

FRIENDS OF THE PALO ALTO LIBRARY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

AND

MEMBERS' ANNUAL MEETING

DATE: October 11th, 2017

Rinconada Library Embarcadero Room

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by President Nigel Jones at 9:35 a.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Tom Clark, Nancy Cohen, Charlotte Epstein, Nigel Jones, Shaun Maguire, Karen Neier, Jim Schmidt, Martha Schmidt, Steve Staiger

Absent: Peter Dehlinger, Tina Kass, Suzanne Little, Gerry Masteller

Guests: Neelima Meka, Monique leConge Ziesenhenné, Rajeshwari Ramamurthi

Charlotte is acting Secretary for this meeting in Tina's absence.

3. Library Director's Report - Monique leConge Ziesenhenné

Monique reported that she recently defended her dissertation and has been awarded her doctorate. The board offered its congratulations.

The library is currently fully staffed though staff change is a constant. She spoke briefly about the New Americans program at MP.

3. Report by Membership Chair - Rajeshwari Ramamurthi

Raji asked what kind of report the board wanted. She suggested a quarterly report. There was a request that changes in membership numbers be indicated on the report. Raji will be able to cull expired members, defined as those with no action in the last 5 years.

She has developed specifications for a new laptop that would be faster and allow her to do the work more quickly and easily.

There was a question on how to handle membership that come from the Stanford Credit Union. She will email Nigel her thoughts on this.

Another question was on the handling of large donations from non-members that are "in honor of". The conclusion was that these should not be in the membership database. These donors will receive a thank-you letter from Verna that will include tax information.

4. Agenda Approval

The agenda was approved as presented.

5. Minutes of September approval

The minutes were approved as presented.

6. President's Report - Nigel Jones

6.1 Foreword

The Foreword went out two weeks late. The Foreword was 10 pages which required a loose sheet so the design and the stuffing by Post Haste took longer. In the future The Foreword will be either 8 or 12 pages to avoid this problem.

Due to the late mailing FOPAL will not be in compliance with the annual meeting notification. Nancy commented that Robert's Rules allow a waiver to open the meeting with acceptance of the non-compliance. There was a question of whether there would be any members who might show up and be upset. Nigel contacted the few whom he thought might be concerned.

There were 1117 copies mailed. This is a high number but the postage went down due to using bulk mailing.

6.2 Amazon

Two weeks ago 5 boxes were sent to Amazon for Fulfillment by Amazon (FBA). The first batch took 10 days to be listed and the second batch 7 days. There were 66 books online and 11 were sold at about \$40 each. There have been no new listings in 2 weeks.

The question is how do we ramp up our Amazon sales to where we were and how do we double the throughput to Amazon. Could we do this without Jerry having an assistant? Can we maintain a level of 100 books a week? What resources do we need? If we want UPS to pick up, we need a defined 4 hour window which would require a degree of organization that we haven't yet achieved. For example, we could work towards having boxes ready for UPS pickup every Thursday from 9 AM to 1 PM. It is not a trivial process to move from a book in the hand to a book at Amazon.

Ed Walker has suggested that some of the Annex shelves be removed which would allow more space to be used for the process of getting the boxes ready for shipping.

6.3 eBay

There are 204 DVDs listed and 100 in backlog. We have taken in about \$450 this month.

6.4 Open Studios

There will be Open Studios of the artists at Cubberley on November 11 which is also a FOPAL sale day. We are doing joint PR with the artists.

6.5 Banner

The banner will be put out before the December Members' Sale.

6.6 Earthquake Preparation

Nigel has requested some information from the city but there has been no response.

6.7 Annual Giving

The mailing will take place after the November 8 board meeting. Last year we sent out 800 pieces but this year it will be over 1100. It was decided that we should also send to volunteers so Nigel will combine the lists to avoid duplicates. Nigel is going to improve the return slip.

6.8 FOPAL 80th Anniversary

April 2018 will be FOPAL's 80th anniversary. National Library Week and National Volunteer Week will also be observed in April. Nigel is working with Monique to develop a resolution thanking FOPAL that the City Council can use.

