

PIMA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

September 3, 2020, 4:00 p.m.

Meeting conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams

Present: Nancy Puckett, Chair; Nubia Valentino, Vice-Chair; Edward Buster; Barbara A. Escobar; John Halliday; Maria Iannone; and Cheryl Langer

Absent: Beverly J. Bannon; Betsy Shepard; and Elizabeth Soltero

Also Present: Amber Mathewson, Library Director; Karyn Prechtel-Altman, Deputy Director; Michelle Simon, Deputy Director; Amy Rusk, Library Services Manager; Sharla Ronstadt, Library Services Manager; Holly Schaffer, Community Relations Manager; and Ken Zambos, Workforce and Economic Development Program Manager

1. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

2. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

No members of the public were in attendance.

3. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING'S MINUTES

Edward Buster moved and John Halliday seconded approval of the August 6, 2020 minutes. Motion carried.

4. INTRODUCTIONS

No introductions were made.

5. 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:

- Cheryl Langer sent letters to the branch managers in District 3 to tell them how much they were appreciated and asked them to share her comments with staff.
- Edward Buster informed that the Friends of the Southeast Library is working on officially changing their name to the Friends of the Esmond Station Library. He also recently spoke at the Southeast Regional Council about all the great activities the Library has been doing, and about the upcoming Esmond Station Library.
- Barbara Escobar recently participated in second interviews for Librarian III positions. She is a Pima County employee, but still learned a great deal more about the Library.
- Nancy Puckett had a good conversation with Brian Edney from the Pima Library Foundation. He highlighted a capital project in Sahuarita, and they talked about how Nancy could help connect him with Green Valley fundraising sources there. She has also been following all the Library posts on Facebook.

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

There were no reports.

7. LIBRARY REPORTS

A. COMMUNITY RELATIONS REPORT

Holly Schaffer, Community Relations Manager, highlighted and/or added to her written report:

- Savannah emails continue to be a huge success, with an open rate of over 100% the last few weeks, indicating that PCPL is really connecting with customers.
- This is Tucson has compiled everything the Library is doing, i.e. the telescope, book bundles, personalized reading recommendations, and teen volunteers.
- Regular columns that feature the Library are still being run in the Arizona Daily Star.

B. LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

PCPL has been working on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Library, and in order to hear from all perspectives, the Executive Team was expanded to include members from the affinity teams, including Nuestras Raíces, Kindred, LGBTQ+ Services Committee, and Many Nations.

On staffing, there are eight Librarian III positions to fill. The Librarian II position was posted and is now closed; up to ten will be hired. And interviews for the Administrative Support Specialist for Human Resources just happened.

Manager vacancies are a result of the Esmond Station Library creating an opening, a new position being created when the Library Services Manager and Joel D. Valdez Main Manager position was made into two positions, and several retirements.

Currently, libraries are open Monday-Friday 10-5, but starting on September 16, they will be open until 6:00 p.m. on Wednesdays. Discussions are going on with managers to determine what they need in order to let people browse the collection when feasible. It is easier to monitor time limits with computers use, but not so much with people browsing.

Nancy Puckett asked about results of the poll asking Board members about potentially changing the meeting time. Judy Moses responded that most people said they couldn't meet earlier due to their jobs.

Director Mathewson followed up on John Halliday's question at the last meeting about staff morale and financial status. She updated that some staff are still in furlough status. There were seven permanent employees who were not able to come back in the facility for whatever reason. They have been working to find places for them to telecommute, some have been helping other departments, and some are doing special assignments for the library. As of now, all of the permanent employees are working. They are working on calling back the intermittent staff, but anticipate that many won't want to come back to work.

C. PUBLIC SERVICES REPORT

Karyn Prechtel-Altman, Deputy Director of Public Services & Community Engagement, highlighted and/or added to her written report:

Deputy Director Prechtel-Altman talked about losing managers, and how difficult it was to lose so much leadership and institutional knowledge. For instance, Margaret Wilkie, the manager at Mission Library was with the Library over 30 years. But it is also provides a great opportunity for people to promote. Across the nation, leaders are retiring at high rates because of reaching retirement age, but also because of COVID-19.

