



ALBANY LIBRARY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Albany Library, 1247 Marin Avenue
July 28, 2010 7:05 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER –L. Flanagan (7:05pm)

Board Members Present:

Leah Flanagan
Rosalie Gonzales
Karen Leeburg
Robert Lieber
Alan Riffer
Sarah Whitmer
Linda Yamamoto

Alameda County Library Staff Present:

Ronnie Davis, Albany Library Manager
Jean Hofacket, County Librarian

City of Albany Staff Present:

Charles Adams, City of Albany Finance Director
Judy Lieberman, City of Albany Assistant City Administrator
Akeisha Melfort

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES– May 26, 2010 minutes approved unanimously

Motion:

Motion to approve minutes from July 28, 2010.
Motion carried all in favor.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Joan Larsen, Albany Historical Society President- We are trying to get as much public exposure as possible by going to boards, commissions and committees. We are asking if you would like to submit suggestions to us for our new plaques [location and historical significance]. You can get a flyer online, or at the Albany Community Center. The deadline for submission is this Friday (July 30, 2010).

Emily from Albany Patch, New Local News Website: Introduced herself and gave stated: “You can reach me on the website if you have a story idea. My address is emilier@patch.com. Any story idea or anything you think we should be looking at, please get in touch.” The URL is albany.patch.com

4. REPORT FROM THE CITY OF ALBANY—C. Adams

I was asked at the last Board meeting to obtain contracts that the County Library had with other cities. I did make that request and the library has responded. I will analyze the material that I’ve received and you can add it to next meeting’s agenda.

Member Riffer had a question for Director Adams: There was a February 3rd memo from Jean Hofacket to Beth Pollard talking about reduction of hours for the Sundays before holidays and that contracts would be adjusted for that...and I can’t tell from the information that you’ve provided that there was an adjustment for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2010, or that the contract is lower in 2010-11...because of the Sunday closings.

Director Adams response: We accepted the billings for the contract that we pay according to billings and there was no adjustment...we didn’t anticipate any adjustments in those amounts. In terms of the new contract and our computation, I

don't know where that's a direct factor for the computations in the contract. County Library Administrator Hofacket gave a clarifying answer of "Yes", and further stated that it would be reflected in the 2010-2011 contract.

Clarifying Question: What's left over from this fiscal year as well...because we've had some closure?

County Library Administrator Hofacket answered: Yes. We've had some closure...and if there were not adjustments made, than I'll check with our finance [staff]...make sure we get that into our refund list.

PRELUDE TO PRESENTATION

City Administrator Lieberman stated: I am working from the City's side to shepherd through, the consultant work that we are contracting for in terms of looking at library services in Albany. We sent to everyone, packets containing a request for proposal services that we sent out along with the response from KG Ouye and Pauline Mingram (consultants) that we have selected and contracted for.

The Contract: We are thinking of it as a preliminary look at what alternative services might be available to the city of Albany; what kind of delivery options are out there. Five issues that we want to focus on are: 1) defining the current scope of library services, 2) outlining options for alternatives—including, establishing independent municipal library structure or partnering with other local library systems, 3) assessing general qualitative pros and cons of these alternatives, 4) looking at a preliminary financial assessment to determine feasibility of these alternatives, 5) working with members of the Albany Library Board and working with the County to develop a recommendation about the desirability of further analysis of the options.

Administrator Lieberman clarified that the County had graciously offered to share the cost of the study with the City (the client) and wanted to get the Board's input on the offer.

5. PRESENTATION FROM OUYE MINGRAM Consulting LLC

Presenters: Pauline Mingram and KG Ouye

KG Ouye's Background: Retired city librarian. Last job was as city librarian for the city of San Mateo (fourteen years). Prior to this, she was branch manager in the city of Oakland (seventeen/eighteen years). She has worked in public libraries all of her career (over thirty-something years). She is a founding chairperson for the Schools and Libraries Corporation (a federal program that provides funding for internet services and connection to schools and libraries throughout the country).

Pauline Mingram's Background: 20 years with the City of Oakland (Personnel Department, Budget Department, Parks and Recreation Department, and 7 years in the Library Department).

The speakers presented three questions to the board regarding alternatives in services; what services they were interested in having:

Question 1: What do you like about current services?

- Member R. Lieber responded that he liked the shared collection. He recalled that it was an issue but as he saw it grow and used it himself, he found it to be [a nice service]. He liked that he could use all of the libraries in the system.
- Member [unknown] responded that she liked the personal service you get from the staff here (Albany branch).
- Member A. Riffer responded that the long-tenured staff knows the needs and interests of the community; this enables them to create programming relative to what's happening in/ important to the community/ in Albany.
- Member K. Leeburg responded that many of the programs at the Albany branch are, especially, strong. Longevity of these kinds of programs. (I.e. poetry program and services for job seekers.

Variety of programming here attracts atypical library clients. The library has served as an important center for everyone in the city.

