

FRIENDS OF THE PALO ALTO LIBRARY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Rinconada Library (Embarcadero Room): January 13, 2016

Nigel Jones called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

1. Roll Call

Present: Tom Clark, Nancy Cohen, Peter Dehlinger, Charlotte Epstein, Nigel Jones, Ann Justice, Tina Kass, Suzanne Little, Gerry Masteller, Karen Neier, Jim Schmidt, Martha Schmidt, Steve Staiger

Absent: None

Guests: None

2. Agenda Approval

Nigel reported that the Board would need to discuss an urgent personnel matter involving a volunteer immediately after the committee reports. As a result, he proposed postponing discussion of the final item: FOPAL's Annual Review and Recommendations. Board members agreed, but suggested that a brief discussion of a mission statement might be possible.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

A motion to approve the minutes of December 9, 2015, as submitted, was approved

4. President's Report: Nigel Jones

Acknowledgements: Nigel and the Board acknowledged the service of Peter Dehlinger as President and Charlotte Epstein as Secretary for the past three years. Both served with distinction and have the gratitude of the Board.

Location of Board Meetings: Nigel took a straw poll of member preferences regarding meeting locations, explaining that he has reserved the Embarcadero Room for future meetings (except for May 2016, when it is not available). The overwhelming majority agreed to the Rinconada Library location and a start time of 9:00 a.m. The secretary will distribute a schedule of meetings for 2016 with the minutes.

Calendar 2016: The President noted the following calendar items should be addressed:

- *Nominating Committee*: According to the Standing Rules of FOPAL the President must appoint a Nominating Committee at the first meeting of the FOPAL Board each year. Although the Standing Rules state that membership of this committee "includes at least two Directors. . . and one member-at-large," past practice has not always included appointing a member-at-large.

Given that, the Board determined that those rules could be suspended if the Board agreed. All members of the Board agreed that a Nominating Committee of two members was sufficient. Nancy and Charlotte agreed to serve. They may add a member-at-large if they wish and are able to find one. [Note: As of January 25th, they report that Tisa Walker has agreed to serve on this committee.]

- *Annual Meeting:* The FOPAL Board needs to set the Annual Meeting (generally in October) and have ready a slate of new/continuing members and officers, to be made public one month in advance of the Annual Meeting. The Secretary will post a schedule of FOPAL Board meetings as soon as she can get access to the FOPAL website.
- *Budget:* A budget for the next fiscal year (beginning on July 1st) should be reviewed by the FOPAL Board in March with approval at the May meeting.
- *Member Sales:* The Board agreed that the Member Sales would continue to be scheduled for July and December.
- *Annual Appeal:* The Annual Appeal is scheduled for November.

Website: Charlotte urged the Board to find a “webmaster” who would be responsible for developing and maintaining the FOPAL website. She emphasized the importance of keeping the site up-to-date. Although the hope is that Frank McConnell will continue to work with FOPAL, his continuing ability to do so is not certain. Even if he continues, FOPAL needs to have at least one (preferably two) backups who can update the website. Martha pointed out that such backup is also needed for the Access database that supports the membership activities. Charlotte will check in with Janette Herceg, who may be looking for a volunteer who can help with these tasks.

Forward with The Foreword: Board members agreed that two issues of The Foreword per year is sufficient. One will be issued in September and one in the spring (likely to be in April).

Treasurer Appointment for 2017: Given the importance of this office and the fact that Karen will complete her third term as Treasurer at the end of this year, Nigel emphasized the importance of finding a successor as early in the year as possible, in order for that person to start learning the ropes well before next January.

Cubberley Site: Nigel raised the matter of FOPAL involvement in discussions of the future of Cubberley. Although Janette attends some of the meetings, the Board agreed that it’s essential for Board members to participate in these discussions. All agreed that FOPAL should be present at the meetings of the Library Advisory Commission and the City Council. Nigel reported that he will be reporting to both in the near future.

5. Library Director’s Report

Nigel reported that Monique le Conge Ziesenhenné was attending a conference and was therefore not available for this meeting. She identified the following points of interest for FOPAL:

- Much of her time for the next few months will be taken up with staff recruitment and training, given the recent turnover in PACL managers, as well as the increased staffing funded by the city.
- A refurbishment of the Children’s Library is planned for this year.
- A plan to install drive-by bookdrops at Rinconada and Mitchell Park is being added to the Public Works Department’s calendar, the first step in the development process.
- Nigel and Monique have collaborated on a proposal to the Palo Alto Weekly Fund for a “Library Bikemobile,” that is, a cycle-based conveyance outfitted with books and other library paraphernalia to be taken to local schools, hospitals, etc. This has been an interest on the part of

PACL staff for some time. It would involve a \$2500 FOPAL match if the PA Weekly Fund approved it. The decision on the awards will be made in April.

