



King County Library System Board of Trustees Meeting

Videoconference
5pm ♦ February 24, 2021

PRESENT

KCLS Board

Pamela Grad
Ron Higgs
Harish Kulkarni
Robin McClelland
Anne Repass
Lalita Uppala

KCLS Staff

Julie Acteson
Angelina Benedetti
Jenny Engstrom
Maria Hatcher
Nicholas Lee
Cynthia McNabb
Jed Moffitt
Dominica Myers
Danielle Perry
Lisa Rosenblum
Ken Ryals
Greg Smith

MOTIONS APPROVED

1. Board Meeting agenda
2. January 27, 2021 Board meeting minutes
3. Payroll expenditures
4. General Fund #0010 expenditures

CALL TO ORDER

President Ron Higgs called the meeting to order at 5pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Pamela Grad moved approval of the Board Meeting agenda. Anne Repass seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

Robin McClelland moved approval of the January 27, 2021 Board Meeting minutes. Harish Kulkarni seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC FORUM

Fernando Recinos submitted the following written statement:

Hello, my name is Fernando and I am speaking on behalf of the Skyway Youth Network Collaborative (SYNC) Leadership Council.

We are composed of youth leaders ages 14-24, representing six different high schools and college campuses. As an organization, we work towards providing a voice for underrepresented youth in the Skyway area towards the various issues that our community faces. In previous years, we have carried out community-based research, presented legislative recommendations alongside the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, and represented youth in our community by giving public comment at King County Council meetings.

This year, we were virtually housed by the King County Library System for the first time as a youth program, facilitated by a library staff member. In addition to recruiting four new members, we partnered with the King County Department of Community and Human Services to work collaboratively on an Anti-Displacement Report.

As was stated in the application for this year's cohort, a small stipend was promised as compensation for the work we would be carrying out throughout the year. This stipend was to be funded by our partners at the King County Department of Community and Human Services. However, just a few weeks ago, we were notified that despite initial promises, KCLS administration had deemed our work unsuitable for compensation.

Their decision was made without our knowledge, disrupting the progress we had already made. Not only does this disregard our work as a council and our involvement in the Skyway community, but it also negatively impacts those of us who are relying on these stipends for financial needs. Three of us are college students, trying to pay for tuition.

It is also nearly impossible for young people in our community to find work that does not put us at a health risk during these times.

Although the situation has since been rectified, the promises made to us should have been upheld in the first place. Going back on their word was highly unethical, and has broken our trust in the KCLS administration.

Those who have the resources to help youth of color access leadership opportunities should be doing just that, not creating higher barriers and making it even more difficult for us.

Skyway and its residents have been historically and systematically underserved, underrepresented, and disregarded. This matter of integrity represents something larger, and sets a precedent on how we value and respect our youth as the future leaders in our communities.

Alicia Ing submitted the following written statement:

My name is Alicia, and I am another member of the SYNC Leadership Council.

After we learned about the decision that was made, we knew we could not stand back and stay silent. We decided to dedicate our own time towards drafting a statement, and launch a petition to collect support from our community.

In just five days, we received over 146 signatures on our petition. 81.5% of our signees were under the age of 24, meaning we the council directly represent their views. I would like to take some time now to read some of the comments that they left us:

“KCLS needs to honor their promises to the youth group and keep their word. It is interesting how this youth group is made of minorities and kids (youth) of color and they want to take away a small stipend for them.”

“Don’t make promises you can’t keep! Disregarding and devaluing our youth puts constraints on our future growth as a community for years to come.”

“Just because they are youth does not mean they should be valued less.”

“Youth voices cannot be taken advantage of like this.”

“I know many of these amazing youth as former students in our school and know how much value they bring towards any community and organization. This work that is being done is extremely valuable and we should be encouraging young people to participate in such actions while also demonstrating integrity and honesty. What’s happened here is unacceptable and I am proud of this group for taking action to right the wrong that has taken place here. I’m hopeful that the administration will also do what’s right and keep the initial promise of a much-deserved compensation to these amazing individuals. I hope you all receive what you were promised! Your hard work doesn’t go unnoticed and I appreciate everything you all do for our community.”

“These leaders are working hard to build a better community, and deserve to be fairly compensated for their work.”

“This is absurd and exploitative. We must protect our youth from being tokenized especially by those in power.”

“Support Skyway youth. The administration’s decision to take back their word and disregard the voices of Skyway young leaders is a continuation of the unjust and inequitable practices that impact minority communities who live in Skyway.”

Skyway young leaders need to be fairly compensated for their commitment, organizing, and activism that they contribute for the community.”

“I remember being a part of the SYNC my senior year and the wonderful work done by the team. You guys provide an amazing opportunity for both high school & college students to collaborate and speak on behalf of the skyway community. I hope you guys get your well-deserved compensation soon. Keep up the good work!”

“You absolutely should be compensated - the administration's decision was unprofessional and unethical, and demands to be reversed. I hope you all get the compensation you deserve and thank you so much for the time and effort you put into this work.”

“Please reconsider taking away the compensation and potentially losing and discouraging your potential future leaders of the Skyway Community.”

“I fully support this call to accountability. I strongly urge you to honor the commitment that was made to these incredible young leaders that are serving our Skyway community.”

Thank you for your time, and we hope that in the future, KCLS and the SYNC leadership council can work together to help Skyway youth reach their fullest potential.

Executive Director Lisa Rosenblum said the situation the speakers described is the first she’s heard of it. She was not asked to either approve or disapprove funding and said she will find out what caused the confusion. She apologized to SYNC on behalf of KCLS for the apparent misunderstanding and said staff will follow up.

