

# Library District of Clackamas County Advisory Committee

Minutes – Approved June 26, 2023

May 15, 2023, 7:00pm

Meeting held at Clackamas County Red Soils Campus,  
Development Services Building, Room 119/120 and virtually on Zoom.

## **ATTENDANCE**

### *Advisory Committee Voting Members*

<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>LIBRARY</b>	<b>ATTENDANCE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
Denise Fonseca	Canby Public Library	Present	
Grover Bornefeld	Oak Lodge Library	Present	
Desiree Dumitrescu	Estacada Public Library	Present	<i>On Zoom</i>
Natalie Smith	Gladstone Public Library	Present	
Al Matecko	Happy Valley Public Library	Present	Chair
Mark Pontarelli	Lake Oswego Public Library	Absent	Alternate present
Karla Branson	Ledding Library of Milwaukie	Present	
VACANT	Molalla Public Library		
Nick Dierckman	Oregon City Public Library	Present	
Kathleen Draine	Sandy/Hoodland Public Library	Present	
VACANT	West Linn Public Library		
Natalie McNown	Wilsonville Public Library	Present	

### *Others Present*

<b>NAME</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
Lois Brooks	Canby Public Library Board Member
Aimee Noss	Canby Public Library Board Member
Sherry Swackhamer	Lake Oswego Public Library ALTERNATE (on Zoom)
Mitzi Olson	Director, Oak Lodge Library & Gladstone Public Library
Doris Grolbert	Director, Happy Valley Public Library
Melissa Kelly	Director, Lake Oswego Public Library (on Zoom)
Brent Husher	Director, Ledding Library of Milwaukie
Diana Hadley	Director, Molalla Public Library
Greg Williams	Director, Oregon City Public Library
Sarah McIntyre	Director, Sandy and Hoodland Public Libraries
Rebecca Mayer	Circulation Supervisor, West Linn Public Library
Danny Smith	Director, Canby Public Library (on Zoom)
Shasta Sasser	Library Services Manager, Wilsonville Public Library
Rick Peterson	Manager, Library Support Services, LDAC Liaison
Commissioner Paul Savas	BCC
KT Austin	Member Services Librarian, Library Support Services (minutes)

## **CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Al Matecko at 7:02pm. The group introduced themselves.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The group reviewed minutes from 1/23/2023. Rick thanked Kathleen for identifying a couple typos and suggesting some clarification on page 5. These changes were made. Kathleen moved to approve the minutes as amended. Natalie S. seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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## OLD BUSINESS

### **Wrap up approval of Annual Progress Reports (APR)**

- Rick reminded the group that reports for FY19/20 and FY20/21 were shared ahead of the November 2022 meeting. The group never approved them for the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) because of concerns regarding the use of district revenues for capital reserves, debt payment, and allocated costs. LDAC should wrap up that review process at this meeting.
- Grover acknowledged the work done to rewrite the APR to help make sure libraries were in compliance with the IGA. The group hasn't agreed on how to move it forward, and he still doesn't believe the group has adequately ensured compliance. He was curious about what could be done if the group didn't unanimously approve reports.
- Rick said there aren't guidelines for how the group needs to submit their review to the BCC.
- Al suggested LDAC could submit the reports with thoughts and/or questions attached.
- Nick suggested the group provides an executive summary rather than full reports to the BCC. Al agreed that the board is unlikely to want a line-by-line analysis and would prefer general assessment. He asked Commissioner Savas how other committees report to the Board.
- Commissioner Savas said it varies. Districts will submit written or verbal reports with notes, but, in general, it's something that's on the record and is submitted by email. However, not all committees submit reports.
- Kathleen didn't think LDAC had ever submitted a report.
- Rick asked what happened in the past with the reports. Greg said at one point LDAC prepared a letter summarizing the group's thoughts that was sent to the BCC (likely 2017).
- Nick said he would like to see the letter and Natalie S. said she doesn't remember it.
- Greg said he could help Rick find the old letter.
- Natalie S. wondered if the group could develop an overall report LDAC could use in the review process with boxes to check off—like what individual libraries do but less detailed.
- Grover reiterated that the group's purpose is to observe where the money goes and if libraries are in compliance. Al mentioned in the last meeting that individual library boards are reviewing library budgets, but Grover doesn't see all libraries following the IGA in the way he interprets it.
- Grover asked if the library boards work for the library director, the city manager, the city, or do they represent the taxpayers. Responses agreed that library advisory boards represent the community.
- Grover asked if unincorporated tax dollars are reflecting what is in the best interest of unincorporated residents.
- Nick shared that in Oregon City the city does a survey every two years for how residents view the library, and they just created one for unincorporated residents. They're working to give attention to the unincorporated residents, because ~40% of their community is unincorporated.
- Rick reminded everyone that all but one library indicated they had unincorporated members on their advisory boards in the FY20/21 APR.
- Greg reiterated that both the chair and vice chair of their library board are unincorporated residents.