6. Officer/Committee Reports

- Treasurer's Report (Karen Neier): Karen suggested deferring discussion of the monthly numbers and the budget until the February meeting, pending resolution of the volunteer situation that the Board would discuss later in this meeting. She noted, however, that the December figures presented no surprises. Karen also reported that she is reviewing the cash handling process as a result of the volunteer situation that the Board will be discussing later in this meeting. Regarding the pace of PACL use of FOPAL funds, she is confident that the Library staff will be able to spend the funds available to them in this fiscal year, although Monique is being careful about how to allocate them.

- Book Sale Committee Report (Suzanne Little):
 - Volunteers from the Los Altos High School Honor Society participated in the last Book Sale.
 - The Mitchell Park kiosk remains quite profitable (\$1530 in December).
 - Sponsor Level: Suzanne reported that the committee recommends reinstatement of the Sponsor membership level, with a membership fee of \$100/year. There are currently 22 Sponsor level members and a description of this level remains on the FOPAL website. Sponsor members and Life members (who pay a one-time fee of \$500) may buy 100 books during the first hour of the Members Early Book Sale. Still to be settled is the question of whether to allow members in other categories who come in at 10:00 a.m. to purchase more than 12 books.
A motion to re-establish the Sponsor Member category was made and approved.
 - Membership Brochure: Suzanne said that the documentation of FOPAL membership categories is not accurate and that the Book Sale Committee will be working on this. The membership brochure will need to be revised and re-issued; the website will need to be corrected.
 - Storage: There's been a positive response from the Cubberley management regarding FOPAL erecting a storage shed near the Main Room for ephemera and miscellaneous equipment.
 - Sunday Afternoons: At the last Book Sale, all Main Room books under \$5 were reduced by 50% in an effort to bring in more people at the end of the event. It's not clear if that made a difference in terms of income, but it helped move books.
 - Volunteer Recruitment: The Board discussed the possibility of expanding volunteer recruitment efforts and agreed that such an effort might yield additional volunteers. Examples of places that could be contacted are Avenidas and senior residences (Channing House, Stevenson House, Avant, etc.).
 - "Escalation": Suzanne explained that the Book Sale Committee has set up a process for escalating complaints and concerns. Individuals with concerns will be asked to provide a written description of the issue to Suzanne, who will then work with the committee and Janette to resolve it and respond to the individual.

- Membership Committee (Martha Schmidt): FOPAL has 813 active members, including 270 Library Members and 192 Family Members.

7. Other

- The Board discussed a report from Nigel, Suzanne, Karen and Peter regarding a possible substantial theft on the part of a FOPAL volunteer. This is an evolving situation, and members decided to schedule a Special Meeting of the Board within a few days to address it. (Note: The Special Meeting was scheduled for January 15, 2016, at 1:00 p.m. at Mitchell Park Library).
- The Board briefly discussed the FOPAL mission statement and whether it needed to be reviewed. Most members were not interested in spending a great deal of time on this. Steve noted that this kind of exercise is generally done in organizations that are changing or that hope to change. FOPAL has been stable in terms of activities and goals for a quite a long time, and is likely to remain so. Peter said that this was an active item when the Library Foundation was discussing its mission statement and it was important to distinguish between the two organizations. That's no longer the case. Generally, the Board agreed that the current statement (About Us) is fine.
- The following items from the agenda were deferred and will be re-scheduled for discussion at future meetings:
 - How can FOPAL increase the use of electronic payments, which would streamline the counting process and might encourage more purchases, and which would be more secure. (Peter)
 - Should we develop a procedure manual for FOPAL volunteers, including a statement of the FOPAL philosophy, how FOPAL conducts business, rules of etiquette and safety procedures? (Peter)
 - Should FOPAL meet with other Friends groups in the area to share ideas and generally keep in touch? (Peter)
 - Storage update, status, cost vs. revenue potential. (Peter)
 - Where do we want FOPAL to be 3 years from now? (Nigel)
 - How do we balance operating as a business and/or as a community resource? (Nigel)
 - Finance: Past, present and projections. Should we maintain a 3-year budget projection? (Nigel)
 - Relationships with stakeholders. (Nigel)
 - Relationships with the local community. (Nigel)
 - The future of the Cubberley Community Center. (Nigel)
 - Amazon status. (Nigel)
 - Storage update, status, cost vs. potential revenue. (Nigel)
 - Space constraints. (Nigel)
 - Synchronize all materials. (Nigel)

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
 Tina Kass
 Secretary

