

PIMA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

February 2, 2023 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 Blake; Lorraine Marquez Eiler; John Halliday; Maria Iannone; Mary Ann O’Neil; and Betsy Shepard

Absent: Barbara A. Escobar, Vice-Chair and Craig Kleine

Also Present: Amber Mathewson, Library Director; Karyn Prechtel-Altman, Deputy Director; Michelle Simon, Deputy Director; Marissa Alcorta, Deputy Director; Kendra Davey, Library Services Manager; Kate DeMeester-Lane, Library Services Manager; Beth Matthias-Loghry, Library Services Manager; Holly Schaffer, Community Relations Manager; JUSDINA Nolin-Brown, Youth Services Librarian; and Mira Domskey, Young Adult Librarian

Guests: None

1. CALL TO ORDER: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT

Meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Elizabeth Soltero and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Elizabeth Soltero read PCPL’s Land Acknowledgement Statement.

2. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

No members of the public spoke.

3. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING’S MINUTES

John Halliday moved and Mary Ann O’Neil seconded approval of the January 5, 2022 minutes. 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 attended one of three Frank Talk community conversations about water use and policies in Arizona that was sponsored by Arizona Humanities and the Arizona State Library. It was at Dusenberry-River Library and he found it to be well organized by staff and thought it was an important use of space where the public could discuss different issues in an atmosphere that was peaceful and open to different opinions. He thanked everyone involved for putting it on.
- Elizabeth Soltero informed that the Library, Sunnyside Foundation, and UA have just started working together to capture the history of the El Pueblo Neighborhood Center.

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. SYNAPSE AFFINITY TEAM PRESENTATION — Jurdina Nolin-Brown, Youth Services Librarian

Some highlights of the presentation:

The goals of forming this team were to make connections to mental health information in Pima County, reach out to an underserved community, and to promote mental health and well-being for all.

Data shows that one in every five adults experience mental illness in the USA, one in twenty adults experience serious mental illness, and 17% of youth ages 6-17 experience a mental health disorder. Suicide is the second leading cause of death in those 10-34 years old. It takes eleven years from the onset of symptoms for someone to get adequate professional care.

The Synapse Affinity Team Mission:

- To readily connect our patrons and staff to information (both physical and digital) to educate and inform their optimal mental health.
- To reduce stigma often associated with mental health issues so that our patrons and staff feel empowered to seek whatever help they need.
- To be a bridge of information to our community partners, who can further assist with their expertise.

The Synapse Affinity Team Vision:

A community that feels more at ease discussing mental health as a part of their overall health, and has greatly freed itself of the stigma that surrounds mental health topics so that individuals in Pima County feel ready to reach out for help and know that they are not alone.

The Synapse Team sees the greatest need with youth, veterans, older adults, those who live in rural areas, Native Americans, LGBTQIA+, and the neurodiverse community. They are working on improving PCPL's collection as it falls short of the need. Only 17 of PCPL's events of almost 1,400 focused on mental illness.

They are planning to put out newsletters, fill the gaps in the collection with up-to-date material, create a web presence with curated lists, reviews, blogs, a quiet space, make well-being kits for home use, and create programs that help with destigmatization.

Over the holidays, they issued 955 Holiday Survival Kits for kids, and 1,112 adult kits. They have added 409 tags to Library materials, written 8 blogs and news stories, and they have issued 20 book lists that received over 980 views. On March 2, 2023, they will be having an in-person event with local author Karen Winters Schwartz at the Joyner-Green Valley Library. <https://pima.bibliocommons.com/events/63d98e726ef7092800a6bc0f>

Elizabeth Soltero asked if there was a specific goal for the team and was told that currently, they want to have presentations that are open across diverse areas and spread out across

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the county virtually for different age groups. They also have plans to work with other Affinity Teams to ensure they are serving those populations as well. They haven't narrowed their focus yet, and are just trying to get the conversation started.

John Halliday asked what was in Holiday Survival Kits. The children's kits had a worry monster craft that allowed them to write down their worries and feed them to the monster. They also had Play-Do, bubble wrap, coloring sheets and crayons, and an activity that helps them to identify their feelings and talk to their parents. The adult kits had a Zentangle instruction sheet, bubble wrap, book lists, peppermints, and calming tea.

Elizabeth Soltero asked what a quiet space was and was told that it is a digital space on a website where one goes and can hear calming music, with nothing else going on. It helps to minimize all the stimulus a body gets all day long.

8. LIBRARY REPORTS

A. COMMUNITY RELATIONS REPORT

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

- The book lineup for Read Black 2023 has been posted on the website: <https://www.library.pima.gov/news/get-reading-with-readblack-in-2023/>
- The newest Writer in Residence, Estella González, has office hours at Quincie Douglas Library and Flowing Well Library. She will also be doing three workshops. <https://www.library.pima.gov/writer/>
- Brainfuse helps with homework, and Holly's son recently tried it out with positive results.

B. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

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

Deputy Director Prechtel-Altman commented that the Synapse Team has gotten a lot of great feedback, and that she hears the same feedback at County meetings she attends, particularly from the Pima County Health Department. They have all been excited about the Synapse Team. COPE Community Services has reached out to Deputy Director Prechtel-Altman and PCPL is working on a partnership with them.

Deputy Director Prechtel-Altman is serving on the Regional Prosperity Initiative Taskforce, which is an effort between eight area governments, to develop wealthier communities across Pima County by creating policies that reduce generational poverty and improve opportunity. The participating governments include the City of Tucson, City of South Tucson, Pascua Yaqui Tribe, Pima County, Tohono O'odham Nation, Town of Marana, Town of Oro Valley, and Town of Sahuarita. They are also working with two UA Professors from the School of Sociology who have been doing research on policies. Based on the national research that they have found, this initiative has identified four policy areas that will provide the greatest impact on our community.

1. Assuring the availability of jobs that will economically support a household
2. Increasing housing availability
3. Providing equitable and effective resources to the entire community
4. Build individual and community assets

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The policies they will be creating will be based on these four areas. All policy recommendations are going to be based on research from credible recognized sources. The policy ideas will be reviewed and vetted by stakeholders from government, community, faith-based organizations, the business sector, and people with lived experience to ensure these policies are a fit for our area and reflect our priorities. The goal is that this group will create these policies, and any jurisdiction can use them and act on them.

Deputy Director Prechtel-Altman showed the Library Board three draft policies they will be working on. Bonnie Bazata and Nicolle Fyffe will be interviewing people, and Deputy Director Prechtel-Altman asked with whom they need to be talking about these policies? Who are the experts in the field, community members, etc.?

Policy #1: *Efforts to increase the stock of affordable housing (development incentives, zoning reforms, subsidies, housing vouchers, permanent supportive housing, public housing, etc.) should adopt practices and investments which reduce the geographic concentration of poverty and increase the number of mixed-income neighborhoods.*

In higher opportunity areas the availability of affordable housing should be increased and households with young children living in high poverty areas should be prioritized for access to these opportunities.

Investments and incentives for development of mixed-income housing in high poverty areas can also reduce the concentration of poverty but should be planned carefully and paired with programs to prevent displacement of current renters and homeowners.

Policy #2: *Increase knowledge of and access to community resources and public benefits for low-income individuals and families by expanding outreach and education, improving and modernizing service delivery, enhancing coordination, and eliminating unnecessary administrative burdens between and within agencies and service providers that delivers positive outcomes for families.*

Policy #3: *Increase access to high quality early childhood education for children from economically disadvantaged families.*

Deputy Director Prechtel-Altman asked the Board to think about people in their community who are experts or interested in this or can give a voice to their lived experiences, and to let her know so she can forward their names. She will keep the Board informed about the progress of this work, which should be wrapped up by mid-fall.

Maria Iannone suggested talking with teachers, or putting out a survey to different districts. She volunteers in Marana School District, which has a higher poverty level. Another suggestion was the Pima County School Superintendent and Deputy Director Prechtel-Altman said that someone from his staff was on the team.

C. PUBLIC SERVICES REPORT

Marissa Alcorta, Deputy Director of Public Services/Customer Experience, highlighted and/or added to her written report:

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Deputy Director Alcorta updated on hiring. Interviewing for Librarian Is just finished yesterday, and they are getting ready set up interviews for Librarian IIIs in a few weeks. The next hiring will be for the Salazar-Ajo Library Associate position.

Deputy Director Alcorta is getting the new Library Services Managers (LSMs) settled, and assigning them to affinity teams to help support them. The LSMs will soon start attending Board meetings.

Deputy Director Alcorta has been working on countywide teams, including the DEI Taskforce. There are twelve different departments on this taskforce. They are looking at ways to be more inclusive, ways to recruit and retain staff, salary, and multilingual pay.

The Tucson Festival of Books is coming up March 4-5. Deputy Director Alcorta is on the Nuestras Raíces team, and they are working with the Many Nations team and bringing in indigenous authors. Ramona Emerson and Bojan Louis are being highlighted.

D. SUPPORT SERVICES REPORT

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

Deputy Director Simon informed that there are many facilities projects happening. The Martha Cooper Library is well on the way. The design work for Richard Elías-Mission Library also continues to move forward. W. Anne Gibson-Esmond Station Library's parking lot is being worked on. Nanini Library has a sidewalk being installed.