The Book Bundles the Library has been offering have been very popular. Since people haven't been able browse, grouping together similar items provides variety. It has been especially popular with parents. Statistics are showing that circulation is about 30% of normal circulation, which is phenomenal considering the gate count and number of people coming in to use computers is only at 8% of normal counts.

The Library has been getting lots of kudos and compliments from customers. Email reference is up 350%, and Infoline and Ask a Librarian staff are working hard to assist customers remotely. Nancy Puckett asked what kinds of questions are being asked, and Deputy Director Prechtel-Altman said she would look into that and report back.

Homework Help online attendance is up 40% over last year. An online service, Brainfuse, is used for Homework Help, not staff. A Homework Help program is being designed for the library, particularly serving people whose first language is not English.

John Halliday commented that he was not only impressed with the increase in virtual reference, but also the digital circulation and the number of card holders. It shows that people are making good use of the library at a distance during the pandemic.

Nubia Valentino asked if services were provided for special needs students. Deputy Director Prechtel-Altman responded that the Library provides services for students whose first language is not English and for those who need special help with math. She will connect Nubia with Kendra Davey for more information.

D. SUPPORT SERVICES REPORT

Michelle Simon, Deputy Director of Support Services, highlighted and/or added to her written report:

Deputy Director Simon gave an update on COVID-19 in Pima County, and what the Library looks at in order to determine the next phase of service.

- Johns Hopkins status report for Pima County <http://bao.arcgis.com/covid-19/jhu/county/04019.html>
- Johns Hopkins tracker: <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/us-map>
- Pima County COVID-19 Data Reports: <https://webcms.pima.gov/cms/One.aspx?portalId=169&pageId=578441>
- COVID-19 Progress Report and Local Recommendations: <https://webcms.pima.gov/cms/One.aspx?portalId=169&pageId=568644>

Deputy Director Simon and Deputy Director Prechtel-Altman participate on separate United Libraries Council taskforces which focus on priorities such as the library card challenge, partnering with schools, digital divide, business and entrepreneurship, race and social equity, and redefining the library's role.

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- Urban Libraries Council (ULC) Executive Board Statement Going Forward from the Pandemic: <https://www.urbanlibraries.org/files/ULC-Executive-Board-Statement.pdf>
- ULC Going Forward from the Pandemic: <https://www.urbanlibraries.org/initiatives/going-forward-from-the-pandemic>

Digital equity is an issue for those who lack internet access or devices, and can't participate in school. At least 13% of households in Tucson do not have access to broadband.

- Making Action Possible (MAP) Dashboard: <https://mapazdashboard.arizona.edu/infrastructure/internet-access>

PCPL is working with the Pima County School Superintendent's Office to help identify children who have a need for internet connectivity, and is purchasing 400 hotspots. Looking at the Arizona Free Wi-Fi map shows where the gaps are, and how libraries can help to provide access to the community.

- Arizona Free Wi-Fi Map and other resources: <https://sites.google.com/view/azlibtap/home>

Deputy Director Simon encouraged Library Board members to help spread the word about the resources that are available. This is important because people who are not connected and not online are getting missed, and word of mouth is one of the best grassroots ways to get information out.

Cheryl Langer commented that the statistics provided about internet were for Tucson and she speculated that there were more connectivity issues in rural areas and Deputy Director Simon agreed. Sandy White is working on pulling statistics that overlap where library services are in order to get a better understanding of the communities.

John Halliday mentioned the New York Times recent opinion piece, "How Libraries Can Save the 2020 Election" about drop off places for ballots. Deputy Director Simon responded that the American Library Association (ALA) had just requested information from libraries about which ones will have drop-off locations, which she provided. She added that currently, four branches will have ballot drop-off, six will have early and emergency voting, and fourteen will be used as election sites. PCPL staff will also be helping the Recorder's Office and the Elections Department. Deputy Director Prechtel-Altman noted how challenging it was to hold an election in the library, especially during the time of COVID-19, adding that staff knows it is important and is stepping up.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Edward Buster moved and Maria Iannone seconded adjournment of the meeting. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 4:48 p.m.

Next Meeting: October 1, 2020, at 4:00 p.m. Meeting will be held virtually, with instructions on the agenda.

Submitted by:
Judy Moses
Special Staff Assistant - Senior