

Library Advisory Board Minutes

PIMA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

April 7, 2022 4:00 p.m.

Meeting was held both at Joel D. Valdez Main Library, 4th Floor Boardroom, 101 N. Stone Ave, Tucson, Arizona and virtually via Microsoft Teams

- Present: John Halliday, Chair; Elizabeth Soltero, Vice-Chair; Edward Buster; Barbara A. Escobar; Maria Iannone; Craig Kleine; Mary Ann O’Neil; and Betsy Shepard
- Absent: Lorraine Marquez Eiler
- Also Present: Amber Mathewson, Library Director; Karyn Prechtel-Altman, Deputy Director; Michelle Simon, Deputy Director; Beth Matthias-Loghry, Library Services Manager; Holly Schaffer, Community Relations Manager; Diane Ward, Technical Services Manager; Marissa Alcorta, Quincie Douglas Branch Manager; Kate DeMeester-Lane, Library Services Manager; and Kylie Walzak, Senior Special Staff Assistant, Board of Supervisors-District 2
- Guests: Tom Cashman, Pima Library Foundation and Scott Lukomski, Pima Library Foundation

1. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by John Halliday 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

Maria Iannone moved and Elizabeth Soltero seconded approval of the March 3, 2022 minutes. Barbara A. Escobar abstained because she had not attended the meeting. Motion carried.

4. INTRODUCTIONS

No introductions were made.

5. SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS BY LIBRARY BOARD MEMBERS

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

- Craig Kleine said he was happy that Hoopla was working for him now.
- Elizabeth Soltero got to participate in the bike ride around the naming ceremony for the Frank de la Cruz Mission Library.
- John Halliday also attended the naming ceremony for the Frank de la Cruz Mission Library and enjoyed the Mariachi Aztlán de Pueblo High School. He also gave a shout out for the staff who organized the many events at the Tucson Festival of Books.

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

Tom Cashman, Pima Library Foundation Director, reported that the Pima Library Foundation had a great experience at the Tucson Festival of Books. They have restarted their Author Salons and recently partnered with the Desert Museum. Anne Hillerman is scheduled for May 15. They are interested in getting more board members. Scott Lukomski, Pima Library Foundation Board Member, added that there weren't a lot of projects happening currently. Director Mathewson added that PCPL was working on a wish list that would give the Foundation options.

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. PRESENTATION ON PCPL'S DIVERSE COLLECTION—DIANE WARD, MARISSA ALCORTA, AND KATE DEMEESTER-LANE

Highlights:

- Pima County has a diverse community, and PCPL works to provide a collection that reflects the community.
- Circulation and Collections Teams are comprised of the Circ Pro Team, Circ Manager's Team, Technical Services Team, and the Diverse Collections Selector.
- The main focus is to provide access and to remove systemic barriers to access for the community, providing equitable access for all the community.
- Some of the diverse collections PCPL has are community-based collections, such as the Frank De La Cruz Collection, collections based on feedback from PCPL's Affinity Teams, and through discussions with staff.
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion analysis of the collection showed that PCPL is doing better than other libraries of the same size, but there is still room for improvement.
- Weeding and deselection can be difficult with diverse collections as they may have lower circulation, but efforts are being made to make sure that needed material does not get deselected.
- Overflow of material can be an issue, and books are sent between branches to improve space and selection at both locations.
- Sometimes diverse collections are not wanted and there are calls for book banning. Intellectual Freedom is a foundational tenet of librarianship and means that materials of all points of view are offered, and rights of readers to access any materials are defended.
- PCPL integrates the American Library Association's (ALA) Library Bill of Rights, and the Freedom to Read statement. ALA has also recently come out with a Statement on Book Censorship.
- PCPL needs the Library Board's advocacy when they hear pushback from the community.

Craig Kleine asked if there has been any contact with the Ukrainian refugee community and was told that there hasn't been yet, but would be a population that the Welcome to America team would support.

Mary Ann O'Neil asked if there has been an impact or a way to tell if dropping fines has helped the community. The response was that it is hard to tell what the impact was since Covid hit right after, but research shows that the nationwide trend has been to go fine free, and access has opened for the most vulnerable members of the community. Anecdotally, customers have shared that they felt welcome to come back after their fines were waived.

B. FINALIZE LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD RETREAT TOPIC(S) AND AGENDA

Director Mathewson described the plan for the retreat, scheduled for May 7th 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 pm. There will be a tour, then opening remarks. County Administration and Board of Supervisors representatives have been requested. A brief state of the Library will be given, followed by a report out from all Friends & Foundation groups. The topics covered will be Intellectual Freedom and Library Collections, and Restorative Practices & Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

All Library Board members in attendance agreed to use the agenda as presented.

C. DISCUSS NOMINATIONS FOR LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD CHAIR & VICE-CHAIR

A discussion was held on nominations and elections for Chair and Vice-Chair positions of the Library Board. Nominations and elections will happen in June.

