

March 2024 Board President Report

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March 14, 2024

Strategic Planning Update

We are in the initial stages of launching our strategic plan. The Board has participated in an initial assessment, which is nearing completion. This assessment will inform the direction of future phases. We are also in the process of drafting internal and external surveys, offering the entire community a chance to engage. As we better understand how to leverage people's expertise and availability, additional staffing for the strategic process is being considered. By the next Board meeting, we anticipate providing a more detailed update on the process and outlining the forthcoming steps.

Board Composition and Engagement

We anticipate the appointment of new members to fill several Board vacancies soon. While the County Legislature has yet to deliberate or vote on these appointments, my confidence here has grown over the last month. I would like to express my gratitude to the Board members who have advocated for this, as well as to Ed Kochian for his recent discussions with the County Executive on several matters. Ed will provide a comprehensive update during the March Board meeting. Additionally, our thanks go to Dawn for her efforts in maintaining a strong relationship with the County Executive's office and organizing informative tours for County Legislators. These actions have laid the groundwork for fostering deeper connections with more community leaders.

Presentation of Board Materials

Following last previous month's Board meeting, I asked Dawn if reports going forward could lead off with 3 things that have been worked on and 3 things that are upcoming. This month, Dawn and Rene have piloted this effort. Highlighting key initiatives not only showcases the exciting developments within our system but also helps in narrating the overarching story of OCPL and the unique events at individual branches more effectively. Let me know if there are other suggestions for how we receive reports.

Generative AI in Libraries

As we embark on the strategic planning journey, it is vital to consider the role of technology, specifically how Generative AI can enhance our services and prompt us to rethink public library offerings. Dane Dell has prepared a memo outlining the potential of Generative AI in libraries, focusing on its capabilities in information retrieval and personalizing the user experience (attached as a pre-read). It also addresses the need to make these tools accessible through the library to mitigate the widening digital divide. Access to such technology should not be a privilege reserved for those who can afford it. I found a useful resource, "[AI and Public Libraries - ChatGPT and Generative Artificial Intelligence](#)" at the [Massachusetts Library System, Inc.](#) which offers additional insightful materials. Under Dawn's leadership, OCPL will explore the implementation and prioritization of Generative AI technologies. It is my goal to ensure the Board fully supports these initiatives and understands their potential benefits and risks.