

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

November 3, 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;  
Lorraine Marquez Eiler; John Halliday; Craig Kleine; Mary Ann O’Neil;  
and Betsy Shepard

Absent: Edward Buster and Maria Iannone

Also Present: Amber Mathewson, Library Director; Karyn Prechtel-Altman, Deputy  
Director; Michelle Simon, Deputy Director; Amy Rusk, Library Services  
Manager; Kate DeMeester-Lane, Library Services Manager; Beth Matthias-  
Loghry, Library Services Manager; Holly Schaffer, Community Relations  
Manager; Kendra Davey, Literacy Initiatives Program Manager; Hassael  
Cazesuz, Latinx Program Manager; Sila Gonzales, Team Leader Many  
Nations Team; Lindsey Curley, Knowledge River Graduate Assistant; Nicole  
Scott, PEEPS Program Manager; and Irene Moreno, PEEPS Program  
Coordinator.

Guests:

**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**

John Halliday moved and Barbara Blake seconded approval of the September 1, 2022 minutes. Barbara Escobar recused herself from voting since 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:

- John Halliday shared that a couple of people in Oro Valley told him how gratified they were to see the Library providing a drop-off place for ballots and early voting. He acknowledged

that the extras create extra work for staff, but that citizens really appreciate what is offered. He also showed the coloring book that he discovered at the Oro Valley Public Library that highlighted the Book Bike and Seed Library.

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

There were no updates from Friends or Foundation groups.

**7. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. WELCOME TO AMERICA UPDATE—Tara Foxx-Lupo, Martha Cooper Branch Manager**

Tara Foxx-Lupo leads the Welcome to America Team, an internal affinity team that helps to ensure that all library services are available to anyone with an immigrant background. Tucson is a city of immigrants, and Arizona has historically been a refugee resettlement state. Part of their work in recent years has involved becoming a member of the Welcoming Network, which is a group of organizations nationwide that works to ensure that the communities are welcoming for those who are coming from outside our country. PCPL is the only organization in Tucson, Pima County, and Southern Arizona to be a member of the network. The network provides a lot of materials and professional development. They also provide bonus items, such as a cookbook they produced. The cookbook is also a toolkit that guides individuals who want help make their community a welcoming place. The team had them printed and distributed them at the Tucson Meet Yourself event and wanted to also share the cookbooks with the Library Board.

Elizabeth Soltero asked what their pressing needs were right now with the immigrant community. Tara responded that there was a large influx of Afghan refugees and there has been a lot of need around them. A lot of local organizations have helped, and the Library did a big donation drive. They are also trying to engage more with Casa Alitas, which is challenged with large numbers of asylum seekers arriving, without enough volunteers. They are trying to get the word out about the need for volunteers. And they are trying to get the word out about the Library, which is one of their most important access points.

**B. MANY NATIONS PRESENTATION—Many Nations Team**

Sila Gonzales, Team Leader for the Many Nations Team, and Lindsey Curley, Knowledge River Graduate Assistant for the Many Nations team, presented on what the Many Nations team has been accomplishing recently.

- Their Mission:  
The Many Nations team's mission is to provide literacy outreach and establish ongoing partnerships with Native communities in Pima County.
- Their goal is:  
Our goal is to engage in outreach events, programming support, and to increase the amount of Bookmobile stops in Native communities.
- Their Values:
  - We value partnerships with Native communities in Pima County.
  - We value increased literacy of all types throughout Pima County.
  - We value outreach that promotes the many resources that the Pima County Public Library offers.

