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AGENDA
RICHLAND LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
1431 ASSEMBLY STREET, BOARD ROOM
March 11, 2024
5:30 P.M.

A regular meeting of the Richland Library Board of Trustees was held on Monday, March 11, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.

Board of Trustees Present:

Lee Rambo, Chair
Erin Johnson, Vice Chair
Jon Robertson, Secretary
Brenda B. Branic, Treasurer
Burlean Moses
Cindy Cox
Chelsea Richard
Tyson K. Brown
Valerie Byrd Fort
David Campbell

Library Representatives Present:

Melanie Huggins, Executive Director
Dyan Bowman, CAO
Sarah Sullivan, Finance Director
Heather McCue, Children & Teen Svcs. Mgr.
Wanda Taylor, Exec. Admin. Assistant

Also Present: Rania Jamison (Chair of F + F), Councilpersons Chakisse Newton and Allison Terracio, Citizens Susan Marsh and Jimella Sterling, Anika Thomas, Tina Gills, Lucas Alva, Sonya Montgomery, Chiquita Brooks, Mahogany Skillings, Leah Bartys, Diane Luccy, Kelly Jones, Mary Kate Quillivan, Malika Greene, Curtis Milton, Robbie Wise, Lisa Gieskes

CALL TO ORDER

Chair, Lee Rambo, called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

ADOPT CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Rambo presented the consent agenda to include the full agenda for the meeting and approval of February Board meeting minutes.
(Chair called for objections; with no objections, the consent agenda was adopted.)

CITIZENS INPUT

One citizen signed up to address the Board. Chair Rambo stated that in keeping with Richland Library policy, the Richland Library Board of Trustees will not provide a verbal response to any statements or questions delivered during the citizens input time. If remarks require a follow-up, they should be provided to the Community Relations Manager, either in person, via email or traditional mail. Due to the allotted time for

citizens input, no audio or visual presentations were to be accepted and no signs or placards would be allowed while participating or attending the Board meeting. The Richland Library Code of Conduct would remain applicable during board meetings.

At this time, the Chair stated the Board would hear remarks from citizen, Susan Marsh. The Chair asked that Ms. Marsh state her first and last name and provide remarks for up to a duration of three minutes.

Ms. Marsh followed the Chair's instructions and provided the following three points for consideration:

- Ms. Marsh self-identified as experiencing homelessness and feels her stroller and contents should be allowed as is.
- She feels there are inconsistencies where and what people are allowed to eat in the Library.
- She felt that several rules were inconsistent with the use of, and leaving, the meeting rooms.
- She feels that the rules are always changing and difficult for people to know. She stated she was told she is banned and wishes to appeal that ban.

Chair Rambo, thanked Ms. Marsh for her comments to the Board.

FRIENDS + FOUNDATION REPORT

Chair Rania Jamison provided the report. Note: Due to technical issues, Chair Jamison was unable to complete the report which was then given by Tina Gills, Development Director, who was present.

Board Member Nominations Process

On June 30th, four board members are leaving the board after serving two 3-year terms: Elizabeth Black, Keela Glover, Sharon Greene, and John T. Lay. All four of these Board members have agreed to serve with Chair Jamison, Vice Chair Will Edwards, and Secretary/Treasurer Sarena Burch as the Nominating Committee for this year. The first meeting will be held on March 12 at noon. Chair Jamison suggested contacting herself or Tina Gills should anyone have a recommendation for a potential board member. The Board will continue the commitment to diversity in recruiting candidates who value the Library and bring needed skills to the Board.

Ethel Bolden Minority Fellowship

Last year, the F + F approved an additional \$3,500 in funding to annually support a second Ethel Bolden Minority Fellowship. Previously, there was funding for one \$3,500 fellowship. The second fellowship will help to increase diversity in the Library by recruiting students from underserved/underrepresented ethnic and racial groups who are working toward an undergraduate or graduate degree and who are interested in working for Richland Library.

