



**MINUTES OF THE
ALAMEDA FREE LIBRARY BOARD MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2022**

The regular meeting of the Alameda Free Library Board was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Joyce McConeghey, President
Sara Strickler, Vice President
Thushan Amarasiriwardena, Board Member
Dimple Kanji, Board Member
Kathleen Kearney, Board Member

Absent: None

Staff: Jane Chisaki, Library Director
Lori Amaya, Recording Secretary

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS, AGENDA (Public Comment)

None.

CONSENT CALENDAR

An asterisk indicates items so enacted or approved on the Consent Calendar

- *A. Report from the Library Director Highlighting Activities for the Months of November and December, 2022.
- *B. Draft Minutes of the Regular Library Board Meeting of November 9, 2022.
- *C. Modified Library Services Report for the Months of October and November, 2022.
- *D. Financial Report Reflecting FY22/23 Expenditures by Fund for November and December, 2022.
- *E. Bills for Ratification for the Months of November and December, 2022.

Director Chisaki reported that staffing issues are expected to improve with upcoming new hires. With the heavy rains, there are minor roof leaks at each of the branches, but no flooding. In November, the Library held a Lego Coding class which was a huge success. The Library is writing a grant to purchase laptops, software, and kits so the program can also be offered at the branch libraries. The new Teen Librarian started early December and is creating a rapport with the teens.

The Red Cross Blood Drive yesterday was a success even though they were understaffed. The drive was fully booked with more appointments offered than before, so more blood was collected. The final two Japantown Historical Markers are expected to be mounted by end of April. The NPS Internment Center Grant project reception will be held mid-May in the Stafford Room at the Main Library, and the exhibit will be on display for 1 – 2 months. Friends' Live @ the Library Concert tickets are becoming available. Single concert tickets are \$40 and the series is \$100. Library card users for October at each location are: 3,837 Main, 583 BFI, and 612 WEB, for a total of 5,032. Library card users for November at each location are: 3,758 Main, 562 BFI, and 589 WEB, for a total of 4,909. November numbers are expected to be lower with the holiday closures. The format of the Library Board Meeting will change in March due to the end of the Governor's COVID-19 State of Emergency and suspension of the Brown Act requirements for teleconferencing. Director Chisaki will update the Library Board when more information becomes available. President McConeghey asked what the occupancy is for the Friends' concerts. Director Chisaki responded she will ask for a maximum of 100 people and for masks to be required. President McConeghey gave her support for fewer people and masks to be required. Board Member Amarasiriwardena shared that he would be an advocate for opening up to as many people as possible. Board Member Kanji shared that she is more on the conservative side because she is frequently seeing Paxlovid and Tamiflu given out. She would prefer masking and restricted occupancy for now, and if numbers go down in March and April, we can reassess. Board Member Kearney agreed with masking indoors. Board Member Kanji asked what age range attends the concerts. Director Chisaki answered that most attendees are older retirees. Board Member Amarasiriwardena shared that he is in favor of in person meetings for the Library Board meetings.

There are no changes to the Draft Minutes of the November 9, 2022 Library Board Meeting.

President McConeghey moved to accept the Consent Calendar. Vice President Strickler seconded the motion, which passed with a 5-0 vote.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Current and On-Going Library Activities (J. Chisaki)

The City is proposing street design improvements that may affect the angled parking next to the library on Lincoln Avenue. They are proposing three different scenarios. Information on the Lincoln/Marshall/Pacific Avenue Safety Improvement Project can be found on the city's website.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Set Library Board Meeting Schedule for 2023 (J. Chisaki)

Director Chisaki presented the 2023 Library Board meeting dates. Director Chisaki noted that the dates do not conflict with any holidays, and if the Board is amenable, a motion to vote can be made. President McConeghey moved to accept the 2023 Library Board meeting dates. Vice President Strickler seconded the motion, which passed with a 5-0 vote.

B. Friends of the Library (J. Chisaki)

Vice President Strickler and Board Member Amarasiriwardena attended the Friends meeting last month. Vice President Strickler plans to attend again and shared an update that new life is being breathed in the Café committee. The committee will meet on Saturday to do a walkthrough and brainstorm for a relaunch and new vision for the café. Board Member Amarasiriwardena was surprised how quickly the Friends approved Director Chisaki's request and asked how much of the money raised by the Friends goes to the library. Director Chisaki explained that the Friends have an investment fund and whatever is not used for operating costs or library budget requests is put into the investment fund for the long term. For the book sales, her best guess is that 50% comes back to the library. Board Member Amarasiriwardena recently visited the BFF Bookstore and was impressed.

C. Patron Suggestions/Comments (Speak-Outs) and Library Director's Response

A patron asked how he is supposed to request books because he was told writing down titles on a piece of paper and giving that to staff is old fashioned and that it is done online now. Staff will contact him on how he can request his titles faster.

LIBRARY BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

Board Member Amarasiriwardena asked if Director Chisaki has goals set for new card holders each month. Director Chisaki doesn't have goals set right now because it's difficult with the way the public ebbs and flows. There was a newspaper article about the San Francisco Library and how all 28 of their libraries are open again, and even though their numbers are increasing, they are still only at 1/3 of pre-pandemic levels. Their door counts are down and can be attributed to not having a lot of in person programs. Digital collection use is rising, but it's not as high as physical materials. The trend across the country is that Libraries are not where they were pre-pandemic, so giving a specific number as a goal is difficult. The Library strives to increase numbers, but won't put a cap on it. Vice President Strickler also read the article and was struck that digital checkouts significantly increased and expects the numbers to increase each year. Director Chisaki expects once staffing levels are increased, more outreach can be done. She likes the idea of the Library Board being forward thinking and looking at what libraries might look line down the road. There is a one day conference coming up in San Francisco called The Library of the Future, and the Board is welcome to attend. President McConeghey shared that she attended the unveiling of the Japantown Marker at the Marketplace and was moved by the descendants of the people featured on the plaque being able to speak about their family history. Board Member Kearney thought it was interesting to see the different generations there and how excited they were.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Director Chisaki informed the board the budget process is starting for the next two-year budget. The Library might ask for one or two positions, but it depends on what the revenue of the City looks like. Board Member Amarasiriwardena asked if there is a salary disparity between Alameda and other Bay Area libraries. Director Chisaki explained that prior to negotiations, a salary survey was completed and appropriate salary adjustments were made so Alameda is now in line with other Bay Area libraries. Board Member Amarasiriwardena asked what Director Chisaki needs the Library Board to do in the budget process. Director Chisaki responded that when it comes to public hearings, she may need the Board advocate for more funding.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS, NON-AGENDA GENERAL

Elizabeth Tuckwell shared that the Library does a great job, and she is an admirer of Jane as the Library Director. She also shared that she would be surprised if the Library doesn't receive a higher percentage than 50% from the Friends and that they have an enormous amount of volunteers because they believe in the Library.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Chisaki, Library Director and
Secretary to the Alameda Free Library Board