



HCLS Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

March 17, 2020 ♦ 7 pm
Virtual

Board members present were: Robert Mentz, Chair; Tom Munns, Treasurer; Phillip Dodge; Anne Markus; Kelly Smith; and Antonia Watts. Also present were leadership team staff members/citizens including Dorna Anderson, Lew Belfont, Angela Brade, Mary Brosenne, Vera Davies, Stacey Fields, Cari Gast, Mickey Gomez, Allison Jessing, Simone Kolnik, Christie Lassen, Sukie Lee, Diane Li, Brooke McCauley, Lauren McCloskey, Emma Ostendorp, Ben Sfanos, Stephanie Shane, and other members of HCLS staff and the public who joined in.

Rob called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

The Board unanimously approved the January 20, 2020 Board meeting minutes. I explained HCLS operations during COVID-19 for the past year, highlighting internal and external communications as well as new services to include contactless pickup and virtual classes and events. Lew reported on Phase 4 reopening plans, namely capacity and services with a focus on greater self-sufficiency by customers through the Meescan checkout app. He further explained what has to be done to prepare for the expanded opening, including reorganization, installation of protection and signage, and staff training. Discussion followed, including clarification on how to separate and manage customers coming into the branch for browsing/computer use and those coming in for contactless pickup. Lew further explained the messaging system to alert customers in the branch of the 45 minute time limit. Communications will be shooting a video next week to walk customers through this process. In addition there will be signage in the branches, plus a “what to expect” on the HCLS web site. I further related the reasoning behind a 25% capacity limit for customers in branch, which is under the Governor’s 50% capacity requirement, and allows for compliance with the physical distancing requirement.

Lew showcased online class statistics for January through March, plus related the “On the Road to Kindergarten” initiative which will bring classes to neighborhoods. Christie reported on the HiJinx podcast, the Chapter Chats blog, and Evening in the Stacks that drew approximately 400 attendees. Simone described how the HCLS Spelling Bee and Battle of the Books will be run virtually this year. For the former, there is a new online testing platform provided by Scripps that students will use. For the latter, HCLS has secured six authors from this year’s books to participate in the event, as well as plans to feature a Google Jamboard for displaying team posters at intermission.

I explained the various expenses reflected in the March financial report. I then presented an analysis of *Library Journal’s* five star ranking, which HCLS has enjoyed for many years. I explained that HCLS needs to be more intentional, looking at budget allocations to materials to meet demand. I made the County aware of where we are not meeting demand as evidenced by our deep collection wait lists, and that if we had more materials, we would circulate them and thus boost our circulation numbers.

Angela provided an update on capital projects. The Glenwood renovation is underway and is slated to be completed in June. During renovation, the branch will be open for contactless pickup out of the meeting room. Regarding the Downtown Columbia Branch, the initial project scope and pricing analysis has been completed, reflecting a 20.5% price increase. The county is looking into this as well as the timeframe. Based on County feedback, we propose revising the FY 22 Budget request from \$1.17M to \$500K, which was approved by the Board. I mentioned the Operating Budget which we requested at an 8% increase, which looks unlikely given the Spending Affordability Advisory Committee recommendation of a 2.3% increase in operating expenditures.

I presented a Legislative Update with respect to the veto override of the Building Lifelong Learners Act which will

translate into more funds to libraries; the Public Libraries – Electronic Book Licenses – Access, which would put libraries on equal footing for ebook distribution from publishers; the Digital Connectivity Act which aims for greater connectivity across Maryland; and State Library Resource Center funding, which supports all Maryland libraries.

I reported on HCLS’s racial equity initiative, including the formation of the HCLS Racial Equity Alliance which boasts 20 partners who help to guide HCLS activities, plus connect and strengthen our efforts to the community. I then related the Racial Equity Training for staff and the Howard County community that is occurring with partners Equity Matters, Racial Equity Institute and Soul Focused Group. Two options for training are provided, two one-day trainings and four two-day trainings.

The Board reviewed and approved the proposed FY 22 Closings and Board meeting dates as well as the proposed changes to Supplement 3 and its Appendix “How We Choose” which related to adding STEM and literacy kits to our collection and updating the print policy for enhance equity. In light of the recent news on Dr. Seuss books, Angela explained that HCLS subscribes to ALA’s Freedom to Read and accordingly will not pull the items from the collection. Rather, the titles no longer being published will be recategorized and placed in the adult collection.

Stephanie presented the recommended nominating committee of Rob Mentz and Anne Markus to propose next year’s slate of officers which was approved. She further announced that the two proposed names to fill Andy’s upcoming vacancy were forwarded to the County, who will likely put a name forward for approval by the County Council in June.

Mickey Gomez reported on Friends & Foundation of HCLS activities, giving an update on Friends’ donations and plans for a fundraiser next month in honor of National Library Week. She asked Board members for their assistance in amplifying the message.

Rob thanked all for their updates, adjourning the meeting at 8:53 pm. The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for 7 pm on **Wed., June 16, 2021** via zoom.

Respectfully submitted,



Tonya Aikens
President & CEO