To that end, Library staff have updated the fellowship application to reflect the addition of a second fellow and included a statement that there will be one fellowship during the fall semester and one in the spring semester. Applications were distributed to area colleges and through a press release last week, and the committee will select the fellows after the April 30th application deadline. The committee is made up of Elizabeth

Black, Chair; Cynthia Richardson Johnson; and Library staff from Human Resources, Learning Engagement, Community Relations, and Development.

Library managers will be asked to submit descriptions of possible projects in their department or locations where a fellow's work would be welcome and needed. Copies of the applications were available at the meeting.

White House Black History Month Celebration

Chair Jamison had the privilege of attending the Black History Month Celebration event at The White House recently and heard Vice President Kamala Harris address the group. During her address, the Vice President stated,

“Across our nation, we have witnessed extremists who try to erase our history. They censor history textbooks and cancel history classes. Tracie Hall, the first Black woman to serve as executive director of the American Library Association, reminded us last year, ‘Free people read freely.’ And yet, today, we see extremists who pass book bans -- book bans in this year of our Lord, 2024. And these extremists not only try to erase the past but to rewrite it.”

When Ms. Jamison returned to Columbia and spoke with Tamara King, Ms. King stated she had recently spoken with Vice President Harris here in Columbia, prior to the White House event. Ms. King had attended a meeting of local pastors and community members prior to the South Carolina State University's "First in the Nation Rally," held in Columbia. During her brief conversation with Vice President Harris, Ms. King thought it was important to mention the struggles currently plaguing libraries nationwide and quoted Tracie Hall's statement, "Free people read freely." That statement obviously left a lasting impression on Vice President Harris for her to include it in her address at The White House a few days later.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Board Treasurer, Brenda B. Branich, provided the following report.

Balance Sheet

Cash and investments increased by \$2.8 million in January. This change was due to \$4.9 million in revenue deposits, \$1.4 million in payroll and benefit payments and \$700 thousand in vendor payments.

Income Statement

County property taxes received was lower than last year due to the collection received by the County through December 31, 2023, being lower than normal. This deficit amount has now been collected by the County and the Library has received \$19 million from tax appropriation on February 15. The revenue received through the end of February is comparable to what has been received in prior years.

Investment earnings are higher than prior year due to the nature of the Library investment in Certificate of Deposits. The checking account earned \$10,615.73 in January and the bank fees were \$1,870.95.

The decrease in miscellaneous revenue from prior year was due to a deposit in January, 2023 for a SCANA settlement. This was a one-time revenue source due to a class action lawsuit settlement of \$9,864.70.

Personnel expense is under budget due to position vacancies. The budget for vacancies was calculated using an approximate 5% vacancy factor. The actual vacancies through December is tracking closer to 10%. The higher than anticipated vacancies are due to a variety of issues. It currently takes significantly more time to find qualified candidates for positions so the positions are vacant longer than anticipated. The administrative team has reviewed vacant positions and feels confident that remaining vacancies reflect the current needs of the Library. These positions are in the process of recruitment. The personnel budget is being closely monitored and unallocated funds will be used for additional staff training and education as well as continued adjustments based on the classification and compensation study.

General operations and contractual services are more than last year due to an increased budget for FY 2024 and the timing of the payment of invoices. Materials and resources, general operations and vehicle operations have more than 42% available due to the timing of the purchases/invoice payments. Programming from donations has more than 42% available due to the timing of programming. The expense is typically higher during the summer months of the year. Facilities and maintenance expenditures include the payments for the escalator project of \$1,187,572.

Grant Income Statement

The Library is managing over \$900,000 in grant projects currently. The Library has received the following grants in January:

- Blue Cross Blue Shield for the Entrepreneur-in-Residence Program - \$10,000
- CG Fuller Foundation for Children's Author program - \$10,000
- Michael Leonard for Studio Services supplies - \$500

Capital Project Income Statement

We are closer to the closing out of these projects. There are still a few outstanding items to be finalized and paid. There are currently about \$2,800 of open purchase orders. These unpaid expenses are for the wayfinding project. There is also \$300,000 set aside for the purchase of Edgewood.

