

**CITY OF ALBANY/ALAMEDA COUNTY LIBRARY**

**Albany Library Board  
Meeting Minutes  
January 23, 2008  
Albany Library**

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by Board Chair Joan Larson.

**Roll Call:**

Board Members Present:

Joan Larson  
Jewel Okawachi  
Peter Goodman  
Leah Flanagan  
Linda Yamamoto  
Frank Carothers  
Janet Fohner

Alameda County Library Staff Present:

Ronnie Davis  
Richard Russo  
Ann Hammond

City of Albany Staff Present:

Charles Adams, City of Albany Finance Director

Guests Present

Dorothy Brown

**Open Forum**

There were no public comments for the Open Forum.

**Consent Calendar**

The minutes for the September 23 meeting were approved (Flanagan/Yamamoto).

## **Presentation: Albany at 100 Photography Project**

Ms. Davis introduced the presentation. The Albany Library had been looking at opportunities to participate in the celebration of Albany's centennial year. Reference Librarian Richard Russo had an idea for a project. Ms. Davis asked the Friends of the Albany library for funding. Albany Historical Society member Dorothy Brown was interested in working with Library staff on this idea. Mr. Russo explained that since he has been working with the Albany Library Historical Collection, he has become aware of the need for more photographs that show how people actually live in Albany. The goal of this project is to identify 100 photographs that depict Albany in the year 2008. Mr. Russo explained that the hope is to take photographs that document aspects of Albany life, in addition to being of a high artistic quality. The photos will be displayed at events throughout the year with a final display in the Community Center lobby at the end of the year. The Library is also applying to the California Council on the Humanities for a grant project that will involve Albany High school students in taking photos of "My Place." Those photographs will also be displayed.

Dorothy Brown then showed about 25 photographs to the Board as well as an audience of Friends and Albany Historical Society members. Everyone was very impressed with the quality of the photos and the relevance of the subjects. Audience members gave several ideas of additional subjects such as the Gil Tract trees, City Hall before demolition, children in school, and the Albany Pool. Mr. Russo suggested that people email him directly with ideas at [russo@aclibrary.org](mailto:russo@aclibrary.org). The Board thanked Mr. Russo and Ms. Brown on their wonderful efforts and said they look forward to seeing the finished project.

## **City of Albany Contract with the Alameda County Library**

Mr. Adams presented the Staff Report that he had prepared for the Albany Library Board. He said that the key question he tried to answer was whether the current library taxes would sustain the present hours and services of the Albany Library for the next ten years. Mr. Adams reviewed the Expenses and Revenues chart that the County Library had provided which showed the trends from FY 2004/05 through 07/08. He then explained the three charts which graphed the trends. He noted that there had been a spike in the Materials Budget and the System Wide account in the most recent year. He also noted that the two sources of revenue that the City provided (two special taxes and property tax) were paying for an increasing percentage of the total Albany Library cost.

Mr. Adams then went over the 10 year Projection for the FY 2007/08 – 2017/18. He explained the assumptions that he used line by line, noting that some costs were somewhat predictable according to economic trends, such as property tax, personnel and utility costs, and that other costs, such as the amount the County

Library could assess for System Wide costs, which increased 23.8% in the past year, were not predictable. He suggested that the Board needed some reassurance or confirmation from the County Library about controlling these costs in the future in order to answer the initial question about whether the revenues would meet the contract costs for the next 10 years.

Board members had several questions and comments. Mr. Goodman asked what the implications would be if the assumptions in the expenditure projections were off by .05%. Mr. Adams said that could result in the City running out of funds for the contract in as little as three years. Ms. Hammond said that the System Wide account had been adjusted in the previous year and would probably not be increased by more than 3% in subsequent years. Mr. Carothers noted that the Board had a responsibility to not recommend a contract to the City if the contract could not be sustained for the future. Ms. Flanagan suggested that since the County Library had taken the equity adjustment in 07/08, that it was "only fair" that the County hold to the 2.5% increase in System Wide for the next 10 years. Ms. Larson expressed concern that these projections only covered contract costs for 9 years with no contingency fund as had been expected when the County Library gave the recommendation of a \$24 tax.

Mr. Carothers sees the Library Board in a confrontational position with the County Library. He felt that the County Library's contract for the Albany Library had not been based on an actual budget, but that they simply asked for what the City had raised. Mr. Goodman said that there had been a fear that if the City raised more funds, that the County Library would take them, County Librarian Jean Hofacket had assured them that this would not happen. Ms. Larson said that Board members had been asking the County Library about the jump in the System Wide account since last May, and had not received the specific information they had requested, such as the total amount in the Alameda County Library budget for this item, and how Albany's share was figured.

Ms. Larson asked Board members how to proceed. Ms. Hammond said that the County Library would continue to work with the City as they had done in the past. Ms. Flanagan said that she was still uncomfortable with the increased cost of the contract from the projections that were promised when the tax amount was determined. Mr. Carothers suggested that the Board write a letter to the County Library which should be copied to the City stating their concerns about the budget process. Ms. Larson and Ms. Flanagan reiterated their concern about the increase in the System Wide support, and the need to cap it at 2.5%. Ms. Larson appointed a subcommittee (Carothers, Goodman, Flanagan) to draft a letter. Ms. Yamamoto said that she continues to be disappointed and irate that the \$24 tax amount that was recommended to the Board by Ms. Hofacket could not be sufficient to sustain the future contract costs. She said that the Board took those figures "on good faith."

Ms. Fohner asked for clarification about the Board's authority around the budget. Ms. Larson said that the Board recommends whether or not to approve the Library contract (2008/2009) to the City Council in June. Ms. Davis said that the City Council requested that the Board also address the issue of the maintenance of the current level of services through 2016 when they make the recommendation for FY 2008/2009.

The Board agreed to have another meeting on February 27 to approve the subcommittee's letter. Ms. Davis said that she would need the letter by February 15 so she could include the letter with the Board agenda packet. The Board also requested that Mr. Adams report on the composition of the Other and the System Wide support categories in the County Library budget expenses.

### **Legislative Action**

Ms. Hammond reported on the CLA legislative agenda for 2008. Board members signed a petition urging the Governor to not reduce the Public Library Fund as he did in 2007. Mr. Goodman agreed to fax the petition to the Governor.

### **Alameda County Library Strategic Plan**

Ms. Hammond announced that the next step in the development of the Alameda County Library Strategic Plan will be a community meeting involving library staff and community representatives in March. The Library will be sending out information about this meeting.

### **ACLAC**

Ms. Okawachi reported on the ACLAC meeting that was held at the Albany Library in November.

### **Albany Library Board Work Plans**

Ms. Larson briefly reviewed the 2007 and 2008 Work Plans.

### **Albany Library Report**

Ms. Davis gave a very brief report on the highlights for the past months. Circulation is 4% over last year and the gate count shows an increase of 7%. Programming highlights include having Loni Hancock and Jewel Okawachi as part of the Library/YMCA Brown Bag Speaker's Forum; Richard Russo as a speaker on business services at the Albany Rotary, and lots of support from the Historical Collection for centennial projects. Ms. Davis also mentioned the

Friends of the Albany Library contributing \$41,020 to the Library for materials and programs as well as the 2 other generous community donations.

### **Albany Library Board Calendar**

Ms. Davis reviewed the calendar. Caryl O'Keefe is planning to join Ms. Davis at the Day in the District meetings with Senator's Perata's aide and Assemblymember Loni Hancock.

### **Future Agenda Items**

Ms. Larson requested that the Board review their by-laws at a future meeting.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

