

PIMA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

November 6, 2025, 4:00 PM

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, Mary Ann O'Neil, Chair, Anna Sanchez, Frances Benavidez.

Guest: Patrick Andrews, application in progress

Absent: Mariana Padias, Vice Chair and Cam Juárez

Also Present: Tess Mayer, Library Director; Marissa Alcorta, Deputy Director; Anthony Batchelder, Deputy Director; Em DeMeester-Lane, Deputy Director; Vicki Lázaro; Library Services Manager; Paula Maez, Library Services Manager; Renee Bibby, Library Services Manager; Adriana Saavedra, Library Services Manager, Kate DeMeester-Lane, Library Services Manager, Lois Miller, Quincie Douglas Manager, Karina Pacheco, Library Technical Assistant Supervisor, Brie Chillious, Librarian I, Holly Schaffer, Community Relations Manager and Laura Lopez, Assistant to Library Director.

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

2. CALL TO THE PUBLIC: None

3. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

John Halliday moved to approve October 2, 2025, meeting minutes, Anna Sanchez seconded, motion carried.

4. INTRODUCTION

Around the room to introduce new board members, Katherine Thomson, Frances Benavidez and Patrick Andrew (application in progress).

5. SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS BY LIBRARY BOARD MEMBERS

Mary Ann O'Neil, Chair, shared that she attended the Wilmot Library's 60th anniversary celebration, describing the program as very nice and charming. She also attended a Library Foundation event to meet Tess, which was well attended.

Laura Lopez, for **Bonnie Carpenter**, reported the Community Sales are Friday, 11/7 to Monday, 11/10.

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

Karen Williams, **Pima Library Foundation Update:**

- Donor Event, featuring Tess Mayer, Library Director, was well attended
- Scholarships and Hotspots for Literacy Connects students
- Ongoing support for Career Online High School.
- Funding to begin for the Juvenile Detention Center Library program.
- Joint session between the Friends of the Library and the Foundation explored future collaboration through a grant-funded workshop.

7. New Business:

A. Quincie Douglas Branch Library Update – Lois Miller, Branch Manager, Karina Pacheco and Brie Chillious.

Presented a PowerPoint:

- **Lois:** 20th Anniversary Celebration honoring Quincie Douglas, with daughter Doreen Davis sharing stories; highlighted the SunVan program (15 vans donated by Jim Click). Also noted a Health Fair.
- **Brie Chillious:** Children's Services and Early Literacy Programming, including the Happy Baby Belly Prenatal Family Storytime Program providing expectant mothers with resources and gifts.
- **Karina Pacheco:** Seed Library gardening program teaching families about seed germination, transplanting, and home gardening; children and parents decorated planters and engaged in learning together.

B. Baker & Taylor Transition Update – Kate DeMeester-Lane/Marissa Alcorta

Baker & Taylor shutdown is a major impact on the industry, which has supplied most U.S. public libraries with shelf-ready books.

The library is now reallocating funds, moving to in-house processing, and working with new vendors. She praised staff for their flexibility and teamwork during the transition.

8. Unfinished Business

A. Downtown Library Update – Library Administration

Tess Mayer, Library Director, provided a brief update that the architect/designer for the new downtown library has been selected, pending Board of Supervisors' contract approval. Once finalized, a project plan and timeline will be shared, including a significant community engagement component.

B. Review Draft – Establishment of Reserves Policy – Library Administration

- Library reserve fund covers fiscal emergencies without affecting early childhood scholarships or regular library operations.
- Policy updates: reserves are for unanticipated shortfalls impacting the Library District only and require Board approval.
- Board allocated \$10M (+\$600K for PEEPs) from the district fund, which also supports community programs.
- Advisory Board will review the reserve policy twice a year for stronger oversight.

C. Survey Results Update – Library Administration

- Deputy Alcorta and Renee Bibby, Library Services Manager, will present to the board next month, sharing insights from the recent community survey.
- The previous consultant aggregated the data without analysis; a new consultant will provide analysis and conduct additional community engagement through the LSTA grant.
- The presentation will offer more comprehensive information, Chair O'Neil emphasized sharing preliminary results with the public and expressing gratitude for their participation.

9. LIBRARY REPORTS

A. COMMUNITY RELATIONS REPORT - Holly Schaffer, Community Relations Manager, provided an update on:

Library Advisory Board Minutes

- The annual report is finished, it features customer stories about the library's impact. The report will be released in early January.
- The library's Savannah email newsletters have exceptional engagement, 50 – 100% open rates, vs 27% industry average, due to targeted, relevant content and diverse programming that keeps readers interested.

B. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT - Marissa Alcorta, Deputy Director of Community noted that monthly reports will now highlight the work of the library's affinity teams, showcasing their outreach and programs. She also shared plans for each team to present to the board in upcoming months.

C. PUBLIC SERVICES REPORT - Em DeMeester-Lane, Deputy Director,

- **Lindy Furman, Library Services Manager:** New role divided into safety and security (50%), vulnerable populations and restorative justice youth programs (30%), and training/education (20%), including overseeing the library's first dedicated professional development coordinator.
- **John Halliday:** Noted that 1% of capital projects support public art; highlighted positive feedback from branch managers on additional staffing; asked about the University of Arizona internship program.
- **Paula Maez, Library Services Manager:** Described 3–5 project-based, unpaid graduate interns (including Knowledge River students) gaining library and community experience; program is expanding and expected to be fully operational by spring.

D. SUPPORT SERVICES REPORT - Anthony Batchelder, Deputy Director, reported strong progress in **library staffing**:

- Staffing is improving, with 25 of 34 vacancies in progress and the vacancy rate is likely to drop below the county average.
- Operations run on a \$58M budget, mostly from property taxes, with additional Foundation and Friends contributions.
- Organization lost a significant number of staff during the pandemic period, but most recovery has occurred in the past year.

E. LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Tess Mayer, Library Director

highlighted two recent community programs organized by the library's affinity teams:

- A Pride team author event featuring Tucson's poet laureate TC Tolbert, which engaged and inspired attendees.
- A Children's Peace Garden event with author Cynthia Harmony, providing a safe, interactive space for children to explore gardening, crafts, and storytelling.

She emphasized the wide variety of experiences staff provide for the community and encouraged board members to visit the Peace Garden. The meeting concluded with a motion to adjourn and welcome new board members.

ADJOURNMENT

Anna Sanchez moved to adjourn the meeting; John Halliday seconded. Motion carried; meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Next Meeting: December 4, 2025, at 4:00 p.m.

Submitted by: Laura Lopez, Assistant to Library Director