

PIMA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

July 2, 2020, 4:00 p.m.

Joel D. Valdez Library, 4th Floor Boardroom, 101 N. Stone Ave, Tucson, Arizona & Microsoft Teams

Present: Cheryl Langer, Chair; Nancy Puckett, Vice-Chair; Barbara A. Escobar; Beverly J. Bannon; Edward Buster; Elizabeth Soltero; John Halliday; and Maria Iannone

Absent: Betsy Shepard and Nubia Valentino

Also Present: Amber Mathewson, Library Director; Kate DeMeester, Library Services Manager; Beth Matthias-Loghry, Library Services Manager; Ken Zambos, Workforce and Economic Development Program Manager; and Kendra Davey, Literacy Initiatives Program Manager

1. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Cheryl Langer and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING'S MINUTES

Nancy Puckett moved and Edward Buster seconded approval of the March 5, 2020 minutes. Motion carried.

3. INTRODUCTIONS

No introductions were made.

4. SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS BY LIBRARY BOARD MEMBERS

Board members updated on what library related activities they have been doing since the last meeting. Some of the responses included:

- Nancy Puckett met with Supervisor Christy by phone in May. She thanked him for his support of Fine Free library, as well as for his support of the Sahuarita Library. Green Valley Friends of the Library had a sale in April, which she attended. She's also been well-informed about the library through Holly Schaffer's emails.
- Maria Iannone and John Halliday had planned to meet with Supervisor Miller, but the meeting was postponed. Maria continues to instruct people about how to access eBooks, and forwards Holly Schaffer's emails that pertain to children to her clients.
- Elizabeth Soltero talked about Supervisor Richard Elías, and his advocacy and leadership, and how he will be missed. She plans to meet with Supervisor Villegas.
- Edward Buster informed that Friends of the Southeast Library now have a bank account and some cash flow. They have increased their board and continue to look for volunteers to join them. Their Facebook page is up and they are working on their logo, which is being created by students in the Vail School District.
- Barbara A. Escobar expressed her appreciation that the library is coming back to normal.
- Beverly J. Bannon continues using the Wheeler Taft Abbett Sr. while quarantined.
- Cheryl Langer has also been using eBooks a lot. When recently checked, the book cart at the Salazar-Ajo Library had made \$85 in sales.

5. FRIENDS GROUPS AND LIBRARY FOUNDATION REPORTS ON EVENTS AND FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES ON BEHALF OF THE PIMA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

There were no reports.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD FY 2020/2021 (ACTION ITEM)

Nancy Puckett nominated Nubia Valentino for Vice-Chair of the Library Advisory Board for FY 2020/2021; Edward Buster seconded nomination and motion carried.

Edward Buster nominated Nancy Puckett for Chair of the Library Advisory Board for FY 2020/2021; Beverly J. Bannon seconded nomination and motion carried.

As the newly elected Chair, Nancy Puckett ran the rest of the meeting.

7. LIBRARY REPORTS

A. COMMUNITY RELATIONS REPORT

Holly Schaffer, Community Relations Manager

Director Mathewson reported for Holly Schaffer, who was not in attendance.

Director Mathewson reported that during the pandemic, Holly has been busy sending out emails and press releases, and arranging interviews. Director Mathewson expressed gratitude for how she and her team have been keeping people informed.

B. LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Amber Mathewson, Library Director, highlighted and/or added to her written report:

Director Mathewson provided a timeline of events that happened during Covid-19 in her report, but wanted to express how difficult of a time it has been for staff. Having to close the library's doors and limit services takes services away from the vulnerable population. Reopening meant requiring masks and having temperatures taken for both public and the staff, which has been stressful, especially when people refused. Coupled with the racial unrest, and having two female employees of color who were pushed by members of the public, only increases the tension.

So far there has not been spread of Covid-19 in the Library. Staff is having to follow all the protocols—wearing masks, having Plexiglas shields around desks, wearing gloves and shields when appropriate, and cleaning areas. Everything is different.

The Library's website features a section on Black Lives Matter, which includes a statement that shows support of the American Library Association's and Urban Libraries Council's statements on racism, which resulted in backlash from the community. A letter of complaint was sent to the Board of Supervisors and to the Oro Valley newspaper. Also, the Green Valley Republican Party requested that it be taken down. Director Mathewson encourages Library Board members to be aware of the Library's position on the website. Elizabeth

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Soltero commented that when she was the Branch Manager of the Quincie Douglas Library, their displays had caused backlash as well.

Nancy Puckett stated that the Board extends their appreciation and support of staff for the good work they are doing during these difficult times.

Edward Buster asked if the library was providing masks and sanitizer to the public. Director Mathewson confirmed that masks and sanitizer are available for the public. Also, increased cleaning is being done several times a day.

Director Mathewson took the opportunity to thank Deputy Directors Prechtel-Altman and Simon for their work during the pandemic. She said that there were days when they worked 14+ hours in order to handle the constant changes. She expressed her heartfelt thanks to them.

C. PUBLIC SERVICES REPORT

Karyn Prechtel-Altman, Deputy Director of Public Services & Community Engagement

Director Mathewson reported for Deputy Director Prechtel-Altman, who was not in attendance.

PCPL has stepped up efforts to work on diversity, equity, and inclusion and joined Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). PCPL also started the Anti-racism Team, which will help PCPL create an action plan as well as create policies and procedures. They will also help figure out how to get more librarians of color in the system. The Knowledge River program at the University of Arizona is helpful, but it is important to look at PCPL's own systems. Deputy Director Prechtel-Altman is leading the Anti-racism Team, and will eventually hand it off to other staff so that it becomes part of PCPL's culture. Deputy Director Prechtel-Altman also joined the Urban Libraries Council's Race and Social Equity Action Team, which will give PCPL even more resources.

