

## **THE LIBRARY BOARD MEETING**

Library of Virginia

September 14, 2020

The Library Board met electronically on Monday, September 14, 2020, via Zoom Internet Conferencing and the LVA YouTube channel live broadcast.

### **I. CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME/QUORUM**

L. Preston Bryant Jr., chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., and immediately took an attendance roll call of the Board.

The following members were in attendance:

L. Preston Bryant Jr., *chair*  
Kathy Johnson Bowles, *vice chair*  
Laura L. L. Blevins  
Paul Brockwell Jr.  
Maya Castillo  
Mohammed Esslami  
R. Chambliss Light Jr.  
Barbara Vines Little  
Mark Miller  
Shelley Viola Murphy  
Blythe Ann Scott  
Marcy Sims  
Leonard C. Tengco

Mr. Bryant noted that a quorum of the Library Board was present and commented that Board member Robert D. Aguirre would be joining the meeting later.

Mr. Bryant welcomed the Board members and all present on the Zoom internet conferencing meeting.

### **II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Bryant asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda. A motion to approve was made by R. Chambliss Light Jr., seconded by Kathy Johnson Bowles, and the agenda was approved unanimously.

### **III. APPROVAL OF THE LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES OF JUNE 26, 2020 BOARD MEETING.**

then asked if there were any amendments to the minutes from the June 26, 2020 meeting. As none were offered, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Laura L. L. Blevins moved to approve the minutes, and Mark Miller seconded the motion. The June 26, 2020 Board meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

#### IV. COMMITTEE AND DIVISION REPORTS

- **Archival, Collections, and Records Management Services Committee**

Archival, Collections, and Records Management Services Committee Chair Barbara Vines Little began her report by expressing her delight that the Library of Virginia has joined Family Search as an affiliate library which will open up worldwide access to research to LVA patrons. She highlighted some of the milestone accomplishments in the area of Vital Records microfilm scanning that Ancestry has finished to date and appears to be on track to have the Department of Vital Statistics records online by end of September 2021. One up side to the pandemic has been that many more chancery indexing project records and transcription approval work by teleworking staff have made records stored in our collection far more accessible than before. Ms. Little invited State Archivist Mike Strom to update the Board on the progress being made with the processing and releasing of the gubernatorial records of former Governor Wilder. As of today's date, 46 percent of the records have been processed; with the staff assigned to the project, he is confident we will meet the January 1, 2021 deadline to complete processing the records and make them available to the public. He is also keeping Governor Wilder's team regularly updated about the progress the Library is making.

- **Education, Outreach, and Research Services Committee**

Next, Mr. Bryant invited Education, Outreach, and Research Services Committee Chair Kathy Johnson Bowles to give the committee report. Ms. Bowles commended the Library staff for their work, dedication and flexibility in being able to quickly shift focus to more online programming to engage with our audiences during the pandemic. Some of the areas they've been able to scale up online programming are with genealogical research with the 2020 workshop series. This included census records, finding female ancestors, maps that are helpful in genealogical research and an overview of records from 1865 to 1880 in the aftermath of the Civil War for African American genealogy research. Ms. Bowles made special note of the work that has gone into the current *We Demand: Women's Suffrage in Virginia* exhibit, which commemorates the 100th Anniversary of woman's suffrage with the passage of 19th Amendment. While the exhibition is again open to the public, she encouraged all to watch the videos the staff have made about the exhibition which highlights some controversial aspects of the women's suffrage movement in Virginia, in particular the role of women of color in the movement. As venues across the Commonwealth have reopened, some of the traveling exhibitions were back on the road. The Inter-library Loan program has resumed after establishing best practices from around the country on safe handling of loaned items. Though the Library has reopened to the public there are many patrons not able to come physically for research and therefore there has been a 35 percent increase of more written requests for research assistance compared to the same time period of 2019. Reference staff have been going above and beyond by conducting more in-depth research than normal to accommodate remote customers. Ms. Bowles invited Gregg Kimball, Public Services and Outreach Division Director, to share some programming highlights. Mr. Kimball reported on this year's *Datathon* which the Library is cosponsoring with the Commonwealth's

