



September 8, 2021

Dear President Bales and Members of the Library Board,

This letter is to bring you up to date on activities during the months of July and August, 2021 and to provide a look forward to some of the activities, programs and plans we are working on.

Modified Library Services Reports: (Consent Agenda). Just a reminder that I have not included the “regular” Library Services Report in your Board Packet because we aren’t collecting most of those statistics. I have included some numbers, trends, and other interesting activities/services provided to the community during the closure. The Expenditure Reports and Check Registers for July and August are also included.

We have new Library Board Officers! Congratulations to Library Board President Amber Bales and Library Board Vice President Joyce McConeghey! Elections were held at the July meeting and we are very happy with the election results. We look forward to an exciting year with our new president and vice president, especially when the Board is completely filled with members.

New Library Board Members: I would again like to thank past Library Board President Cynthia Silva and past Library Board Vice President Dorothy Wismar for their years of service to our Board. The Mayor and I are currently interviewing applicants for the two Library Board vacancies. Those spots will not be filled (nominees sworn in) in time for the September meeting. Cynthia has agreed to be available to attend the September meeting until the replacements are sworn in. I will be able to share with you the names of our nominees at the September Library Board meeting since the Mayor’s announcement will be made at the September 7 City Council meeting. New members will be voted on by the full City Council then sworn in by the City Clerk on September 21. All applicants are welcome to view the September Library Board meeting but the new members will not officially at a meeting until November 10.

Main Library Update. All the best laid plans. Just when we thought all our full time positions were filled, we experienced another resignation. Full time Library Technician Ken Yuen resigned his full time position and decided to go part time. The full time vacancy was opened, posted, and closed in record time. Interviews will hopefully be held the third week in September. We wanted all positions filled before we resumed all service hours at all three libraries. We will manage however staffing will be a little thin. We have hired quite a few new part time staff members so there will be a lot of new smiling faces when you come in to any of our libraries to visit.

The Main Library is prepared to be a Cooling Center or a Fresh Air Center when the need arises. With the Main Library close to resuming pre-COVID service hours the staffing for these emergency uses are taken care of. For your information, these are the trigger points for activation:

- Air quality index above the “Very Unhealthy” index of 200 or higher based on the “Bay Area Air Quality Management District” <http://www.baaqmd.gov/about-air-quality/current-air-quality> .
- Heat Risk - National Weather Service (NOAA) Heat Risk chart at or above a Red / Level 3 <https://www.wrh.noaa.gov/wrh/heatrisk/?wfo=hnx>, or if temperatures are predicted to be at or above 88 degrees *and is expected to rise throughout the day.*

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Re-Opening Plans: As of August 16, the Main Library reopened full hours Monday through Saturday and both neighborhood libraries opened two days a week each. This was a soft opening with no fanfare. During the pandemic we lost about half of all our staff members and both neighborhood libraries lost their full time staff. This gradual opening of the West End Library and the Bay Farm Island Library is allowing the new staff members to ease into the West End and Bay Farm Libraries. Intentionally, each location has an open evening and an open day. By the time of the Library Board meeting on September 8, all three libraries will have resumed all pre-COVID-19 service hours. The Grand Re-opening of the three libraries will be on Tuesday, September 7, after the Labor Day Holiday. A press release has already gone out, on September 7; although there will be limited giveaways for those who visit the library we are not advertising that fact. We have a few face masks with the library logo in both adult and youth sizes, and tote bags, with the library logo; balloons and a "Welcome Back" sign. The community will once again have access to in-person services such as holds pickup at the branches, access to study rooms, computer drop-in assistance, computer courses, in-person programs for adults and teens, and limited children's in-person programming. The Stafford Community Room, Dewey's Café, and in-person children's storytimes will be available at a later date to be decided. Per City policy, face masks covering the mouth and nose is required at all times for everyone two years old and older in any city building.

Here is a reminder of our Library Locations & Hours:

Main Library: 1550 Oak Street, Mon-Tues: 12-8; Wed: 10-8; Thurs-Sat: 10-5; Sun: 1-5

West End Library: 788 Santa Clara Avenue, Mon: 12-8; Tue & Wed: 10-6; Thurs & Sat 10-5;
Fri & Sun: Closed

Bay Farm Island: 3221 Mecartney Road, Mon: 10-6; Tue: 12-8; Wed: 10-6; Thurs & Sat: 10-5;
Fri & Sun: Closed

Staff recommends discontinuing Library Takeout, demand has dropped off since we began allowing people into the building and they can pick up their own holds. Staff also recommends discontinuing the Grab Bags. Tentatively Dewey's Café will open late December 2021 or January 2022. Reservations for the public meeting rooms (Stafford Room and Family Study Room) will not be taken until after January 1, 2022. Children's storytimes will be dependent on when young people can be vaccinated and what the health directives are at the time.

Access Key Card Project. All Library Staff have been issued their building access cards for the Main Library. All existing employees & new hires were given the draft policy and have returned their signed acknowledgement page to receive their access card. We will see if the first to arrive employees get the building un-alarmed before the rest of the staff arrive, otherwise my phone will be ringing with alarm activations every day! Internal doors, particularly if they are from the public side to the staff side, have the card readers and as the batteries die in the push-button keypads, use of the card will be required. No decisions have been made on what official text will be printed on the cards but they are functional. Time will tell how the transition goes.

LED Lighting Project. The installation of the new LED lights is complete. It is very easy to notice how much brighter the Main Library is, take a look around the next time you are at the library. The copier alcoves and the first floor are the most noticeable locations on the public side. We scrambled to finish an agreement with Energy Conservation Options (installer) so they could be paid. There was a misunderstanding with Alameda Municipal Power with the project management and the fiscal responsibility for the project but it is all sorted out now and our lighting is beautiful.