During the time that libraries were closed, staff started doing food distribution. In conjunction with the Amphi School District and the Community Food Bank, snacks and vegetables are being given away. When the libraries were closed, staff also worked at other departments, such as at the Office of Emergency Management, with the Sullivan Jackson Center, where Covid-19 positive people who were experiencing homelessness were assigned housing in local motels, and at the Pima County One-Stop, helping people with unemployment benefits.

For the Summer Reading program, Kendra Davey's team has been producing Story Sketches, a program where kids write the stories and library staff illustrates them. Look for them on the website.

The non-profit center at the Community Foundation was closed due to lack of foot traffic, the timing of the lease agreement renewal, and the lack of staff that could be provided. PCPL will continue to work with the Community Foundation, and left them a small book collection. It will be revisited in the future.

Nancy Puckett asked if work has continued on the two new libraries. Director Mathewson informed that the Southeast Library is well on the way, and should be completed on time. The Sahuarita Library has broken ground and is moving forward.

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Director Mathewson updated on staffing: there are more than 50 vacancies and about 24 people not working due to health conditions and 7 people who are telecommuting. There is a hiring freeze right now, but permission was granted to hire five branch managers and two accounting positions. After the branch managers are hired, the next group to be hired will be evaluated.

Edward Buster asked if there were any new remodels coming up. Director Mathewson responded that Dusenberry-River Library is closed, and might be ready to open by August. If the Mission Library gets renamed, it could expedite its remodeling. Martha Cooper and Quincie Douglas Libraries are scheduled for upcoming projects.

The Library Budget was approved, and the tax rate will be set in August, and reviewed again in January, 2021.

Elizabeth Soltero asked if the Library will be receiving any funds from the CARES Act that the County has received. Director Mathewson responded that the CARES Acts funds provide reimbursement for Covid-19 expenditures. Everything PCPL purchases through this has to have special coding when sent to procurement. PCPL hasn't seen any money yet, and it isn't known how much the Library will get specifically. There has been a lot of expenditure for cleaning supplies, PPE, temperature readers, Plexiglas, etc. Edward Buster asked if that included deep cleaning as well. Director Mathewson commented that all the branches had a disinfecting fog done, and repeated wherever there were staff who tested positive.

Edward Buster asked about other opportunities for PCPL to reach out to other organizations in order to enhance the current staff. Director Mathewson responded that PCPL does reach out to the states around Arizona, as well as to Pima Community College and the University of Arizona. The University of Arizona now has a Bachelor's Degree in Library Science. Masters Degrees can be difficult to attain, as there are many obstacles. PCPL is discussing the possibility of changing the requirements for Librarian I positions to allow Bachelor's Degree with experience as opposed to having to have a Master's degree. Edward also suggested looking into other colleges and Director Mathewson will do some investigation.

D. SUPPORT SERVICES REPORT

Michelle Simon, Deputy Director of Support Services

Director Mathewson reported for Deputy Director Simon, who was not in attendance.

Director Mathewson said that Deputy Director Simon was instrumental in getting everything that was needed during the pandemic, including PPE, cleaning supplies, etc.

Director Mathewson pointed out the Communications and Systems Office report on digital services. In addition to their regular work, they created signage that was needed for curbside service, temperature taking, and the circles to stand 6 feet apart.

The Budget passed as presented. Not many cuts had to be made and Director Mathewson was able to make a strong case for not cutting staff positions.

Beverly J. Bannon asked if there was a timeline for libraries to open, and if it would be coordinated with schools opening. Director Mathewson responded that it was hard to say at this time, but tentatively in August, depending on how Covid-19 is doing. Currently, libraries

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are open 10-5, but statistics are being reviewed to help determine best future days and hours. PCPL will also be paying attention to when schools open, which is currently expected to happen on August 17th at the earliest.

Elizabeth Soltero expressed gratitude for PCPL's membership to GARE and offered her assistance to support the efforts. She also asked if there were any changes relating to Covid-19 that were positive, or might be done long term. Director Mathewson has asked staff to think about what the work is that PCPL really need to be doing right now. For instance, programs are being changed so they can be online, such as Ready, Set, School, GED, Career Online High School, and Job Help. People are starting to get tired of screen time, though, so that needs to be examined as well.

Director Mathewson discussed how the inequity in access to the internet is astounding, and needs to be looked at in the community and worked on together. PCPL is working on getting funding to get hotspots, but even accessing 300 in a sea of need means that there needs to be more collaboration with all entities.

Edward Buster asked if PCPL was using the Bookmobile, particularly to provide Wi-Fi. PCPL is currently not using the Bookmobile as the driver was deployed to another area. Also, many of the locations he had been going to were adult care facilities, which were not allowing anyone in. The driver is coming back to work on Monday and they will look at what makes sense for him to do.

Edward Buster commented that during such tumultuous situations around the world and nation, the Pima County Public Library stands out as a beacon of hope. He asked if there was anything the Library Board can do to support PCPL. Director Mathewson responded that being a voice in the community and reminding folks that we are here. Also, being able to talk about why we support different initiatives. Director Mathewson added that if the Board thinks the Library is going in wrong direction, to let her know.

8. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

No members of the public were in attendance.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Edward Buster moved and Cheryl Langer seconded adjournment of the meeting. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 4:54 p.m.

Next Meeting: August 6, 2020, at 4:00 p.m. Meeting will be held virtually, with instructions on the agenda.

Submitted by:
Judy Moses
Special Staff Assistant - Senior