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- During Covid, they crafted their Land Acknowledgment statement, “The Pima County Public Library (PCPL) acknowledges the sovereignty of Native Nations and acknowledges the twenty-two federally recognized Indigenous tribes of the state of Arizona and those who inhabit Pima County. We honor the vast and often unrecognized contributions and sacrifices of Indigenous people and are conscious of the ongoing experience of inequality and political invisibility. In partnership with Native Nations, PCPL advocates for full access to its educational, informational and recreational resources.”
- They worked on an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA), a five year agreement that works to create a partnership between the Pascua Yaqui Department of Education and PCPL in order to improve library services.
- Their Spread the Wealth program provides donated books, programs, and Bookmobile visits to Native communities. Additionally, books are distributed to the Casa Alitas Program for migrant families.
- They have had numerous collaborations and partnerships with various organizations, including Tohono O'odham Community College, Venito Garcia Library in Sells, and St. Kateri Catholic Parish.
- They have provided grab-and-go programming and various services at the Tucson Festival of Books, Tohono O'odham Learning Resource Collaboration, and at the Richard Elías-Mission Library. They also create blogs and book lists for the website.
- They are cataloguing a special collection for the Salazar-Ajo Library, which is from (Library Board Member) Lorraine Eiler's personal collection.
- They have monthly meetings at the tribal library.

Director Mathewson said that this team has done some amazing work. She added that PCPL had been working on the land acknowledgment before Pima County came up theirs, and the Library was allowed to keep their version. She also commented that the IGA that was previously mentioned allowed the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and PCPL to work together more easily, where in the past, the Pascua Yaqui Tribe would have to request permission from tribal leaders each time.

Elizabeth Soltero asked about their programming, and if there was a diversity of presenters on contract, or if people from the community were used. Responses were that PCPL is working on getting people who serve the community to match the community, and that some progress has been made. Also, there were some tribal members who tried to get approval, but the forms were not user-friendly and they were not able to complete them. PCPL can also use Personal Service Agreements that allow the Library to identify individuals and work with them outside of the procurement process.

### **C. PRESENTATION ON PIMA EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM (PEEPS)—Nicole Scott, Program Manager, Pima Early Education Program**

The Pima County Board of Supervisors approved \$30M the County's share of American Rescue Plan Act funding to fund scholarships for income eligible children to attend high quality preschool. There are also contributions from the City of Tucson, the Town of Marana, the Town of Oro Valley and other organizations for use for promoting this program and to increase access to it.

In order to be eligible, families must have incomes at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty level. The main component is to assist income eligible families with paying for high quality

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preschool. High quality preschool in Pima County can cost the equivalent of mortgage payments, and not everyone can afford it. PEEPS operates with funded contracts through First Things First, six School Districts, Child Parent Centers and their Head Start programs. They also have informal partnerships with various organizations.

Their first year, they served over 856 children at over 100 locations, and that was during a pandemic. As of September 30, 2022, they have served over 900 children. At the system level, PEEPS and other programs have assisted 4,690 children. Unfortunately, that addresses only half the need.

This year they are focusing on expanding to other school districts, and will continue to build relationships with Tohono O'odham and Pascua Yaqui Nation. They are also exploring strategies and ideas on how to support early childhood workforce. They have partnered with other County programs, and with PCPL.

In order to sustain this program, the Board of Supervisors approved one cent of the Library's secondary property tax revenue to be set aside for future PEEPS expenses. The Library will track the revenue in a separate unit. They also released a Request for Proposal for future program design that may inform future programming.

Barbara Escobar asked what Quality First certification entailed, and what kind of challenges they were facing. In order to be a Quality First provider, they have to go through an assessment of the physical environment, the teacher and child interaction, what is available to the children on a daily basis, and be able to ensure they are licensed by DHS. They do have challenges, and one of their biggest was during their first year when they had to deal with the pandemic, and the resulting fear of having children share space. Teacher shortage is their second greatest challenge.

Director Mathewson added that the reason this can go through the Library is because by State statute, monies that go through the Library can go to early childhood education. It is not coming from money that was already budgeted; the one cent increase covers the cost.

## 8. LIBRARY REPORTS

### A. COMMUNITY RELATIONS REPORT

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

- PCPL is on TikTok: <https://www.tiktok.com/@pimacountylibrary>
- The teen and tween librarian in Green Valley was asked to write a monthly column. He is now writing "The Heavy Metal Librarian Files":  
<https://www.library.pima.gov/blogs/post/access-a-world-of-information-for-free-with-your-library-card/>
- PCPL now has a new affinity team, Synapse, which is devoted to mental wellness in our community. <https://www.library.pima.gov/synapse/>
- To find information about all of PCPL teams, click on the website's Browse tab, and there is a list under "Discover Community".

