



HCLS Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

September 22, 2021 ♦ 7 pm
Virtual

Board members present were: Tom Munns, Chair; Antonia Watts, Vice Chair; Anne Markus; Robert Mentz; Kelly Smith; and Sabina Taj. Also present were leadership team staff members/citizens including Dorna Anderson, Lew Belfont, Angela Brade, Mary Brosenne, Emily Carter, Chris Conkling, Vera Davies, Stacey Fields, Cari Gast, Mickey Gomez, Rohini Gupta, Rita Hamlet, Adrian Harpool, Allison Jessing, Dan Kenney, Nina Krzysko, Christie Lassen, Sukie Lee, Diane Li, Tanya Malveaux, Brooke McCauley, Kim Montenyohl, Kaitlyn Murphy, Emma Ostendorp, Larry Richardson, Monae Rivers, Lois Sanders, Michael Scott, Ben Sfanos, Stephanie Shane, and Sheng Wu.

Tom called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, welcoming newest Board member Sabina Taj.

The Board unanimously approved the June 16, 2021 Board meeting minutes. Discussion followed on the state requirement that Commission and Boards have members certified in response to the Open Meetings Act, to include requiring officers to take the training for continuity purposes and giving coverage to the Board. There was a suggestion to add this requirement to the Board of Trustees policies. Stephanie is to contact the County to determine how long the certification is good for. Other questions raised were if you've taken the training in another capacity will it transfer for the County's required training which takes over two hours to complete.

Tonya introduced CohnReznick auditors who delivered a presentation on the audit they performed for Howard County Library System. They addressed their audit approach, a review of FY2021 financial statements, audit communications, and finalization items. Included in this presentation were management's discussion and analysis, disclosures, investment funds, the balance sheet, notes on financial statements, OPEB, and management's representation letter. The auditors noted that HCLS didn't have any material weaknesses and that a third party does audit on certain schedules that is then given to CohnReznick for inclusion in HCLS' audit. They pointed out that the audit was a lengthy in light of COVID with lots of disclosures. Any questions on the audit can be routed to Dorna Anderson.

I kicked off discussion on HCLS Operations, relating Maryland State Library (MSL) statewide operations that HCLS is participating in. These include a State Library Resource Center (SLRC) Strategic Planning Conference, Library Boards and Their Roles Task Force, DEI Committee, and Legislative Committee. With regards to the Task Force, the HCLS Board has been selected to participate in an effort to create a toolkit of best practices. The Legislative Committee which includes the capital grant program is just starting backup.

Lew reported on HCLS operations statistics since June, noting that in person classes were started back up in June and were conducted both outdoors and inside HCLS branches. He explained that inside classes had reduced numbers to facilitate social distancing, but were offset by additional classes held. He pointed out the high numbers for virtual classes and increases in branch visits and borrowing. As of August 30, contactless pickup was stopped since customers were no longer using it, preferring to come into the branch to pick up their holds. He further related the high number of holds which account for 1/5 of all activity.

Angela provided statistics on borrowing, to include a 32% increase in physical materials as well as a 10% increase in eResources.

Christie addressed events, both past and upcoming including the ribbon cutting for the Pop Up mobile library, the 5-Star Showcase on October 2 which starts with lunch at the East Columbia Branch on October 2, and a Save the Date for Evening in the Stacks which will be a two day hybrid event. She related that the Undesign the Redline exhibit is coming back to the Central Branch, noting that the \$11,000 cost is being offset by partner donations. The exhibit will be featured prominently in the Equity Resource Center's ribbon cutting scheduled for Monday, September 27 at 2 pm. The exhibit will be up until the end of February with public and private tours available.

Angela provided an update on capital projects. The Glenwood Branch renovation is mainly completed with HCLS just waiting on furnishings and an expected reopening in mid to late October. The branch has been updated to include more classrooms, a secure passport office, a MakerSpace, an outdoor customer space and classroom, and a modified early learning area. With regards to the Downtown Columbia Branch, HCLS is awaiting on a fiscal projection from the County. While we still have the space, we are trying to get a sense of the finances of the construction. There is an upcoming meeting scheduled before going into the planning season. All branches have been or will be updated to provide more and better teen-specific spaces.

I presented the FY 2023 Operating Budget and Curriculum focus referring to the document in the Board packet, which highlights previous accomplishments and goals for beyond. The initial request is for an \$868,000 for increases in Objects 1 – 3, covering (1) two new positions, a DEI officer and a Curriculum Service Outreach Instructor, plus merit and COLA; (2) contract funds to continue equity work; and (3) funds to cover publisher increase, customer demand, and ongoing technology maintenance. The Board approved sharing the increased funding request with the County.

Angela reported on the FY 2023 proposed capital budget. Funding for the Southwest Branch has been pushed out to FY 2026. \$1.6 Million has been put in FY 2023 along with funding in the outyears for the Downtown Columbia Branch based on what we know. I pointed out some important dates in the budget process timeline provided in the Board packet.

I then presented a report on behalf of Mickey Gomez, the Chair of the Friends & Foundation of HCLS, which included the annual campaign, the pop up library kickoff event, Huephoria, and the 5 Star Showcase.

I reported on activities related to the Brave Voices Brave Choices, referring to the FY 21 Process Evaluation whose full report was contained in the Board packet. I talked about how the report was prepared to include outcomes, processes, and feedback, plus provides a blueprint for how to make transformational change. We have received ARPA funding from MSL to fund training for this year, comprised of two day trainings plus sensemaking circles based on topics of interest that participants can self-select. I requested \$217,500 funds in a sole source contract with our previous vendor in the HCLS budget to cover training for staff and community in Year 2 of this initiative. The training will involve training of CEOs and Directors of other library systems. The Board approved the request.

I related that we received a second ARPA grant to cover a STEAM Mobile unit which will feature more technology than the Pop Up mobile unit. I showcased a sample vehicle's interior and exterior to include its flexibility and rich technology components. I further related that we received a \$100,000 grant from Charles Schwab that can be used for the vehicle. The Board approved a request for \$141,967 for the vehicle. Discussion followed on the special licensing required, parking at the Administrative Branch when not in use, the neighborhoods targeted for the vehicle, and maintenance costs. The vehicle will take up to a year to be built so that hopefully COVID will not limit how many people can take part in classes provided by the vehicle.

The Board approved the Policies and Supplement 1 sections of Board policy which were proposed with no changes.

Tom thanked all for attending, adjourning the meeting at 9:02 pm. The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for 7 pm on **Wed., November 17, 2021** and will be virtual unless otherwise noticed.

Respectfully submitted,



Tonya Aikens
President & CEO