CALS Board of Directors Meeting

July 23, 2026, 12 p.m.
Hybrid Meeting: Main Library & Zoom Video Call

Board Members in attendance were Karama Neal, Luke Underwood, Madhav Shroff, Esperanza Massana-Crane, Alexis Sims, Dustin McDaniel, Ryan Davis, Ginann Swindle, Jennifer Jamison, and Audrey Evans. David Finkbeiner, Denise Ennett, and Joyce Elliot were absent.

Staff in attendance were Nate Coulter, Ray Terry, Sarah Sewell, Sam Sewell, Carol Coffey, Nathan Smith, SJ DeYoung, Tameka Lee, Gonzalo Hernandez, Pam Estes, Jessica Scott, Jo Spencer, Joyce Wesley, Brandin Gibbons, Kate Matthews, Eliza Borné, Leslie Blanchard, Ellen Samples, Heather Zbinden, Amanda Orgel, Kaitlin Davidson, Michael Chambers, Hannah Saulters, Averille O'Neal Jr, Star Carr, Mattie Thacker, and Priscilla Barnes.

Others: Toney Orr and Greg Moore from United Labor Unions.

Action Items

1. Call to Order and Approval of June Minutes

Neal called the meeting to order and asked for a motion to approve the June 25, 2026, meeting minutes. Evans made a motion to approve the June 25, 2026, meeting minutes. Shroff seconded the motion. Sims commented on the ARCAN summation in the minutes. She stated that the description did not reflect all the comments that were made. She also stated that Board members would benefit from receiving documents earlier, to have more time to prepare. Neal added that the minutes could be edited to reflect Sims' comments. With that caveat, the motion to approve the June minutes was approved unanimously.

2. Approval of the June Financial Report

Underwood reported the expenditure is running right on budget, year to date. Ad valorum taxes are up about two and a half percent, year-over-year, at

$13,490,000. General fund assets total $114,867,821. General fund cash is approximately $5,000,000. Reserves are $7,870,000.

Neal filed the June financials for audit.

3. Resolution to Authorize Use of Reserves to Complete the Roberts Library Capital Projects

Spencer mentioned that this resolution will allow reserves to complete the Roberts capital projects, both inside and outside the Library. The resolution would allow $353,000 of reserves to be used on the renovations. Underwood asked if this money would come out of the Arvest Money Market accounts. Spencer replied in the affirmative. Neal thanked Underwood and Spencer for the summary and reminded everyone that the Board was aware of the expense. Underwood made a motion to approve the resolution. Shroff seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Information Items

1. Director's Report

Coulter mentioned a few items from his Director's Report:

- Coulter introduced Joyce Wesley, the new Community Resources Manager. He mentioned Wesley's background as LRSD Board president. He added that he has heard positive feedback from the community, regarding Wesley's hiring.
- Coulter recognized the CALS Summer interns that were in attendance, which included Averille O'Neal Jr, with Administration, and Sam Sewell, with Rooker Library. Coulter asked Sewell what he enjoyed most about his internship. Sewell replied that he really enjoyed Children's Storytime.
- Coulter introduced Robertson, who mentioned the ongoing work of digitizing the LeMaster collection. Some items from the collection are available for Board members to view. Those items are in the Pryor room.

- Coulter and Estes described how the Bookmobile was initially outfitted to allow patrons to send faxes, check-out computers, and make photocopies. However, no one has ever used those resources. Patrons continue to ask for more access to children's books. Neal asked if there was a schedule for the Bookmobile locations. Estes replied that yes, that information is on the CALS website.
- Coulter recognized Scott and asked the Board members to look for Scott when they attend the Bookstore opening. The soft opening is August 14th, which will coincide with 2nd Friday Art Night. The ribbon-cutting ceremony is August 20th.
- Coulter recognized Hernandez to discuss the ongoing renovation projects at Roberts. Hernandez reported that the ramp should be completed in approximately one month, with the installation of handrails. Underwood asked if there were any signs of pigeons at Roberts. Hernandez responded that yes, pigeons have been seen on the building. He added that once construction is complete, the abatement equipment will be turned on, and the pigeons should leave.
- Coulter shared some cumulative attendance data for CALS. In June 2026, CALS had 127,165 library visits. Using that data to estimate yearly visits, which would mean CALS has over one million yearly visits. Coulter noted that CALS will have more annual visitors than Crystal Bridges, the Clinton Presidential Center, the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts, and the Museum of Discovery. Sims asked about the decline in meeting room usage. Spencer added that it is due to Main being closed for much of the last year. Coffey added that the numbers will better align in October of this year, once Main has been reopened for a year.

2. Analytics Dashboard (Strategic Plan) preview

Coffey showed the Board the analytics dashboard that will track and report the Strategic Plan progress. This data will also be available to the public, via the CALS website. Coffey added that this tool will help streamline the data collection from branches. Coffey highlighted library visits and circulation at the branch-level. Neal

asked if data would go back to January 2025. Coffey answered yes, her plan is to have a static, year-by-year breakdown. Coffey added that data included in the Board reports will be on the Analytics Dashboard. Items not in the Board report, like website visits, will also be included. Neal thanked Coffey for her presentation and for bringing accountability to the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Evans also thanked Coffey for her work.

3. Move to Adjourn

Sims asked that staff consider getting Board materials to members earlier in the week, to allow members more time to review the materials before the Board meeting. Sims noted that receiving the materials the day before the meeting did not always allow enough time for review. Neal thanked Sims for her comments. Neal asked for a motion to adjourn. Underwood made the motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Sims and passed unanimously. With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:45 pm.