

FRIENDS OF THE PALO ALTO LIBRARY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING  
RINCONADA LIBRARY  
14 SEPTEMBER, 2022  
MINUTES

1. Call to Order: Board President Jenny Munro called the meeting to order at 9:32 A.M.
  
2. Present: Jenny Munro, Melinda Parry, John Wang, Helen Beevers, Nancy Cohen, Karen DalColletto, Charlotte Epstein, Tina Kass, Susan Light, Suzanne Little, Gerry Masteller, Young-Jeh Oh, Steve Staiger, Jim Sutherland, Nancy Tillman  
Apologies: Nigel Jones  
Guest: Gayathri Kanth

3. Acceptance of Agenda:

**No additions were suggested to the agenda; motion to approve the agenda**

Proposed: Jenny Munro

Seconded: Helen Beevers

*No Objections*

*No Abstentions*

**The agenda was approved**

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

**Motion to approve the minutes of the meeting July 13, 2022**

Proposed: Melinda Parry

Seconded: Jenny Munro

*No Objections*

*No Abstentions*

**The minutes of the meeting of July 13, 2022 were approved by acclamation.**

5. Librarian's Report (Gayathri Kanth):

- The Library was pleased to be able to open on Labor Day as a cooling centre during the recent hot weather. This service was used by 10 people.
- The Summer Reading Programme is now closed. 37 000books were read. Next year's programme is already being planned.
- Re:Maker fair attracted just over 300 people. Highlights were the Zerowaste Cooking Demonstration and the 'turn an old T-shirt into a shopping bag' activity.
- Palo Alto Reads will begin soon. The theme is to be 'Climate Action and Climate Change'. There will be a recommended book for everyone to read, along with companion books.
- The Re:Maker Fair and Palo Alto reads have been funded by a private donor who approached FOPAL. The Library has been approached by other people who have taken part in a library programme or activity and then come back to the library wishing to offer support
- City has spoken to the Council candidates about the library. Gerry has spoken to one candidate who was concerned about library hours and has recommended that they contact Gayathri.

- Cubberley's future was raised in a recent Forum and will be raised again at the Palo Alto City Council and Board of Education Candidate Forum
- Gayathri will be away during October in order to attend her son's wedding.

Q: Librarian roles have now been filled. The next stage is to fill hourly staffing roles. This will enable an extra day's opening at some of the libraries. Eventually the libraries will have their closure days organized such that there will be a Palo Alto library open 7 days a week.

6. Treasurer's Report (John Wang):

- Cash & Credit Card Sales income from the three rooms for the month of August was 40% up compared to the previous month.
- Total sales income is up 69% due to an exceptionally good sale at the auction. Total gross income is up 61% overall compared to the previous month.
- The expenses are broadly in line with previous months.
- One of the CDs matures in early October and will be rolled over. This is a no penalty CD so it can be moved if better rates are found elsewhere. However, rates for CDs appear to be on an upward trend at the moment.
- TIAA will mature at the end of October. However, this has a low rate and a proposal for dealing with this investment will be part of the Treasurer's report next month.
- Taxes have been filed.

7. Book Sale Committee (Melinda Parry):

- September's book sales totalled just over \$16,000. Although down on August's sale figure of \$20,000, this is still a good result and August was an exceptional month. There were 5 weeks between the July and August sale and schools were starting which could have helped boost sales in August.
- There didn't appear to be so many of the big dealers this time.

C: 46% of the income was cash sales.

8. High Value (Nancy Cohen):

- Sales through Forest were \$2 398
- Ebay sales were \$4 217
- PBA authenticated the MLK signature in the book which was sent a couple of months ago. This sold at auction for \$6 375 which has really boosted the High Value sales for this month!

9. Nominating committee report (Melinda Parry):

- 3 new directors are being nominated this year:
  - Suzanne Cholko, who looks after health & Medicine, is nominated for the role of secretary
  - George Chaltas, who looks after photography and music, and Gail Reeder, a new volunteer who has already taken on running a sale in Janette's absence, are also nominated.

Q: A Director already on the board could not be found to serve the office of secretary. There was one other candidate interviewed who was not offered the nomination.

10. Technology Committee (John Wang)

- The proposal for the Technology Committee was presented and led to the following comments and suggestions: -
  - John Wang is happy to lead the setting up of the committee until a formal chairperson is elected.
  - Frank and Ed Walker should be invited to be on the committee.
  - Nigel and Gerry have expressed an interest in being part of the committee. Raji may be happy to be called upon for support if required but would probably not wish to be a full member of the committee.
  - It was thought 5 members may be a good size for the committee.
  - **John to ask Janette to send an email to volunteers to let them know of this committee and ask if those with expertise could make themselves known if they would be willing to support short, fixed term projects.**
  - High School students may also be a good source for support for such short, fixed-term projects.
  - There is no budget as yet. Expenses will go to the board for approval.
  - The first meetings will likely be virtual.

