

**PIMA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

August 4, 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: Elizabeth Soltero, Chair; Barbara A. Escobar, Vice-Chair; Barbara Blake; Edward Buster; Lorraine Marquez Eiler; John Halliday; Craig Kleine; and Betsy Shepard
- Absent: Maria Iannone and Mary Ann O’Neil
- Also Present: Amber Mathewson, Library Director; Karyn Prechtel-Altman, Deputy Director; Michelle Simon, Deputy Director; Kate DeMeester-Lane, Library Services Manager; Beth Matthias-Loghry, Library Services Manager; Holly Schaffer, Community Relations Manager; Kendra Davey, Literacy Initiatives Program Manager; and Kylie Walzak, Senior Special Staff Assistant, Board of Supervisors-District 2
- Guests: Tom Cashman, Pima Library Foundation and Jennifer Anderson

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

**2. CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

No members of the public spoke.

**3. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING’S MINUTES**

Edward Buster moved and Barbara Blake seconded approval of the June 2, 2022 minutes. Motion carried.

**4. INTRODUCTIONS**

Library Board members introduced themselves and shared what districts they represented.

**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:

- Edward Buster is running for the Vail School District governing board. He introduced his running mate, Jennifer Anderson.
- John Halliday expressed appreciation for the Covid test kits the Library helped distribute.

**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, said that he is mostly doing prep work and strategic planning for the fall.

## 7. NEW BUSINESS

### A. Discussion on agenda items for future Library Advisory Board meetings

Elizabeth Soltero asked if there were any topics that Board members would like to have presented. Suggestions included Open Meeting Law review, branch reports, update on the Library's work with the JDC, and updates from Affinity Teams, specifically Many Nations.

## 8. LIBRARY REPORTS

### A. COMMUNITY RELATIONS REPORT

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

- The Murphy-Wilmot Library reopened in July after getting new carpet, furniture and other improvements.
- A new Writer in Residence is coming. Adam Rex writes books for children and tweens, and will be starting this month.
- PCPL has launched a health action team for youth age 14+. By participating and doing writing and media activities, they can earn an \$800 stipend. It is being done at Woods Memorial Library and addresses mental health issues in our community.
- The Oro Valley Public Library will be celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary on August 17, from 11-4. There will be music and other activities, with guest speakers at 3:00.

### B. LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

Director Mathewson reported on hiring. The LTA hiring process is mostly completed and staff is being notified. LTA Supervisors have been placed. Librarian I positions are being notified. The Latinx Program Manager interview happened today. The HR Specialist will be coming up soon. The Librarian III (Branch Manager) position was posted. Library Service Managers will be up next. Another Deputy Director will be hired. Karyn Prechtel-Altman will be Deputy Director of Community Engagement and what was once Public Services will be now called Customer Experience. There will be a nationwide search for that position. A lot of other vacancies from when staff were promoted continue to be filled. The Library hiring process was changed, and now Library Service Managers, Deputy Directors and Director Mathewson are helping with different recruitments so that more can be done simultaneously.

Director Mathewson had added in her written report about some of the things happening around illicit drug use in libraries (and other public places), which is becoming very problematic. The drug problem in the community is growing. It is most prevalent in six or seven libraries, but the Frank De La Cruz-El Pueblo Library, which is located near the bus station, has had many incidents. It is one of the smallest branches, but has had the highest number of drug issues come up. Staff has been working with community members, Deputy Director Simon has been working with County Facilities. County Administrator Jan Leshner and City Manager Mike Ortega have both visited the library to talk with staff. Supervisor Grijalva will be visiting soon. In place of security guards, Sheriff's Deputies are onsite, but won't be able to do that long term. A fence is going up around the property. Woods Memorial Library and Valencia Library also recently had fences put up. Betsy Shepard asked what it was about that branch that is making it more susceptible to drug use. Director Mathewson said that it was due to the way the campus was built, and because most of the buildings are empty. Also, the library is the only place to use a restroom. The City of Tucson is working to get more tenants into those buildings.

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Elizabeth Soltero asked what the outcome was on requiring people to show their library cards or IDs in order to use the restrooms. Director Mathewson responded that the practice is still in place, however it did not slow the drug incidents.

John Halliday thanked Director Mathewson for the information she sent out, saying it was useful, and that it sounded like staff is doing everything that can be done.

Barbara Blake suggested asking people using drugs how they thought it should be handled, similar to peer counseling.

### 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 said she was excited to be able to focus on Community Engagement, particularly now, after the pandemic, because the Library needs to be able to bring library users back, and new ones need to be found. She will also be focusing on partnerships and collaborations with organizations in the community.

Deputy Director Prechtel-Altman attended many conferences over the summer and the first one was an Urban Libraries Council conference called Partnerships in a Post-Covid World, where she learned about opportunities, and about what others are doing. An example of the kinds of things that can be done, the Edmonton Library created a teaching facility with 20 kitchen teaching work stations. They are partnering with local chefs to teach classes. Another conference was Urban Librarianship Embracing Challenges and Opportunities. There is a notable increase in North America in customers' need for social services. Las Vegas Public Libraries is circulating smart phones to community members in order to connect them to services. Houston Public Libraries is hosting mental health fairs called Coffee with a Therapist.

The LGBTQ+ Services Committee author talks are being well received. This summer, Deputy Director Prechtel-Altman attended author talks with Carlos Valenzuela, a local author, and Tee Franklin, a DC Comics author. Deputy Director Prechtel-Altman is looking forward to Benjamin Alire Sáenz's talk this fall. He is author of *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*, and his books were given out during the Summer Learning Program.

### D. SUPPORT SERVICES REPORT

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

Deputy Director Simon informed that they are in the design phase of the Richard Elías-Mission Library. The project had been delayed for about a year because of paperwork issues, but they have since been corrected. It will take approximately 10 months to finish the design and construction drawings. Once that happens, a contractor can be brought on board.

Deputy Director Simon talked about the County's current efforts for digital infrastructure and inclusion plan, and how the Library is an integral part of this effort. Deputy Director Simon is one of the Co-Chairs of Connect Pima [www.pima.gov/connect-pima](http://www.pima.gov/connect-pima), which is working to get everyone in Pima County affordable, reliable, and sustainable internet. One of the projects that has come to fruition is the Hotspots Around Town program, which will provide wireless access points, named PCPLonTheGo. Cox Communications just received a \$5M grant, which will help to expand connectivity to remote areas. Providing access to information is a

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pillar of what the Library provides. The Library is already the largest provider of free internet service in Pima County.

Elizabeth Soltero asked how the location of the hotspots was determined. Deputy Director Simon responded that they chose rural locations where people congregated, such as schools and parks, and where Cox already had them in place.

Barbara Blake noted that the VA is an area where a lot of people congregate, and asked if the Library was working with them. Deputy Director Simon responded that organizations, such as Old Pueblo Community Services, Salvation Army, and Pima County's Community Workforce and Development work with the VA to provide services.

### 9. ADJOURNMENT

Edward Buster moved and Barbara Blake seconded adjournment of the meeting. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 4:44 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** September 1, 2022, at 4:00 p.m.

Submitted by:  
Judy Moses  
Senior Special Staff Assistant