Chief Data Officer, Carlos Rivero. This will be a completely virtual and live-streamed event with over thirty teams. The focus will be working with big data to come up with innovative solutions to important issues related to the coronavirus pandemic in our communities. Mr. Kimball invited Education and Outreach Manager Catherine Fitzgerald Wyatt to report on several upcoming programs. Ms. Fitzgerald Wyatt briefly shared about the creation of more online content of current exhibits, David Rencher from FamilySearch giving a webinar in honor of our affiliate status with FamilySearch, and shared that the 11th Annual Anne and Ryland Brown Teacher's Institute was totally virtual this year and had forty participants. The keynote address was given by Dr. Hasan Kwame Jeffries from Ohio State University. Dr. Jeffries has worked with the Southern Poverty Law Center in developing a framework for teaching slavery in K-12 classrooms. In his presentation during the Teacher's Institute, he and co-presenter Chris Matthews, a fourth grade teacher from the Norfolk public school district, discussed some of the challenges in teaching this difficult subject of U.S. history. Other presenters featured at the Teacher's Institute discussed Reconstruction and Jim Crow eras, segregation, and also looked at some local history of Danville, VA.

- **Legislative and Finance Committee**

Next, the Legislative and Finance Committee Chair R. Chambliss Light Jr. invited Librarian of Virginia Sandra Treadway to give the financial and legislative reports prepared by Director of Administration and Finance Connie Warne; Ms. Warne was not able to attend today's meeting. Dr. Treadway reviewed the financial reports relaying that the Library closed out last year's budget at the end of June on track and on budget. In reviewing the current year's budget and expenditures, Dr. Treadway commented that as usual the expenditures for July reflect the payment of our yearly rent to the Department of General Services and the issuance of the first quarter state aid payment to Virginia public libraries. This year's budget information also reflects funds removed from the approved budget as passed in April by the General Assembly; these un-allotted funds were a result of the economic impact of the pandemic based on projected revenue shortfalls. This reduced the original approved budget by over \$1 million of Virginia Library State Aid funds and \$400,000 requested for the processing of gubernatorial records.

Mr. Light went on to explain the one action item from the Legislative and Finance Committee that the Board needed to vote on; the approval of the 2020-2021 Library Services & Technology Act Grant Budget (LSTA). Dr. Treadway gave an overview on the history behind the LSTA Grant and its primary purpose to fund mostly statewide technical library services. The funds are distributed based on population data of localities and funding is dependent upon annual appropriations from the U.S. Congress. The funding year is from October 1 to the end of the following September and this year's grant to Virginia is a little over four million dollars. After brief discussion, Mr. Light asked for clarification of the voting procedure for the electronic meeting. Audrey Burges, Assistant Attorney General and Library Board Liaison confirmed that all voting in the electronic meeting must be by roll call vote, but indicated that Mr. Bryant could confirm the unanimous approval of the earlier votes taken today by a verbal confirmation now.

Mr. Bryant asked for a verbal confirmation by the board members present on both the approval of the agenda for today's Board meeting and the minutes of the June 26, 2020 Board Meeting, which were both verbally confirmed as approved unanimously. Mr. Bryant then went on to take a roll call vote to approve the LSTA Grant Budget; the LSTA Grant Budget was approved unanimously. Absent from the meeting and vote at this time were Board members Robert D. Aguirre and Leonard C. Tengco.

- **Public Library Development Committee**

Public Library Development Committee Chair Mark Miller expressed his enthusiasm for chairing this committee for the coming year and shared some of the items he anticipates working on such as State Aid and the LSTA budget. Mr. Miller invited Public Library & Network Development Director Nan Carmack to update the Board on funds from the CARES Act.

