



**ALBANY LIBRARY BOARD**  
MEETING MINUTES – September 18, 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  
Cindy Chadwick, Deputy County Librarian  
Carmen Martinez, County Librarian

City of Albany Staff Present:

Ronnie Davis, Staff Liaison

2. APPROVAL OF May 20, 2014 MINUTES – Correction to Item #6 to delete the word “rural”. Motion to approve by McKeown, seconded by Gonzales. Motion approved unanimously.

3. REPORT FROM LIBRARY BOARD CHAIR

Leeburg gave reports on the following items:

Resolution 94-16: Leeburg noted that Resolution 94-16 established the purpose of the Albany Library Board to advise the City Council on matters relating to the Albany Library. The Albany Library Board does not make policy. It was noted that the composition of the Library Board was changed by Resolution 2012-80 to “one appointee per Council member.” The Staff Liaison position is City staff.

City of Albany Advisory Body Public Meeting Procedures: Leeburg reviewed the meeting procedures. She determined that speakers would be allowed 3 minutes. Leeburg advised speakers and audience to be respectful.

County and City meetings: Leeburg reported that she had met with County, City and representatives from concerned residents to discuss the current issues around library collection management. She introduced Interim County Librarian Carmen Martinez who will speak on these issues during her agenda item. Leeburg asked that the general Public Comments item be reserved for comments not related to weeding.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comments included the following:

The library staff needs to be able to speak out at meetings and have a voice in the workplace. There was much concern about employee/staff relations. Library policies need more transparency. Clarification was

asked regarding the number of volumes that had been removed from the library's collection. The Albany Library is a pleasant place with all staff working hard to serve the public. The Library was looking more like a book store than a library with not enough depth in the collection. The new Lucky Day collection is great for DVDs and fiction but needed more non-fiction titles. There is concern about hiring practices.

## 5. GREETINGS AND COMMENTS ON COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

Interim County Librarian Carmen Martinez introduced herself and talked about her life long commitment to public libraries. She commented on the weeding process, noting that it was an important aspect of library collection management, was very labor intensive and always done with the community in mind. She noted that the Albany Library looked very good and that the shelves were filling up with new titles. She estimated that the collection had been reduced by 11,000 volumes in the past year. She also noted that the Floating Collection model that Alameda County Library had started five years ago was being evaluated and was currently the subject of a task force. Martinez shared a presentation that outlined the specific steps in the weeding process.

Board Questions: Board members asked if there were surprises in the Floating Collection model. Chadwick noted some of where the collection ended up had more to do with traffic patterns than community interests. Sica confirmed that items purchased through local funds remained at the purchasing branch for one year before floating. Martinez restated that all discarded items are offered to the Friends of the Albany Library and that all discards were sent to a central book selection unit for evaluation and consideration of whether they should be added to another library's collection.

Public comments: Approximately 25 people made comments on this issue. People asked for further clarification on which staff made the weeding decisions and the specific criteria that were used in addition to date of publication. Several people spoke about the content of the specific items that were weeded. There was concern that items in good condition were discarded and put in dumpsters and not offered to the public for free as had been done in the past. There was concern that the weeding decisions had not been made with the community in mind, that people liked a collection with depth and the serendipity of finding things they didn't expect. There were several comments about the change in the work environment – that veteran Albany Library staff was not involved in this and other decision making, creating an uncomfortable environment that some patrons felt and others were not aware of. One patron said that he had submitted a public records request for the specific list of discarded titles and did not receive a reply. Chadwick replied here that the library's software program did not allow for specific discarded titles to be identified. Some people said that they felt welcomed in the library and appreciated the library's collection and the focus on youth and diversity. There was a concern that the flyer advertising this meeting that was produced by a group of concerned residents was prevented from being posted by the manager. One person asked if there could be a moratorium on weeding until there was a commitment to more transparency and community involvement.

Comment from Supervisor Carson's representative. Kevin Jenkins from Supervisor Keith Carson's office said that Supervisor Carson was aware of the community's concerns and was committed to a more transparent and community involved weeding process.

Comment from Albany Mayor Joanne Wile. Wile said that she had listened carefully to all the comments and proposed to the Board that she arrange a meeting of the County, City and community representatives to work on a set of guidelines that would clarify the collection management process and incorporate more community participation.

Board discussion. Board members agreed that this issue needed to move forward. A meeting such as Mayor Wile proposed that was developed with full participation could answer the concerns of the

community. The Board recommended that this kind of meeting happen and that there be a report back at the November meeting.

#### 6. REPORT FROM ALAMEDA COUNTY LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMISSION

Riffer attended an ACLAC meeting in August. Riffer explained that the Alameda County Library Advisory Commission consists of representatives from the cities and unincorporated areas that the County Library serves. The Commission meets several times a year in different locations in the County. Martinez said that agendas are posted at the County Library website: [www.aclibrary.org](http://www.aclibrary.org)

#### 7. CALENDAR

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Albany Library Board is November 18.

#### 8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Report from City/County meeting.
- Albany Library Vision – D. Sica (deferred from this meeting)

#### 9. ADJOURNMENT

Leeburg adjourned the meeting at 9:25 p.m.