D. DISCUSS BOARD MEMBERS' SUMMER PLANS AND FUTURE MEETINGS

Director Mathewson explained that it is typical to cancel one of the summer meetings, and is usually based on summer plans. This item will be on June's agenda. Several Board Members indicated that they would not be able to attend July's meeting.

8. LIBRARY REPORTS

A. COMMUNITY RELATIONS REPORT

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

- Quincie Douglas, Dewhirst-Catalina, and Murphy-Wilmot Libraries will be temporarily closed for facilities work.
- PCPL is launching "One Seed Pima County", a community seed-saving program, through September. Barbara A. Escobar expressed doubt about being able to return seeds but Deputy Director Prechtel-Altman explained that returning seeds was not a requirement.
- Kaitlyn Sparks, Oro Valley Public Library Branch Manager, and Betsy Langley, Sahuarita Library Branch Manager, received ALA awards.
- Some library branches have started having outdoor Family Storytime. Martha Cooper Library had one recently, and about 60 people attended.

B. LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

The new Annual Report is out and is being distributed. Holly Schaffer and Reneé Bibby did a great job on it.

Pima County has a new County Administrator, Jan Leshner. She was Acting County Administrator, and has already implemented some changes, including allowing teleconferencing and flexible schedules. At an upcoming Board of Supervisors meeting, she will be recommending education reimbursement for staff.

The County is looking at a salary study, and the Library is sending information to County HR next week. The Library is participating in a job fair in April, and not in July as she'd put in her written report.

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Director Mathewson attended a meeting today with Library Directors around the state and they talked about how libraries are one of the last bastions for the democratic society, and how the community doesn't understand that. It is important for the Board to understand the role the libraries are playing. The pandemic highlighted the difference that libraries make but also the disparities that are out there in the community. PCPL appreciates the Board's support helping to make the initiatives happen that the Library has been working on. The Board's support for staff is also appreciated because they are frontline workers and have been under a tremendous amount of stress for the past two years.

Mary Ann O'Neil asked if there have been any challenges to books or content. Director Mathewson responded that there have been a few. PCPL has a lot of control over the physical collection, but with the electronic materials, we can suggest the types of material wanted, and patrons can suggest a title through the platform. There are ways to have titles removed, but if a library were perfect they would have everything. Electronic material is tricky and people may complain if they think a cover is too suggestive. Director Mathewson recently directed a customer to the Request for Reconsideration Form regarding a concern about a particular title.

John Halliday commented about supporting staff who have been having a tough time, adding that one of the best rewards is offering competitive pay.

C. PUBLIC SERVICES REPORT

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

Programs and outreach have started again and PCPL is again offering in-person Job Help, in-person Homework Help, and one-on-one library resources for Kanopy and Hoopla. Last month, Let's Read a Classic book club was held in Oro Valley Public Library and a cybersecurity program for adults program was held at Dusenberry-River Library. The Library's event section on the website shows where everything is happening.

A lot more outreach is happening, particularly with elementary schools. Preparation is happening for Summer Learning, and schools are looking forward to having more librarian visits.

The Nuestras Raíces Committee is partnering with Reforma, a national library organization that focuses on Spanish speakers and the Latinx community. They will be doing El Día de Los Niños/El Día de Los Libros on April 30th. There will be grab-n-go kits for kids and activities planned throughout the day.

PCPL is poised to expand a few libraries to six days a week at the beginning of May. Libraries that are currently open Tuesday-Saturday are Nanini, Woods Memorial, Valencia, Sam Lena-South Tucson, Martha Cooper and Murphy-Wilmot. In May, Eckstrom-Columbus, Oro Valley, Sahuarita, and Miller-Golf Links will be open Monday-Saturday, and Nanini, Woods Memorial and Valencia will add Mondays.

El Rio Library's hours have been increased, and is now open four days a week, on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

D. SUPPORT SERVICES REPORT

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

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Deputy Director Simon talked about how much work the Collection Development Office and Technical Services do keeping up with collection. There will be a deeper dive at the retreat on intellectual freedom and requests for reconsideration and how they are handled, as well as how the circulation policy and collection development policy are evaluated.

There are various library closures, as mentioned in her report. The Richard Elfas-Mission Library is getting closer to having the expansion done. While Martha Cooper Library is closed, they are looking at providing services to the community in the area.

The Traditions and Celebrations team is working on finding ways to make sure that staff understands their value and feels empowered.

American Library Association (ALA) just announced a Unite Against Book Bans campaign. Deputy Director Simon recommended going to ALA's website to see their running list of banned books. She added that as a group, there is the need to advocate constantly for people's freedom to read in an autonomous fashion.

Craig Kleine works at the UA Tech Park, which is close to the Anne Gibson-Esmond Station Library, and offered to set up a table for people coming back to work, to let them know about the library being open and the services available. Deputy Director Prechtel-Altman said the Manager could work with them to set something up.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Edward Buster moved and Barbara A. Escobar seconded adjournment of the meeting. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 5:19 p.m.

Next Meeting: June 2, 2022, at 4:00 p.m.

Submitted by:
Judy Moses
Senior Special Staff Assistant