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DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

**LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD (LAB)
ANNUAL REPORT CY 2020**

A. Members

The LAB consists of a chairperson and twelve members of which six members are representatives from various Friends groups. The Chair serves at the pleasure of the County Executive. The Chair and Members are appointed by the County Executive with the advice and consent of County Council. At present the Board has a chairperson and eleven members. There is one vacancy.

Member List:

Chair – Dr. Abdullah Muhammad

Members - Kay Bowes, Janet Dean, Subira Ibrahim, Constance Malin, Cheryl Rice-Moore, Rose Passarella, Margaret Ann Ryan, Sophia Sotilleo, Anita Sterling, Judy Taggart, and Jim Young.

B. Functions

The LAB shall advise the County Library Manager by reviewing and making policy recommendations on such matters as local library needs; implementation of an effective library system; new and modified administrative policies; and other strategic planning and operational issues pertinent to the operation of the County's libraries.

C. Accomplishments

LAB Members were actively engaged in their advisory role for 2020. The Board met in January, February, March, April, May, June, September, October, November and December for regular meetings.

- During the pandemic, Board members continued to meet on a consistent basis via Zoom missing only one meeting since April 2020.
- Meetings were held regularly at their scheduled time with presenters from select libraries sharing their efforts to continue service to the public that they had come to expect and to rely on.
- The Board welcomed two new members: Rose Passarella and Connie Malin.
- Despite meeting virtually, the Board continued to advocate for libraries with legislators and library Friends Groups.

- The Board was able to single out and highlight the remarkable resiliency and ingenuity of library branch managers in the ways they found to continue programming to their library communities with amazing success.
- The Board sent a letter to Jamar Rahming, Director of Wilmington Public Libraries, commending him and his staff on their stellar work to present outstanding workshops and programs to the community even during the height of the pandemic.
- The Board voted to acknowledge all NCC Library managers and their staff for their outstanding work during the pandemic.
- The Board successfully planned a virtual seminar to occur in January 2021 to host new legislators for the purpose of acquainting them with library programs, services, events that continued in a safe manner throughout the pandemic. Library staff, Board members, and Friends groups were all invited to participate.
- Despite the pandemic, NCC elected officials and library staff were able to have a socially distant, mask-wearing outdoor groundbreaking ceremony for the county's newest library, opening in Middletown next year. The library project is currently ahead of schedule and on budget.
- Ongoing updates on the construction progress of the Appoquinimink Library were presented by Jim Young and Diana Brown.

D. Challenges

- COVID-19 continues to present challenges to in-person meetings in 2021.
- LAB recognizes that having gone through COVID-19, libraries will need to maintain their flexibility and adaptability in offering new services to the public.
- LAB would like to further extend advocacy efforts with elected officials and within the community.