Green reminded the board that they are not required to give an interview or statement to the media and can direct inquiries to her, the Chief Marketing Officer, to provide more in-depth information. She also reminded the board that sometimes questions come up in casual conversation with friends, family and/or colleagues. The talking points she provided for media inquiries are still

appropriate to use but also suggested more options for board members who may experience more casual questions and inquiries.

At 1:00pm, pursuant to NC GS 143.318.11A6 Mr. Helweg requested a motion to go into closed session to discuss 2023 FY Performance Review. The motion was seconded by Dr. Woods and the board unanimously approved the motion to enter Executive Session.

Executive Session 2023 FY Performance Review (Board only)

The board returned to open session at 2:13pm

Strategic Direction Discussion

MT facilitated an exercise where board members and staff wrote out their past bad experiences with creating and implementing a strategic plan. MT read the issues to the group, board members and staff explained their experiences and reasons, and the group discussed how to prevent them from reoccurring. The issues discussed included strategic plans that had too many goals, that were not specific enough, had the wrong facilitator, and plans that did not clearly state who was responsible for implementing them. Board members and staff had a robust discussion surrounding their aspirational goals for the Library's strategic direction. Joe Helweg previously expressed, and MT clarified with board members that there was a need to hire a consultant to help facilitate the creation of a new strategic direction. Board members discussed who owns the strategic direction, who is responsible for creating the goals, who is working to meet the goals, who is evaluated for reaching the goals, and the duration of the strategic direction. Board members affirmed that it is their strategic direction. Staff also briefly discussed how the strategic direction can be incorporated in the County's guidance for the Library's progress.

Wrap Up and Closing

Mr. Thomas thanked everyone for attending the retreat and for participating in the productive discussions on Education and Advocacy, Intellectual Freedom, and creating a new Strategic Direction.

Charles Thomas adjourned the board meeting at 3:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcellus Turner
CEO