



ALBANY LIBRARY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES – May 20, 2014

Albany Library, 1247 Marin Avenue, 7 p.m.

1. **CALL TO ORDER – K. Leeburg**

Board Members present:

Rosalie Gonzales
Karen McKeown
Karen Leeburg
Alan Riffer

Alameda County Library Staff Present:

Deb Sica, Albany Library Manager
Paula Greer, Albany Library Circulation Manager

City of Albany Staff Present:

Ronnie Davis, Staff Liaison

2. **APPROVAL OF March 18, 2014 MINUTES –Motion to approve by Gonzales, seconded by Riffer.**
Motion approved unanimously.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT – An Albany resident commented on her concern that the Albany Library staff work collaboratively. She asked Library Manager Deb Sica if staff were allowed to speak freely at public meetings. Sica said that staff may speak at public meetings on their own time, but not on County time.**

4. **ALBANY LIBRARY REPORT**

Albany Library Manager Deb Sica gave updates on the following topics requested by the Board:

Statistics: Sica said that there were programs for children, teens and adults in April with an overall attendance of 906 people. The circulation was 31,663; the gate count 21,221 and 2951 reference questions were answered. 1028 holds were processed.

Staff. Sica announced the appointment of interim County Librarian, Carmen Martinez. Ms. Martinez worked as the director of Oakland Public Library before her retirement in 2012. Martinez brings a strong background in managing a large multi-branch library with special concerns for service to teen and multi-ethnic populations. Paula Greer announced that she will be retiring after 35 years with the County. Several people praised Greer's contribution to the Library over the past years. Greer will be honored at a dance party on July 26 to which the Board is invited. Sica announced that she will be hiring a full-time professional librarian in the next months. Board members were pleased that this is moving forward.

Programs. Sica announced that the summer is well planned with programs and reading game activities. She has just received the completion of a digitization project of all of the Albany High and Middle School yearbooks from 1959 to current. An intern from San Jose State is working on the organization of the local history collection.

5. STAFF LIAISON REPORT

Staff Liaison Ronnie Davis reported that the City contract with the Alameda County Library for additional hours and services for 2014/2015 passed the City Council on April 7 through the consent calendar with no discussion. The staff reports from Davis and interim City Finance director Paul Rankin were attached to this agenda. Riffer asked for clarification about the mechanism that the City Council uses to give direction to the County auditor about whether the tax rate should be changed to reflect the CPI- Consumer Price Index. Davis said she would follow up with the new Finance Director, Tina McKenney and get back to Riffer.

6. REPORT FROM CALIFORNIA PUBLIC LIBRARIES ADVOCATES WORKSHOP

Board member Rosalie Gonzales attended the CPLA workshop at the Castro Valley Library in March. One of the speakers was the interim State Librarian; however a new permanent State Librarian has just been appointed. Speakers included representatives from local Friends and advocacy groups. Library advocates were pleased that there was \$2 million in the State budget this year to expand high speed internet to public libraries.

7. REPORT FROM ALAMEDA COUNTY LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMISSION

Alan Riffer said that he was unable to attend the April meeting but he did get some information about the County Library budget which is \$33.2 million, an increase of 2% over last year. He did not have any information about the Strategic Vision. Sica explained that the plan was being reviewed by the Library's administrative staff and would be presented to ACLAC in the summer. Sica mentioned that a study of the library's finances was a priority goal. A member of the public asked Riffer if ACLAC would be a good forum to air concerns about library policy. Riffer said that his experience was that ACLAC did not function in an advisory capacity. He said that ACLAC members did not participate in the formation of the Strategic Vision.

8. ALBANY LIBRARY COLLECTION: STATISTICS; REFRESHMENT PROCESS

Staff Report: Sica presented statistics that showed that there had been downward trends in circulation before the accelerated weeding had begun. She said that library business was related to economic cycles. She said that the Friends were reviewing all discards for sale. The Friends were also supporting \$1500 a month to buy enrichment materials for the collection including Scandinavian mysteries and children's fiction. The Library has a new Vietnamese collection. The emphasis on enrichment was on replacing content, not necessarily exact titles.

Public concerns and comments: Members of the public, including some library staff, had the following concerns: Why were volunteers pulling books by date? Were these books being reviewed by professional staff so that valuable materials, or possibly out of print titles were not discarded? Did the Library's central materials selection staff review the items sent for discard? How were these items processed at the administrative offices? Were items discarded from Albany reviewed for inclusion in the overall Alameda County Library Collection? If the decision was to discard them, were they offered to charitable institutions or were they put directly in dumpsters? A picture showing a full dumpster of items was distributed at the meeting. Other people talked about the specific value of books that were being sold for \$1 at the book sale and the concern that important works of literature were no longer available on the library shelves and this will have a long term effect on the library collection. Others asked if it was possible to get a list or accounting of the specific titles that were being discarded. There was a concern that now that the shelves were half to three-quarters empty if the intensive weeding would be stopping or

slowing down. There was much concern about the misuse of public funds in the discarding of so many usable books and the need to replace with additional funds.

Library Board discussion: Board members discussed their options for response. Davis said that the Board could report back to the City Council, either formally through a letter from the Chair or a Staff Report, or Board members could bring up at a meeting with the new interim County Librarian which had been suggested by Supervisor Carson's aide, Kevin Jenkins. One Board member said that because the weeding had been done so hastily that she was concerned it had not been done carefully. Board members were not sure if this topic was covered by their 2014 Work Program and one member questioned if the group at the meeting was representative of the concerns of the Albany community. Leeburg noted that the time was late, and without consensus from the Board on a formal action, she suggested that Board members communicate the public concerns to the Council members that appointed them. Several members agreed to do so.

9. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Riffer said that there had been an announcement from Alameda County Library that Albany resident, Elisabeth Bell, had left a sizable bequest to the Alameda County Library Foundation. Davis will forward the announcement to the Board.

10. **CALENDAR**

Since there would not be a quorum for the July 15 meeting, Leeburg cancelled the meeting. The Board will next meet on September 16.

11. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

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

–Margaret and Gardener Young Bequest

12. **ADJOURNMENT**

Leeburg adjourned the meeting at 9:55 p.m.