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Electrifying the West End Library. The West End HVAC install and furnace & water heater replacement is on hold due to “supply chain” issues. The size of the HVAC unit that we want is back ordered. We considered a replacement brand but it would not have had the same output as the original one specified. Since we do not replace these items regularly, we decided to wait until the desired model came in. The program to talk about the electrification project has been rescheduled to January 2022. Without the new AC unit, the West End will not be a Cooling Center or Fresh Air Center for this season.

American Red Cross Blood Drives. The Library’s next quarterly Red Cross Blood Drive is September 14. The Blood Drive donors will enter and exit through the front doors with the rest of our public.

American Rescue Plan Funding. Prior to the August City Council break, no direction was given to city staff for which projects/priorities the City Council had this funding. So moving forward with the hot spot lending program is on hold. The item is on the September 7 City Council agenda. The State Library has funding for similar projects but our Library does not qualify for the funding primarily because of the way we do not filter our computers.

National Park Service Japanese American Containment Site Grant Project. With the speed of a snail this project moves forward. The sorting and identifying of photographs and documents is a much slower process than anticipated. Our participants are easily side-tracked looking at the old pictures and the memories come flooding in, with those memories are the stories that we are not documenting. The interviews have begun but again, are slow to conduct. Work with Densho in producing encyclopedia articles for inclusion in their expansive digital collection is moving forward. Topics are being discussed, an experienced editor has been selected as well as authors of several of the pieces. Some of the material found for this project is being used in the historical marker project.

Japantown Historical Markers. The content for the markers is just about ready to go. Before the final content is approved, there will be a sort of “sneak peek” event. On Friday, September 17, Rhythmix Cultural Works is presenting their next Artwalk in their “Island City Waterways” grant project series. The theme for this artwalk is Alameda’s Japantown. There will be three performances: beginning at the Main Library there will be a dance program, then we move on to the Buddhist Temple of Alameda on Pacific where there will be a several small performances of cultural significance~ dance, music, rhythmic chanting, and flower arranging; then finally on to the Buena Vista Methodist United Church for a taiko drumming performance. There will not be a performance at the Marketplace but “mock-ups” of all four historical markers will be on display. Just to give Rhythmix an idea of attendance, you can RSVP for this free event here: <http://bmacards.com/Dm8kL5>. It should be a fun and joyous event.

Friends of the Library. The Friends continue to work hard on the Library’s behalf. They continue to work on their own governing format with an Executive Board, working committees (i.e. fundraising, author programs, book sale, communications, etc.), their own strategic plan with goals and objectives, and they are discussing forming a Governance Committee to write a Governance policy, and possibly having a Board Retreat in 2022.

The book sales are still the major topic of discussion. There will not be an October book sale in 2021. The book sale committee are working on creating a book store in the Friend’s sorting space at the Main Library. They would still sort donations in that room but rather than have sorting bins arranged throughout, shelving would be installed for customer browsing. The Friends are still discussing layout and procedures. They are

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now selling some books online through a third party seller. That seller accepts the books the Friends send that are valued \$8 and up. The Friends receive about 50% of what the book is sold for. If they did the listing, sales, shipping themselves they might make more money but this third party also disposes of what doesn't sell. The last report is that they are ready to send about 30 boxes of materials to the third party seller.

The Live @ the Library Concert series still hopes to return however now the start date is in question with the new Delta variant causing the surge in COVID cases. The concert committee is watching what is happening in the world to determine when best to host in person program again. The concerts would not be the same if they were offered as a Zoom event and they would certainly not be much of a fundraiser for the Friends. More news as it comes.

The next Friends Board meeting will be on Monday, September 27 and October 25 via Zoom at 6:30 p.m. The Friends have decided to continue the Zoom format for their Board meetings at least through the end of the calendar year.

Alameda Reads. The program took a significant hit with the pandemic/shelter-in-place situation. They currently have just under half the number of active pairs and just over half the number of active learners. Until this past month, Literacy Coordinator Barb Papik, has not taken in any new learners or tutors due to the complexity of evaluating folks remotely, training folks remotely and the uncertainty around new pairs being able to build solid tutoring relationships entirely online. However she now feels that they are now ready to move forward, re-growing the program both in-person and online.

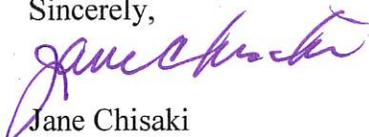
They are moving toward re-opening the office to the public. Their target date is September 13, 2021 and they already have several pairs on the calendar! Barb has been meeting with new pairs by appointment only in the office during August. They are very excited about the study rooms in the library being available for tutoring pairs to reserve in September as well.

The pandemic, while extremely disruptive to the program, has given them an opportunity to reset and reevaluate how they can best serve our learners while maintaining a safe and productive work environment for our staff and volunteers. As a result, they will be changing the hours that the program is open to the public to: Monday – Thursday, 10:00a – 2:00p.

Barb says these will be the Alameda Reads hours for the foreseeable future. If they feel that the volume of learners requires more hours, they will expand by opening earlier and/or staying open a little later. They currently do not have plans at this time to resume evening hours.

If you have any questions about the items to be considered at the Board meeting, or if you would like to discuss these or any other items, please email me at jchisaki@alamedaca.gov or if it is not urgent, please leave me a message at 747-7747.

Sincerely,



Jane Chisaki
Library Director