Ms. Branic asked if anyone had questions regarding the charts in the board packet. The charts in the packet were as follows:

2 Year Monthly Cash Investment

This chart showed the trends in balance of the Library's most liquid assets and the break out between cash and investment. Note that the balances began to increase in the month of January, February and March. The balances begin to decrease in April. This trend shows how the revenue flows from the County as property taxes are collected and then submitted to the Library. The investments will always trend down starting in April/May through December. The reason for this is the timing of the payments from the

County for the tax appropriation. The Library receives most of the funding in January and February which is invested. Then the money from the investment is used throughout the rest of the year to fund the Library operating expenses.

FY 2023 Investment Income

This chart showed the monthly investment income/loss from FY 2023. (Keep in mind that the losses were unrealized as of the end of the year). You could see this trend as the market declined in August through October 2022. The income picked up as the market shifted in November 2022 and continued to improve through the end of the year. The FY 2024 analysis sees a steady increase in investment income.

Monthly Revenue

This is a monthly comparison of revenue collected. This is a fiscal year comparison. This chart also showed the property taxes being received from the County in December, January and February.

Monthly Expenditures

This chart is a monthly comparison of expenditures paid. This is a fiscal year comparison. Note that July expenses are typically lower than other months. This is due to accrued payroll in July. August through October typically sees a spike due to payment of book leases and first of the year expenses. May and June spikes due to programming expenses (summer learning program) and year end journal entries to record accruals into the appropriate year. An additional spike in FY 2023 was due to the payment of retention bonuses to staff. Note that the FY 2024 expenditures are trending greater than prior year. This is due to the increased funding received from county property taxes.

General Fund Budget Spent

This chart showed each budget category for the General Fund and what percentage of the budget has been spent as of the financial statement date. Looking at this data using a timeline, an estimated target would be 7/12 or 58% of the budget spent. Some of the personnel spend is lower due to accruing the expense into the prior year and vacancies. Other expenses have a higher percentage due to the timing of the expense payments...such as technology (timing of the payment for contracts).

Grant Fund Budget Spent

This chart showed each grant and the percentage spent of the budget. It showed that 20 of the active grants have been fully spent as of the end of January, 2024. This chart included grants that may have started in prior fiscal years but were still in progress as of July 1, 2023 (the start of the current fiscal year). There are some new grants that have not started expenditures as of January, 2024.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

Proposed Action Items:

Chair Rambo called upon Dyan Bowman to present the action item below.

- A. Approve Contract with Find Great People

Ms. Bowman sought Board approval to contract with Find Great People (FGP) to recruit an interim Finance Director.

This request was due to the pending retirement of the current Finance Director. An interim director will likely be able to begin working immediately. This person will help the Library to evaluate and document current processes and procedures, making recommendations for modifications and ensure successful transfer of experience and knowledge.

The Strategic Plan connection is to engage our team. Finding a talented and skilled leader to manage the Finance department and functions is imperative to maintaining a high-performing workforce that will support the growth and development of the Library.

Funding for this expense should come from the Library's personnel budget. The monthly cost is \$14,500 with an anticipated six-month engagement.

In response to a question raised by Trustee Campbell, it has been advised by FGP that it may take up to four months to hire a full time finance director and this interim position would help to bridge that time issue.

The Chair called for a motion to approve as presented above.
(Motion: B. Branich; Second: D. Campbell; Motion Carried).

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Rambo recognized the Library's County Council liaisons, Chakisse Newton and Allison Terracio. Councilperson Newton thanked all staff for the wonderful work done at the Library and visits frequently with her son. She indicated budget time is upcoming and that a Council workshop would be held on March 12, dedicated to transportation. It is possible the Council may ask voters to support a penny tax program for major road improvements.