Jim Schmidt handed out a proposal for our 80th anniversary gift of \$150,000 for library staff development.

Shaun suggested that the use of the word "gift" would move the money to the City who would then have control. It would be better if we could earmark funds and hand them off as requested.

Nigel will seek more suggestions from Monique on library needs.

The motion was passed that discussion on this proposal be postponed until the November 8 board meeting.

6.9 Volunteer Handbook - Nancy

The information on how to create listings has to be changed with our new process for Fulfillment by Amazon when that process is more fully defined. There will be a membership and donation sections are now complete. The handbook should be moving to the FOPAL website soon.

7. Treasurer's report - Shaun

Since the last meeting Shaun has looked into improving our investment options. His conclusion is that our best option is to work with a banking subsidiary of TIAA. He would create of ladder of CDs to retain liquidity while also seeking higher yields. He

said it was important to retain the relationship with SFCU particularly for memberships.

The motion to accept Shaun's recommendations passed.

8. 2017 Calendar

No action

The board meeting was adjourned at 10:47 AM.

FOPAL MEMBERS' ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting started at 10:48 AM.

The motion was passed that we waive notice of this meeting.

Nigel welcomed visiting members.

There was a suggestion that that the Foreword can be sent as an email to members to save costs and trees. There are already members who have chosen this option.

Election of Officers

Nigel read out the slate as presented at the Members' Annual Meeting.

Proposed for re-election to the Board
for a two-year term:
Nancy Cohen, Nigel Jones, Karen Neier, and
Martha Schmidt.

Continuing Board members:
Suzanne Brown Little, Tom Clark, Peter
Dehlinger, Charlotte Epstein, Tina Kass, Shaun
Maguire, Gerry Masteller, Jim Schmidt, and Steve
Staiger.

Proposed FOPAL Officers:
President: Nigel Jones
Vice President: Charlotte Epstein
Secretary: Tina Kass
Treasurer: Shaun Maguire
Assistant Treasurer: Karen Neier

Proposed Board Member:
Neelima Meka

The motion to accept the full slate passed.

Nigel welcomed Neelima Meka, our new board member.

Treasurer Report for Annual Meeting

Nigel will place Shaun's report on the web so volunteers can read it.

Shaun's report on the September sale noted that YTD reports will continue to see underperformance on income due to our changed relationship with Amazon.

Even if the number of books sold on Amazon went back to previous levels, there are so many more costs associated with FBA that we likely take in 20% less than before FBA. Also we won't be able to put up \$12 books because the cost of getting those to Amazon is too expensive. Shaun suggested that we make a re-forecast of the budget in December with respect to our income from Amazon.

President's Report for Annual Meeting

Nigel said that he was asked at his first board meeting if FOPAL was going out of business soon and that this issue grabbed his attention. Book donations are not down and there are hundreds of boxes of books in storage. We are still getting high quality individual donations such as the library of a linguistic professor. People are still buying books as our retail sales are doing very well. He thinks that in the next 3-5 years the retail book sales are not the problem.

What keeps him up at night is worrying about people. What would we do if Jerry left or Janette left? The Amazon problem was a result of a minor mistake by a volunteer but there were extreme results. We have no backup or succession for Jerry. We have trouble getting listers. We have no good backup for Karen Neier at the sales. It is difficult to find new people to fill these roles. Janette is covering many bases. We get numerous hours from community service people who can be quite hard workers. Our vulnerability is on the people side but there are no obvious answers.

People who know us admire what we do and are deeply appreciative of our work. We are an amazing organization.

Remarks from the attendees

Tom suggested that BR books might be directed to wine country libraries who might have suffered in the recent fires.

Neelima suggested we work harder on getting excess books into the community.

Tisa suggested that we should publicize that we are working in a business like manner with results that provide value support to the libraries.

Nigel answered that even many volunteers don't know the extent of our grants to the libraries.

The annual meeting was adjourned at 11:28 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlotte Epstein
Acting Secretary