



## ALBANY LIBRARY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Albany Library, 1247 Marin Avenue  
May 25, 2011 7 P.M.

### 1. CALL TO ORDER – A. Riffer

#### Board Members present:

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

#### Alameda County Library Staff Present:

Ronnie Davis, Albany Library Manager  
Cindy Chadwick, Deputy County Librarian

#### City of Albany Staff Present:

Charles Adams, City of Albany Finance Director  
Heather Robinson, Parks and Recreation

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES –Minutes from April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011 meeting were approved unanimously.

### 3. INTRODUCTIONS AND DISCUSSIONS OF AGENDA

4. PUBLIC COMMENT – None at this time

### 5. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

#### **a. Albany Library Report- R. Davis**

1. April and May saw continued high circulation numbers
2. Summer programs will soon be launching. There are 23 programs including arts & crafts, concerts, reading games with prizes and more.
3. The “Albany Reads” committee has selected The Beekeepers Apprentice, by local mystery author Laurie King. The event will take place in October and Books Inc. will co-sponsor.
4. Berkley Impact Update: In April, 54 of 219 total new cards were from Berkeley. In May, 80 of 238 new cards were from Berkeley. As statistics have not been taken before, it is unclear if these numbers are exceptional. In order to better track trends, going forward the library staff will be keeping these statistics.
5. Volunteer report: R. Davis mentioned SF Chronicle article on library volunteers and passed out Albany Library volunteer report. She noted that she greatly appreciates all that volunteers do for the library, wishes they could honor their volunteers more and that they are using as many volunteers as they can effectively train and supervise.

#### **b. Presentation of Budget Scenarios for FY 2011/12 - Cindy Chadwick**

C. Chadwick presented the details of revised budget option 3A, which has features of Option #1 and Option #3 ( presented at the April 27<sup>th</sup> meeting).

#### **Option #3A**

**Pros:** Total weekly open hours are maintained at 41. Able to staff children's librarian position at ½ time. Number of clerical positions maintained. Will reduce dependence on county library funds. Employees may be able to pick-up additional SANS hours, which will partially off-set their loss of hours.

**Cons:** Total weekly open hours are maintained without increasing staff, which could negatively impact the quality of service provided. A reduction in clerical staff hours. Will alter work schedules for almost all employees. Employee schedules will be less consistent, as SANS hours will be used to make-up staffing deficits.

**Concerns/Questions from the ALB board** (C. Chadwick's responses have been italicized):

R. Gonzales: How can we keep the budget of Option #3, while staying open for 41 hours?

*C. Chadwick suggested that this will be possible through staff reductions, especially during closed hours and a reduction in prep-time and paraprofessional time.*

R. Davis responded that this will be a challenge because staffing is already stretched very thin.

A. Riffer: Asked if there is a difference for employees if they work regular hours or SANS hours. An unidentified woman in the audience responded that benefits are calculated on total hours worked, regardless of if they are regular or SANS.

R. Lieber: Noted that the community will be happy to keep the same open hours for a year, even with less staffing and that the community will also be pleased to have a part-time children's librarian. Other than finding new revenue sources, he doesn't see any other alternatives.

A. Riffer: Again expressed his frustrations regarding questions about Albany's contract with the county, which have remained unanswered. He does not want to approve any option until he understands why Albany's cost per hour is so much higher than surrounding communities. He feels that the county is not being transparent and that important budget information is not being freely shared. He would also like to know how Albany is staffed compared to the other libraries. At this time he is not interested in approving any of the options that have been presented.

R. Lieber: Echoed A. Riffer's frustrations that the county is not making the logic behind the provided budget numbers clear. He said that he has been asking for clarification on these numbers for 6 years and is convinced that the numbers are made up or not based on any reality. He feels that the current Albany budget is unfair.

*C. Chadwick does not believe that the numbers are made up, but she does not have an explanation for them. She said that the county is in transition, which is why she may not have been able to get answers to these questions yet.*

L. Flanagan: Responded that the library has been in "transition" for several years and continues to use this as an excuse not to answer questions. She would like let the public know what effects these proposed budget cuts would have on service levels if they are forced to accept any of the options. At this time she would not vote for 3A and feels that the county is "royally screwing" the Albany Library. She is also concerned that reducing staff without reducing open hours will negatively affect service.

A. Riffer: Again Expressed concerns that vacant positions, such as for the children's librarian, will never be filled and they do not have confidence that the projected staffing would actually occur. He again requested that the county sign a contract committing to hire the staff or offer a refund for the unpaid salaries.

R. Davis was asked if she prefers Option 3 or 3A: She responded that she fears that there will be people who will not be served if they close during slower hours, such as seniors, job seekers and the disabled. She does not have a clear cut answer at this time.

R. Gonzales: asked if it is appropriate to include requests for information in the county contract language.

A. Riffer responded that you can include anything in a contract that the two parties agree too. He noted that in the past the city has signed the county contracts without requesting modifications. He does not feel that the board can make a recommendation to the city council at this time. He is not overly concerned with approving a contract by July, because in the past the expired contract has carried over until a new one could be approved.

A. Riffer would like to make a motion to request the following information from the county (before considering a recommendation to the city council):

1. Language in the contract that guarantees staffing at proposed levels and credits if these levels are not met.
2. More information about the logic behind overall costs including why the City of Albany's cost per hour is greater than surrounding communities.

This motion was voted on and approved unanimously by the board. [JL: WHO SECONDED THE MOTION?]

A. Riffer suggested that if new information becomes available it would be appropriate to convene a special meeting, before the regularly scheduled one at the end of July.

#### **Public Input:**

One citizen is happy to hear that the board still feels it does not have enough information to make a decision. She thinks it might be necessary to get the requested information from a source other than the county. She encouraged the board to keep hammering at the questions until they are answered. She noted the contract deadline is coming up soon (July, 2011) and suggested that perhaps a short term extension of the current contract could be approved. She would also like the library board meetings taped and posted on the city's website.

Another citizen is concerned about employees losing hours. She wondered if it would be possible for employees to trade hours with each other so that those in the greatest need could get more hours.

A citizen asked if SANS hours cost less than regular hours.

*C. Chadwick responded that they should cost less and that the money should be credited back to the City of Albany.*

d. Review of Committee, Commission, Board training – A. Riffer

Noted that with the advent of Patch and blogging it has become necessary to create guidelines for city employees involved in social media. Preliminary guidelines, created by the city Attorney and City Manager Beth Pollard, were distributed. [JL: NOTE THAT THESE GUIDELINES ARE FOR COMMISSION MEMBERS, NOT EMPLOYEES, AND HAVE TO DO WITH BROWN ACT COMPLIANCE]

Emily Raguso (Patch): Commented that she sees Patch as an online newspaper. In her opinion, these guidelines were issued in response to an invitation from Patch for city employees to become bloggers. She feels there is a difference between having your own blog and commenting on articles. She also mentioned that Patch has had a good collaborative relationship with the library, including Dan Hess's regular blog.

A citizen observed that she would like to have a set meeting to discuss these new guidelines.

**6. ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS**

The recent “Friends of the Library “ two day sale was very successful and raised over \$7,200.

**7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

No public comment will be taken on announcement of future agenda items.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

*The Board packet is available for public inspection at the Albany Library. The agenda can be found on our web page at [www.albanyca.org](http://www.albanyca.org). Please note that if you provide your name and address when speaking before the Board it will become part of the official public record, which will be posted on the Internet.*