The Chair reported that Trustees Brenda B. Branich and Tyson K. Brown will attend the PLA 2024 Conference in Columbus, OH and Trustee Jon Robertson will attend the ALA 2024 Conference in San Diego, CA. She also announced that there will be two spots for Trustees to attend the Urban Libraries Council 2024 Annual Forum in October in Philadelphia, PA. Trustee Valerie Byrd Fort will attend the ALA Conference as a librarian, not as a trustee. Chair of F + F, Rania Jamison, will also attend the ALA Conference.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Edgewood Update – there are no new additional updates. We are still waiting on the finalization (signatures) of paperwork.

The ED asked Heather McCue, Children and Teen Services Manager, to speak about the upcoming Augusta Baker(s) Dozen events, in partnership with the Augusta Baker Endowed Chair, Dr. Nicole Cooke and her team, including Trustee Byrd Fort. This is the 38th year of celebrating August Baker(s) Dozen. On Thursday, April 18 at 10:00 am,

fourth graders from around the county will come to the Robert Mills House for storytelling on the lawn. This is a much-loved annual event. On Saturday, April 20, 3:00 – 5:00 pm, A Celebration of Stories will be held at Main. Ms. McCue, gave a copy of the book, *Go Forth and Tell, The Life of AUGUSTA BAKER, Librarian and Master Storyteller* to each Trustee. Heather extended an invitation for Trustees to attend one or both events.

Ms. Huggins presented the data highlights for March which focused on the Wheatley location. Although Wheatley is one of the smallest locations in square feet. Their readers put them in the top five locations for holds checkouts in 2023. Circulation, door count, number of programs, and program attendees all increased in 2023 at Wheatley. Jessica Daly is the location manager.

The Executive Director gave a post Covid data summary which covered the following:

Comparing to Jul - Dec 2019 to Jul - Dec 2023
Door count 60% of 2019 (957,852 to 573,576)
Circulation 82% of 2019 (2,160,673 to 1,769,259)
Programs 76% of 2019 (2,390 to 1,811)
Attendance 88% of 2019 (34,772 to 30,585)

Ms. Huggins stated that if Covid had not occurred, the door count and circulation would be down as they had been trending down nationwide and statewide for at least five years, by roughly 6% and 2% respectively in South Carolina. It's impossible to say what could have happened but worth noting there is no guarantee that numbers would be significantly higher without Covid. Ms. Huggins stated that Mary Frances Cely in Planning and Projects indicated this is the trend across the nation. Additionally, looking at the past years for IMLS, the number of programs for our total fiscal years aren't too different (3,914 in 2019, 3,993 in 2023).

A reminder was given about Overdue on Friday, March 15, 7:00 – 11:00 pm at Richland Main. Names of performers and planned activities were given.

Ms. Huggins stated that on Monday, March 18 at Main, a lunch would take place with community partners to celebrate National Social Work Month. Mayor Daniel J. Rickenmann will address the group.

Community Development will recognize Financial Literacy Month at Columbia City Council meeting on Tuesday, March 19 at 4:00 pm. Diane Luccy and Sylvie Golod (BCR) will be presented with a Financial Literacy Proclamation relating to ongoing collaborative workshops.

Richland Library's Karen Strickland, Walker Local History Room, received a resolution from Richland County Council for her work in championing Hettie Anderson to receive her just due acknowledgement. Karen has also led a program here at the Library about Hettie Anderson. Ms. Anderson was born in Columbia and was an art model of the Gilded Age. A marker has been erected on the west side of Wayne Street, between Taylor and Blanding streets, near where she grew up. Her likeness was used by many

prominent artists for such works as *Winged Victory*, the General William Tecumseh Sherman Monument in NYC and the \$20 gold coin.

DATE OF NEXT BOARD MEETING

The Board will meet on April 8, 2024.

ADJOURN

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Jon Robertson, Secretary