- Member L. Yamamoto responded that she likes the accessible hours; open on Sundays (Sunday hours are important).
- Member K. Leeburg responded that she likes the floating collection. She likes that the availability of materials has greatly increased; she can get materials on hold more quickly. She likes that she has the ability to see what's available (online service) and make the hold herself. She likes the ability to [maintain her account] online.
- Member S. Whitmer responded that she likes that the system sends courtesy emails. She likes that this branch is one of the centers of the community; it is attached to the community. It feels safe; it is a place where kids can come after school.
- Member K. Leeburg responded that staff has done a great job making the branch feel comfortable for kids and providing a [productive environment] for middle school kids to hang out.
- Community Member C. O'Keefe responded that she liked the renewal policies change and that the organization reviews [policies] and makes changes, occasionally. She also likes the close relationship with the Friends of the Library and how they work together (collaboratively). The branch manager [has been successful].

There was a question about the presenters being on the agenda for this meeting and about the project's timeframe. The understanding is that the presenters will have a timeline of six months [for the project]. This is a fluid timeline.

Presenter Ouye made clear the purpose for question 1 as being to know/ get a feel for what the current branch services are, which services are unique to the Albany branch, and to be able to tailor goals to this branch so that results will be most representative of actual concerns.

Question 2: What are your concerns?

- Member R. Lieber responded that we are operating at reduced staffing due to budget constraints. Employees that aren't working should be working according to the contract; it's been over a year [that they haven't been working]. Reduced staffing has been hard on staffs who are working; this has affected other programming. Member R. Lieber also stated that there is a universal concern that [the money] is being spent wisely and that we are getting what's being paid for.
- Member K. Leeburg responded that a part of the concern [about tax monies] has been the difficulty [due to an existing opacity in the kind/ flow of information] in understanding what is and isn't coming from the county. Need a bit more clarity and detail.
- Member [unknown] wanted to know whether the decent interest of the community being met—as opposed to some other needs—in having formerly local responsibilities moved to the headquarters in Fremont. This member also asked if there was equity across the branches. There is an existing opacity in knowing what's going on at other branches; branches are kept separate. Branches in other parts of the country (including in less affluent communities) have much more extensive hours than the Albany branch.
- Member K. Leeburg responded that the Children's Librarian position is a huge concern.
- Member [unknown] responded that an emphasis should be put on equity [concerning services] since a large percent of the Albany population and the surrounding communities (outside of Albany) use the services at the Albany branch; yet there have been [proposed service cuts]. If services are being used, they should be funded.

- Community Member C. O’Keefe responded that there is a lack of collaboration between the county and the Albany branch.
- Board Member A. Riffer responded that there have been issues concerning the contract for the children’s librarian position. There has been a lack of [action in fixing the language in the contract to match what we are being told the reality is].

Question 3: What would you change? (Board Members) responses:

- Bigger building
- Add a children’s librarian
- Create and maintain a buffer in order to stabilize [the branch’s services]
- More transparency regarding these kinds of processes (contracting to have consulting services)
- Add an automatic separating machine
- Be fully staffed
- No job cuts

Member A. Riffer (following up with the same concern presented by a member of the community) presented a concern about the county providing funding for the project to be undertaken by the consulting firm and where the funding would come from. County representative J. Hofacket stated that the county made the offer to fund the project out of good faith because of the tough economic climate—among other reasons—and intentionally did not ask for any governance or oversight [of the project]. She further stated that funding would come from all jurisdictions (the general fund).

There was no motion made to accept or reject the offer of funding from the county however, those present at the meeting were advised to contact City Administrator Lieberman questions, concerns. She will make a decision based on this feedback.

The consultants hope to have information available at the next meeting (by mid-September). They will give a report to City Administrator J. Lieberman.

[Unclear whether the presenters would have complete findings by October 29th, 2010]

6. CITY OF ALBANY ADVISORY BODIES REPORT AND STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS—J. Lieberman

Four Staff Recommendations:

- Staff Liaison (new City staff liaison for the Board)
- Appointed members that have a particular background and expertise
- Amend the council representative seat from voting to non-voting ex-aficionado
- Eliminate the Friends of the Library seat

Board Member states that making the Friends of the Library seat non-voting ex-aficionado would not be better than eliminating the seat.

City Administrator asked that comments be submitted to her by October 29th, 2010. It will then go to council for review and then [determinations will be made].

Board Member R. Gonzales’s concerns: background/expertise requirement in recommendation #2.

Branch Manager R. Davis is concerned that the Staff Liaison be a city staff-person.

Board Member A. Riffer is concerned that [the appointee relationship] make more sense. Also, how things get on the agenda. Evaluations by staff. The preservation of the Friends of the Library seat, [as voting]

Board Member L. Flanagan is concerned that (we) get less support and less control.

The Library Board will make specific recommendations about this at the next meeting.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

9. MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:07PM