The Budget is being worked on, and there are many things in the Library's budget that are related to technology, including not only computers, hardware, databases, e-books, audiobooks, but also hotspots to check out and put out in the community, broadband and infrastructure from Three Points to Corona de Tucson. An application is being worked on for E-rate to build infrastructure in Ajo and Arivaca. These technology items cost millions and millions of dollars.

One of the technology trends Deputy Director Simon has recently been made aware about is the ChatGPT software developed by OpenAI. People are saying it is "the end of writing" and should be banned in school because AI is doing the writing. Some professors are embracing it, and encourage their students to use it to help generate ideas and write papers. Libraries help make sure correct information goes to people when they are searching for things, and will be something we will be working with. It is not going away, and can be used to our benefit. It can be used to leverage the work that is done at the Library, but must be done in such a way that ensures that people get accurate information.

E. LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

Director Mathewson informed that in her report, there were some results about the staffing taskforce which helped provide information for a salary study. There were six job classifications that were unique to the Library and not in other County departments that were focused on. The results were sent to the Human Resources Department and three of the positions had substantial changes to them. There was a typo in the chart that Director Mathewson used in her report, which said that Librarian III positions are nonexempt, which is incorrect. The chart shows what the rates were previously, and what they now are. Also, in the past, the Library Associate position was a higher classification than Library Technical

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Assistant Supervisor (Circulation Managers) who supervise the circulation team as well as manage all of the money transactions, which is why they are now at a higher grade than the Library Associates. And, some of the positions have probably been used in ways they shouldn't have been, which the taskforce will continue to look at.

Director Mathewson also wanted to share the importance of the staffing taskforce in looking at how we utilize all PCPL's staff in the work they are doing. What requirements there are, and if they need to be rethought. Some systems around the country are allowing other Masters Degrees instead of Library Science Degrees, depending on the level of the job. The Cincinnati Public Library is changing their structure because a lot of people who go to get an MLS and want to do library work, reader's advisory, or programming, don't necessarily want to be branch managers or to be in charge. Typically, that has been how people can increase their wages. The Cincinnati Public Library is going to be working with a community college for a Professional Library Leader Program where people will be certified and will get up to 30 credit hours through the community college and all of the courses are based on management techniques, leadership, etc. which would allow someone who has some college or worked in a library system for a few years the opportunity to advance to becoming a branch manager. Director Mathewson said that it is an interesting philosophy and an interesting way to think about it. Parts of those discussions are the change in our world now—the cost of a Bachelor's or Master's Degree, the number of people who are not able to make enough money to not only go to school, but to buy a house or pay the rent, and thinking about what are the appropriate requirements for the work that people are doing.

About AI, Director Mathewson noted that the implications of it is unknown, but we find it difficult to fill positions, and is why Cincinnati is changing their positions as their Master Degree librarians are not applying to be managers. She speculated that other professions will be thinking about that as well. Pima County has a Certified Public Manager Program that three librarians are working on right now through Eller College. She added that it will be interesting to see if over time if Pima County uses that program as a way for library and other County staff to move up in their positions.

On the library salary study, folks were not happy about the positions that didn't have an increase, and added that the Library was not finished. There should be news soon about the County's overall salary study, and one of the hopes is that there will be a way for people to move through a salary range. There hasn't been anything in place like step increases or merit increases that actually let people move. If the Board of Supervisors voted on an increase for everyone, then people would move a little bit, but generally, people were not moving through their salary ranges. While being hopeful, if that doesn't work out in the way hoped, there is a strategy to build in some framework where there are different levels of certifications that people can do to help them move through a step range.

In addition to continuing to look at minimum qualifications, the staffing taskforce is and PCPL is working on retention of staff.

The Southwest Books of the Year publication is out. Many of the authors in it will be at the book festival as well.

John Halliday had a question about the LGBTQIA+ Affinity Team name change to the Pride Team. He thought the email that was sent out was excellent in explaining the good reasons for changing it. He wondered if this is something going on nationwide, or if PCPL was leading the way? Director Mathewson said PCPL was leading the way. Most of

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the libraries were still using the initials, and that the Pride Team did a great job coming up with that.

Elizabeth Soltero asked about grades and salary range. When someone starts a new position, did they have to start at that entry grade, or can they negotiate? Director Mathewson responded that it has been the practice of the County of hiring people at the minimum salary, and occasionally people have been able to negotiate. It is one of the hopes of this salary study to figure out if someone comes in with a certain amount of experience if they can be hired at a higher pay grade, noting that most places do that.

9. ADJOURNMENT

John Halliday moved and Barbara Blake seconded adjournment of the meeting. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

Next Meeting: March 2, 2023, at 4:00 p.m.

Submitted by:
Judy Moses
Senior Special Staff Assistant