C: Committee Responsibilities should include volunteers in the first bullet point:

Existing: *Evaluate technology needs as identified and/or requested by board or staff members.*

Changed to: *Evaluate technology needs as identified and/or requested by **volunteers**, board or members.*

C: Change the last line:

Existing: *Redesign or enhance the FOPAL web site to [fill in the blank].*

Change to: *Redesign or enhance the FOPAL web site.*

**Motion to accept the proposal for the Technology Committee with the changes described above:**

Proposed: Nancy Cohen

Seconded: Gerry Masteller

*No Objections*

*No Abstentions*

**The motion was passed unanimously.**

11. President's Report (Jenny Munro):

- Friends groups in the Bay Area met at Rinconada and enjoyed the opportunity to get together. It is hoped this could be repeated.
  - Some groups are still working directly with Amazon - but these are on a small scale.
  - All groups are seeing a decline in both donations and income from sales.
  - Donor Perfect (online site) was discussed and this could be something that the Technology Committee looks into. At the moment, donors who contribute \$100 + receive a letter from the President of the FOPAL Board. Donors of smaller amounts do not get anything. This seems to be in line with other Friends Groups.
  - Other groups are also finding that space to store donations is a challenge.

Q: FOPAL is receiving a good amount of donations, but the quality is not as good as it used to be. Many book donors did a lot of clearing out and moving during the lockdown and we are still working through those boxes. These donations are likely to be old, poor quality books that have been lingering in attics, basements and garages. Consequently, a lot of books are going straight to H2 and some shelves in the Main Room look sparse.

C: Perhaps people are buying less books - relying more on ebooks and audiobooks which is why there are less books being donated. Eg. A recent popular book has 23 holds for the book, 200 holds for the audio books and 400 holds for the ebook.

C: Perhaps HV books could go to sections to be placed on the shelf. Perhaps the bar could be raised at which books are sent to HV to give section managers more choice for their shelves. However experience tells us that these books do not sell well at the Book Sales.

- Section managers may have different rules for managing books going to H2. Books generally should be kept for 3 months. **Jenny to ask Janette to send section managers a request to keep more books, keep books for longer if possible and remind them about facing out and using book stands. This can also be re-iterated at the volunteer meeting.**
- Some section managers have reported that some of their stock seems to be moved before the sale. For example, a special display of 21 art prints were set up on the Thursday before the sale. On the Friday, it was noted that 7 had gone missing. There have also been other instances of books not being on shelves or red carts as they were expected to be when setting up on the Friday before the sale. It appears this has become more of a problem in the last 6 months.

C: Could the missing items actually be just borrowed, moved or bought by volunteers? Should volunteers note down on a slip of paper or log book which sections they are buying books from and their price?

- **Jenny to ask Janette to send an email to volunteers (and Steve) to remind them of the rules for when and how they can buy books. This to be re-iterated in the volunteer Zoom meeting.**

C: This is the second discussion around this topic - if nothing is seen to be done, it could give the message that FOPAL does not value the work of the volunteers.

C: The key fobs should identify who was in the building at which time.

- It was suggested that cameras should be set up to find out what is happening to these items.
- There will be signs up to show their presence.
- The cameras would only be checked if there was another occurrence of missing items.
- 3 Cameras in the Main Room by the cash box, vinyl, High Value; 2 or 3 cameras in the Bargain Room; possibly cameras in the Children's Room.
  - The following points were raised:
    - The presence of cameras could suggest that volunteers aren't trusted.
    - The presence of cameras could suggest that the work of the volunteers is valued and it is important that the stock is monitored.
    - The equipment cost (\$500 - \$1000) could be more than the value of the items going missing.
    - There will be certain areas of the room that the cameras cannot see, so will they be helpful?
    - **There needs to be some thought given as to where the information from the cameras is stored, who looks at it and who follows up and has the conversation should something unusual be found in the camera footage.**
    - Many members of the board felt they couldn't give full approval until the organizational point above had been decided.
- **Jenny to ask Frank to reinstall the motion detector cameras he already has over the exits and entrances in the main room as a pilot.**
- **The pilot will be mentioned at the Volunteer Zoom meeting, responses noted and the issue discussed again at the next meeting.**

12. Old Business - None

13. New Business:

- Jenny will be away for the October meeting so Melinda will chair in her absence.

14. Adjournment:

Steve Staiger moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:24am.

Seconded: Suzanne Little

**The resolution passed by acclamation.**