Dr. Carmack reported that Virginia received slightly over \$770,000 from the CARES Act for Libraries; qualifications to receive these grant monies were threefold: high poverty, high unemployment, and low broadband accessibility. The top three regions that met these criteria were not surprisingly southern Virginia, southwestern Virginia and parts of the Eastern Shore. Twenty libraries met one to three of the grant criteria; all but two have submitted grant applications which are in process. Dr. Carmack described examples of how some of the localities were utilizing these funds to meet constituent internet needs ranging from purchasing vehicles to provide travelling broadband internet wifi access points at different places within the county where there is also cell service, buying hotspots and chrome books for students and laptops to loan out to the public, to installing lockers at community locations so that devices can be left there to be borrowed. These innovative solutions are temporary band-aids and underscores the significant inequity of broadband internet access for many across Virginia. Since going online has been the main alternative choice during the pandemic for most education and government services, this has brought to the fore the fact that forty percent of Virginians are at great disadvantage in accessing these services. As the grant funds have to be expended by September 30, 2020, sustainability of programs is of concern and they are looking at writing new grants and finding community partners. Mr. Miller commented that in light of the above information this also heightens the urgency to reevaluate the formula used for allocating state aid; the current formula distributes funds in even amounts to all localities instead of based proportionately on need. The American Library Association also is looking at working with the U.S. Department of Defense to provide telehealth options for veterans via libraries for the same reasons of lack of broadband internet access across rural areas. Dr. Carmack wrapped up her report relaying that the Library is also working towards a collaborative model with the Virginia Workforce Development Board, Virginia Employment Commission and the Small Business Development Center to help meet the needs of the many people who are or will be looking to find jobs due to the economic impact of the pandemic; libraries are a crucial hub for that support.

- **Report of the Foundation**

Mr. Bryant asked Foundation Executive Director Scott Dodson to speak next. Mr. Dodson noted he had just celebrated his one year anniversary at the Foundation and congratulated the Library Board ~~and Foundation Board~~ for reaching one hundred percent Board member participation with the Foundation's annual fund. Being able to show that commitment by the Board goes a long way in supporting fundraising efforts to prospective donors. He reported they ended the past year with a slight audited deficit due to fluctuations in the market late in June, but so far since then the market has recovered and has been positively impacting the Foundation's investments. Fundraising efforts are going well to date, showing significant improvement from the same time period last year. Because of those positive trends they've been able to increase program funding as well as make strategic investments in the Foundation.

In addition to increased funding of current programs, the Foundation is looking at developing programmatic initiatives that generate targeted funding which falls outside of the general unrestricted fundraising efforts. An example of this is the current work with the Collections team to conserve and make digital all the Jefferson Hotel architectural drawings; this is a big piece of Virginia history preservation and the Library will have the sole architectural records collection for future reference and research.

Strategic investments made for broadening the Foundation's development bandwidth have been: retaining the Curtis Group, a fundraising consulting firm out of Norfolk to help with building a state wide fundraising infrastructure; contracting a grant writer to build our grant portfolio; and hiring a full time Assistant Director of Development, Elaine McFadden, who was the Director of Corporate & Foundation Giving at the Virginia Museum of History. The Foundation is now better positioned to find resources to fill in where state funding is lacking.

The Foundation is also working with Library staff to create and raise funds for a digital studio in order to meet the growing need for high quality digital programming, as well as working on University Fellowship Initiatives with the aim of being better able to attract people of color into positions in the Library and Archives field. Both Dr. Treadway and Dr. Metz have provided leadership with this initiative and with input from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, we will be in a position to create a program which can be utilized throughout the country once established.

Mr. Dodson shared they have begun work on commemoration planning of the 50th Anniversary of Virginia's Constitution coming up next year and thanked Mr. Bryant for his invaluable assistance in taking a leadership role in that endeavor. Mr. Dodson concluded his report by sharing an outline of the upcoming Literary Awards which this year would be totally online. The awards will take place over a five day period, include three panels with the finalists, the Mary Lynn Kotz Awards, and culminate Saturday night, October 17, 2020 with featured speaker Douglas Brinkley, U.S. presidential historian and best-selling author.

An additional feature throughout the five days of award events will be short videos of selected Library staff to promote a broader understanding of all the Library does and the difference staff make in the lives of patrons through the work done here.