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- Kathleen reiterated that our obligation is to determine whether libraries are meeting the standards established by the 2008 vote. There are different interpretations as to what the IGA means. There is a catch-22 because the County is not providing direction on the specific issues, and unless we disapprove these reports, we have no way to refer something to the Commissioners asking for guidance. The only way to move on is to vote.
- Al suggested LDAC can't approve or disapprove the reports because there isn't clear guidance on interpretation. Perhaps the group can let the BCC know that is needed.
- Natalie S. suggested the group could be proactive and form a subcommittee to submit this type of request to the BCC.
- Nick thinks this was the whole purpose of the Library District Taskforce, and that framework is good.
  
- Kathleen agreed that clarification is needed going forward, but there is a current concern that has not been resolved. Is the group's answer to its legal obligation to the taxpayers that it will just wait a little longer and it will eventually get fixed? She does not find that acceptable.
  
- Nick doubted the possibility of reviving the Taskforce following the pandemic break.
  
- Rick suggested that, in lieu of the group approving the APR, a letter could be sent to the BCC explaining the impasse and acknowledging the concerns. It appears LDAC's duty is to review the reports and advise the board, not necessarily to approve or reject.
- Sarah suggested this could be a memo with a majority report and a minority report.
  
- Denise noted that with the changes in the reports, it's impossible to compare years.
  
- Al suggested the group could say it is united in confusion. As a result, there are different camps and LDAC needs advice. He proposed a subcommittee could be convened to identify the specific issues that need to be addressed. Then a group of two city managers, two library directors, and two LDAC reps could consider how to address those issues. The Taskforce was created with the best intentions, but it's time to move forward with a new approach.
  
- Natalie S. noted that each city has a unique IGA with the county, which partially explains some of the issues. They won't be resolved without some uniformity.
  
- Desiree endorsed the idea of a subcommittee to reevaluate LDAC's goals and volunteered to be a part of it.
  
- Al asked the group to share their thoughts on the situation:
  - Everyone agreed that the letter should move forward.
  - Grover wanted a better definition of a letter but supports the concept. Grover also volunteered to be on any subcommittee.
  - Kathleen questioned what the majority report would say.
  - Greg thought the most important thing LDAC could do would be to help establish a sustainable revenue model. And while clarity is needed now, he doesn't want the group to lose momentum while figuring things out.
  - Nick supported the letter but would like to see the content of it, and asked if the group would be seeking unanimous approval.

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- Rick suggested LDAC should note in the letter that the group reviewed the reports, acknowledge the disagreement, and note that some LDAC members believe there are violations.
  - Doris recalled the intention behind the District formation and worried that the group could damage what has been built (namely, a district that is funding all libraries) by continuing to be sidetracked by the minutiae. The District is stuck with the existing documents because the BCC never did what they promised to do, which was change the Master Order to include capital expenses once Estacada's capital bond was paid off.
  - Diana expressed frustration at seeing the group still debating the same issues years later and wished LDAC could focus on the future.
  - Sherry discouraged the group from saying that it's united in confusion and would rather see a majority and minority report.
  - Melissa endorsed the idea of a letter asking for guidance.
  - Danny said asking for answers from the Board might help. There is serious concern from directors about the lack of forward progress from the group.
  - Kathleen was confused by Doris's comment about the county not doing what was promised, because as far as she knew all that was promised was what was written in 3-310.
  - Denise lamented our lack of historical data and staff with institutional memory.
  - Natalie S. requested the letter also include action items from the BCC rather than just the minority/majority report.
- AI volunteered to work on a draft letter and send to the group. LDAC will reconvene on Zoom in June to discuss.
  - AI also recommended a subcommittee to look at the Task Force document to identify the pressing needs. Desiree volunteered to join this subcommittee.
  - Grover said LDAC should continue to specifically address funding, services, and governance. He didn't know what a subcommittee would accomplish.
  - AI agreed that the group should define specifically what it's trying to fix, in two to three sentences.
  - Kathleen reminded the group that the subcommittee spent hours distilling their concerns in the May 2019 document on the Taskforce that was submitted to the BCC, so the question is not "What do we need to consider?" but rather "How do we get it moving?"