**B. LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

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

In addition to Director Mathewson's report, she announced that Amy Rusk, Library Services Manager, will be retiring. She was with PCPL for seven years, and was the TUSD Librarian before that. She was integral in getting the Many Nations, Kindred, and BiblioLotus teams organized, and has worked with the Nuestras Raíces team. She has been a great connector with staff and community partners and was integral in the conversations that happened with tribal members. She also managed the Knowledge River and UA Graduate Assistance and Interns.

PCPL is in the process of hiring a third Deputy Director. First and second interviews have been completed, and there will be an announcement soon.

The City of Tucson manages the asylum seekers that are being released on a daily basis from ICE. They come from our border, El Paso, and other areas. A few months ago, 200-400 were coming in every day. The County is trying to help support the City's effort, and the Library was asked to identify staff who could be on call. Unfortunately, they don't know until the day of release, how many will be coming. Casa Alitas usually handles them, and have hotels set up for overnight stays until they are on their way to their end destinations. It is difficult for volunteers because the call to help can come at any time. The County is working on a more sustainable method, and a lot of County Departments are involved.

Concerning the book challenges that are happening around the nation, today on the Urban Libraries Council's Director's Call, Director Mathewson heard that Chicago Public Library partnered with [www.booksanctuary.org](http://www.booksanctuary.org) in order to create book sanctuaries. The idea is to collect and protect endangered books, host book talks and events, and to educate others on the history of book banning and burning. She plans to bring this to the Collaborate Action Team to look at what PCPL can do. There haven't been many challenges at PCPL, but there have been nationwide, particularly at school libraries.

Director Mathewson noted that the date on the cover of the report she included in the packet was incorrect, and should be FY 2021-2022. All the dates inside were correct.

John Halliday asked about the classification compensation study. Director Mathewson responded that the Library's staffing task force turned some information into Human Resources about specific salaries, and there will likely be some changes made as soon as it is finalized, and will have to be approved by the Board of Supervisors. The County's overall salary study should be completed in February. County Administrator Jan Leshner requested that the Board of Supervisors put in an amount as a placeholder, knowing that the salary study is likely to result in increases. Progress is happening, but probably not as quickly as everyone would like.

**C. PUBLIC SERVICES REPORT**

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

In part because Amy Rusk is leaving and because of some transfers, several new Library Service Managers will be hired. They are administrators who work directly with the Branch Managers.

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The County has been taking part in a big effort to help people who are facing foreclosures and evictions, and helping to put them in hotels. The Library is providing some grab-n-go activities, books and things for the kids and families at the hotels.

### D. SUPPORT SERVICES REPORT

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

Deputy Director Simon informed that Martha Cooper Library's last day to be open is on November 19, and will be closed for 16 months. PCPL is currently in the process of doing the design documents and construction documents for Richard Elias-Mission Library, and a Save the Date was sent out.

The Library is involved in many fabulous programs and does a lot of community outreach. It is important to understand that as advocates for the library system, and when talking to the Board of Supervisors, we do everything—but it comes at a cost, and we shouldn't be doing everything. If the problem is in the library system, it is exponential in our community. People come in needing food and asking for other services. A lot of nonprofit organizations may have lost funding or have had to close their doors. People have no one to ask but the library. And while we can do everything, it comes at a significant cost, to staff, buildings, and customers. It is important that these are community conversations. The Board of Supervisors is aware, and is looking at how to address it. It is Deputy Director Simon's job to help Director Mathewson decide what priorities have to happen in the budget. County Administrator Leshner is asking to change how the budget gets assessed, is getting more guidance, and is having everyone work together. If Board Members plan to visit with their District Supervisor, it is important to talk about everything the Library has been working on.

### 9. ADJOURNMENT

Barbara Escobar moved and Barbara Blake seconded adjournment of the meeting. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 5:16 p.m.

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

Submitted by:  
Judy Moses  
Senior Special Staff Assistant