Mr. Bryant thanked Mr. Dodson and invited Librarian of Virginia Sandra Treadway to give her report.

- **Report of the Librarian**

Dr. Treadway shared that they were all still learning to navigate the new normal and find that right balance between virtual and in person interaction, communication and engagement with patrons. The focus continues to be on keeping all safe. The current policies have been working well and she anticipates them continuing at least until the end of the year. Dr. Treadway commended the Library facilities staff for their tireless efforts to keep up the sanitization throughout the facility. She spoke briefly about the status of the budget impacts being considered in the current special session of the General Assembly; currently the \$400,000 requested for the processing of backlogged gubernatorial records remains in the budget, but just for this year. She invited Mr. Bryant to speak further on the budget and the 50th Anniversary of Virginia's Constitution.

- **Report of the Chair**

Mr. Bryant shared some highlights from the state budget short-fall and projections for the next eighteen months for the Commonwealth. If the House and Senate can't come to a decision on the budget in the current special session, the budget will revert to what was passed in March earlier this year. Mr. Bryant then discussed 2021, the 50th Anniversary of Virginia's Constitution ratified in 1971; it had not been changed since 1902. Much that was changed in 1971 reflected advancements in civil rights for African Americans and other people of color. The Governor has identified an informal working group of interested parties in commemorating the anniversary which includes the Virginia Humanities, Dick Howard – UVA professor involved in drafting the 1971 constitution, and the Library of Virginia. Commemorative ideas being considered range from a Teacher's Institute, online exhibits, travelling exhibits, workshops with the State Bar Association, Law Schools, and community engagement.

Mr. Bryant indicated the Board would be voting on two action items and explained the process and order they would be taking the roll call votes, who would be voting on which items and when, as outlined in the Library Board Bylaws. The Committee assignments he had made for this year were before them in the Board Meeting packet and the first action item was to have the existing Executive Committee, consisting of Mr. Bryant, Ms. Bowles, Ms. Scott, and Mr. Light, nominate the proposed slate of Nominating Committee members, which Mr. Bryant recommended consist as follows:

Blythe Ann Scott, Chair  
Marcy Sims  
Mohammed Esslami

Robert Aguirre  
Paul Brockwell Jr.

Mr. Bryant then asked members of the Executive Committee for a motion to approve the proposed slate of Nominating Committee members. Ms. Bowles motioned, Mr. Light seconded the motion and a roll call vote was then taken of the four Executive Committee Members present, Mr. Bryant, Ms. Bowles, Ms. Scott, and Mr. Light; the motion passed unanimously.

Next, Mr. Bryant addressed the newly appointed Nominating Committee members, Ms. Scott, Ms. Sims, Mr. Esslami, Mr. Aguirre, and Mr. Brockwell, asking them for a motion to nominate the Board Officers and the three other board members proposed below as the slate for the Executive Committee:

L. Preston Bryant Jr., Chair  
Kathy Johnson Bowles, Vice Chair  
R. Chamblis Light Jr.  
Blythe Ann Scott  
Shelley Viola Murphy

Ms. Scott motioned to approve the slate of officers and members of the Executive Committee as proposed; the motion was seconded by Mr. Esslami and a roll call vote was taken of the entire board. The motion was approved unanimously. Leonard Tengco did not vote as he had left the zoom meeting by the time of the roll call vote.

**V. OLD OR NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Bryant asked whether there was any old or new business to be discussed. Mr. Esslami inquired about the Bylaws Committee that he is chairing this year and it was suggested that the Librarian's office send an electronic copy of the most recent Bylaws to all the Board members. Dr. Treadway also inquired as to whether there had been any comments or questions submitted from the public; Nancy Orr, executive assistant to the Librarian of Virginia, confirmed that there had been no inquiries or comments submitted from the public. Mr. Bryant suggested that the Library Board Bylaws be posted on the Library of Virginia's website as well.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Mr. Bryant thanked everyone for their dedication and attendance. He asked for a motion to adjourn, which was given by Mr. Brockwell; it was seconded by Ms. Scott and the motion to adjourn passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:38 a.m.