### Library District future

- Commissioner Savas shared that back in 2004, some cities were frustrated that the unincorporated weren't paying city taxes and cities were subsidizing libraries for the unincorporated areas. City managers & library directors came up with the library district formation.  
The Estacada Capital district created a snag, so they put a temporary provision in where the district would be formed to fund operation and maintenance. The promised fix that Doris referred to was the original intention—to include capital once the Estacada bond was paid off.  
He pulled up 3-310 and quoted the last paragraph, "The Library District would be governed by the Board of County Commissioners and advised by an independent citizen committee... An annual audit of district finances would be conducted and made available to the public. LDAC can make your advisory role as simple or as complicated as you want."

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- Commissioner Savas said that if the County were to follow the history and original intent of the district, it would go back and change the Master Order to say that library district funds could be spent on library operations, services, and capital. He said in 3-310 that the library district funds were not designed or intended to be the sole funding for libraries. But all revenue should go to the cities and that is happening.
- He agreed that the issue needs to be fixed and the group should move on. He believed that if the Master Order was updated to reflect its original intent that no cities would disagree. Unfortunately, there has not been consensus from this group.
- Commissioner Savas referred to the packet from April 20, 2019 about the Taskforce formation that Rick shared with everyone. He said LDAC isn't prepared to hit full speed after the pandemic since new members are still learning. He suggested a subcommittee identifies the issues because they may not be the same as they were in 2019. Perhaps by a survey with ranked priorities. Buy-in from the cities is needed before the District can move forward with anything.
- He suggested the capital spending issue might be solved within 60 days if the group agreed on that as a recommended path forward. He asked if the group wanted to update the Master Order to keep with the original intention of the temporary carve-out for Estacada, allowing District funds to be available for operations, maintenance, and capital.
- Kathleen said she would not vote for that.
- Sarah added that the current rate is not enough to cover capital on top of operations, so the rate needs to be increased.
- Commissioner Savas said he would reframe that to say that District funds *supplement* library operations. Cities need to make up the difference.
- Kathleen's impression was that the cities already were supposed to supplement by way of capital improvements and that the tax was exclusively for operations only. Commissioner Savas said 3-310 did not specifically say cities should supplement by way of capital.
- Natalie S. endorsed the idea of revising the Master Order to alleviate disagreement.
- Greg agreed with Sarah that if the capital is explicitly included, the current tax rate is not sufficient to include both operations and capital. As a taxpayer, he would want to see some kind of commitment to working towards long-term sustainability.
- Al would support including capital improvements because building improvements are often necessary to effectively operate libraries. He thinks a levy is a nice idea, but it could be a challenge since it's voted on immediately after tax bills go out.
- After Al and Doris mentioned Multnomah County Library patrons using the Happy Valley Library more heavily due to closures, Sherry clarified that those library closures are temporary during construction.
- Natalie S. made a motion to develop a subcommittee to create a survey that will identify and rank the issues we want to fix that could be distributed to all libraries, city managers, library board members, and LDAC reps. Nick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Members will include: Al, Desiree, Nick, and Denise.
- Al will draft a letter so everyone can review it on a Zoom meeting at the end of June before passing it on to the BCC.

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## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **LIBRARY SUPPORT SERVICES (NETWORK) BUDGET UPDATE**

- Rick shared that the cuts being made to the Network budget will not directly affect service to the libraries. The process is still ongoing, but things are currently looking relatively good.
- Grover wanted clarification around the budget cuts if they weren't going to be affecting services. Rick explained that cuts included eliminating Taskforce funding and rightsizing budget lines.
- Grover asked how much money was available from the Taskforce and if it would then be able to be used for other things, and Rick explained that it was being cut completely.
- Greg clarified that the Network Office is funded through the County general fund, and just like other general funds, it is coming under pressure, and will likely continue to see cuts in the future. He envisioned future library funding as a district that would include operations, capital, and centralized services to operate as a district.
- Grover asked if people are discussing developing a new district with a higher rate and improved governance to manage what the current IGAs aren't able to. Greg said this was the vision in 2019 that got derailed by COVID.
- Greg argued that the process of changing IGAs, which has been discussed to get clarification regarding capital expenses, is cumbersome and energy would be better spent working towards the future.
- Sarah suggested that perhaps the idea that we will need a modified district for future sustainability can be part of the letter AI is drafting.

## **FUTURE PLANNING**

- AI confirmed that the group wanted to meet at the end of June to discuss the letter.
- Kathleen is in favor of a Zoom meeting, but requests that if anyone has comments they send them to Rick so he can send them to everyone else ahead of time.
- AI suggested to meet at the end of June, perhaps the 26<sup>th</sup>. This meeting will be dedicated to finalizing the letter. The group will meet at 6:00 p.m.
- People shared thoughts about their mothers in honor of Mother's Day.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

- Natalie S. moved to adjourn the meeting. Natalie M. seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.

*Minutes submitted by KT Austin.*