Erik Yeats said he and his wife, a KCLS employee, are scared that staff are being asked to return to work before being vaccinated, when the current rate of Covid-19 infections is peaking again. While everyone remains vulnerable to a fourth wave of the virus, he asked why KCLS as the largest Library System in the state hasn’t called upon the Governor to give librarians the same priority status as others who are included in Phase 1B, or at least ask to be given more time for libraries to reopen. He said it is only a matter of weeks until vaccines will be fully available to the public, and he called upon the Board to delay opening libraries until everyone has access to being vaccinated.

Lisa Rosenblum said she has asked for libraries to be prioritized for vaccinations in her role as Executive Director. Up to this point, only 17 staff have gotten COVID over the last year, and transmission was not tied to any KCLS building. As libraries reopen, modified services will look different from what is customary. While she does not intend to try to change minds, she said KCLS continues to do the best it can to balance the needs of staff with those in the community who need access to library services.

STAFF REPORTS

PANDEMIC RECOVERY - SERVICES & STAFFING UPDATE

Library Operations Director Jenny Engstrom said KCLS’ service priorities didn’t change over the last year, but became even more critical as the pandemic exacerbated economic, social, and health impacts on communities KCLS serves and those hardest hit, including older adults, limited English-speaking households, patrons experiencing homelessness and students facing food insecurity.

After libraries shut down in March 2020, staff immediately had to adjust services to be virtual and contactless, while simultaneously planning for the eventual reopening of libraries without benefit of knowing an exact date. KCLS’ Joint Labor-Management Collaboration established a Re-entry Committee comprised of 18 members who worked with three standing committees - Scheduling Process, Security, and Safety - to develop a thoughtful and comprehensive plan that adhered to all public health protocols for mask-wearing, social distancing, and building capacity restrictions in alignment with Governor Inslee’s Safe Start Washington and Healthy Washington plans.

Early phases of the plan focused on online programming and virtual information services while buildings remained closed. Starting in June, when staff was allowed to return to buildings, KCLS opened book drops

for limited hours at initial locations, slowly ramped up hours and locations, and added curbside contactless service for holds pickup and printing. Grants secured through the Foundation allowed for installation of pickup lockers at the Bothell and Covington libraries and extension of Wi-Fi signals to parking lots at 44 locations. After King County entered Phase 2, KCLS reopened to the public on March 3 with modified in-building service at six locations. The Phase 2 plan is intentionally small and simple to allow flexibility to scale up or down depending on need. It incorporates equity considerations and manages conditions to minimize potential for conflict between patrons and staff. Some libraries will offer in-building services only, curbside services only, or a hybrid of the two.

At every stage, KCLS has held virtual Town Halls prior to implementing each service change, covering topics ranging from cleaning and sanitation procedures to managing the environment. Throughout KCLS has also offered a series of trainings and online sessions to provide support resources for staff.

FINANCE REPORT

Total general fund revenues for fiscal year 2020 were \$126.6M and reflect 97.6% of the total revenues budget. Year-over-year total revenues received were up 0.2%.

Total general fund expenditures for fiscal year 2020 were \$111.4M and reflect 84.2% of the total expenditures budget, and a 10.5% decrease in year-over-year expenditures compared to the prior year.

Total expenditures in the Capital Investment Program (CIP) for fiscal year 2020 were \$3.5M and reflect 69.4% of the total CIP expenditures budget. By category:

- Total CIP-FMS expenditures were \$2.7M (71.9% of category budget)
- Total CIP-ITS \$853K (62.7% of category budget)

January revenue was \$304.9K, which reflects only 0.2% of the total revenue budget. KCLS will receive the first semi-annual property tax revenue disbursement in April.

January expenditures were \$10.4M, representing 8.0% of the total expenditures budget with 8.33% of the budget year completed. Year-over-year expenditures decreased 8.0%.

There were no expenditures in the Capital Investment Program (CIP) in January.

APPROVAL OF MONTHLY EXPENDITURES

Lalita Uppala moved approval of Payroll expenditures for January in the amount of \$2,699,690.49: (01/08) Ck#00200419-00200441; 366539086-366540345 and (01/22) Ck#00200442-00200462; 369576905-369578180. Harish Kulkarni seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Anne Repass moved approval of General Fund #0010 expenditures for January in the amount of \$4,979,794.17: Travel Advances - Ck#; (01/14) Ck#5012610-5012613; 1131726-1131791; (01/19) Ck#5012614; 1131792-1131806; (01/21) Ck#5012615-5012618; 1131807-1131813; (01/21) Ck#1131814-1131890; (01/26) Ck#1131891-1131960; (01/28) Ck#5012619-5012621; 1131961-1132043; (02/02) Ck#5012622; 1132044-1132089; (02/04) Ck#5012623-5012627; 1132090-1132092; (02/04) Ck#1132093-1132119; 5012628; Voids - Ck#. Pamela Grad seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Lisa Rosenblum felt it was important for the Board to hear the extent of the planning that has gone in to safely reopening libraries and thanked Jenny Engstrom for providing a comprehensive report. She said KCLS is a strong organization with talented, competent staff at every level and the work couldn't have been done without them. As buildings gradually reopen, staff will keep the Board apprised of what is working and what needs to be done differently.

TRUSTEES REPORT

Robin McClelland acknowledged Marcellus Turner, Chief Librarian of Seattle Public Library, who has accepted a new position as Chief Executive Officer and Chief Librarian for the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library in Charlotte, N.C. She said Marcellus has been a force for libraries both regionally and nationally, and she particularly appreciated his role in organizing the first regional trustees' retreat with the Boards from King, Pierce, Kitsap, and Sno-Isle Library Systems.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:59pm.

Ron Higgs, President



Anne Repass, Secretary