

LARKSPUR LIBRARY BOARD  
Minutes of Regular Meeting- November 14, 2016

Roll Call: Present: Chair Joan Foley, Jeff Gunderson,  
Michele Melka, Noel Shumway

Absent: Jeannette Giacomini

Staff: Library Director Akel

Chair Foley called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT CALENDAR**

The Library Director certifies that this Agenda has been posted in accordance with the requirements of the Government Code

Approval of Minutes as Submitted: Special Meeting, October 24, 2016

M/s, Shumway-Gunderson, and approved 4-0-1 (Giacomini absent) to approve the Consent Calendar as submitted.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no comments.

**BOARDMEMBER REPORTS AND COMMENTS**

Boardmember Shumway reported he attended the Annual Tea held on November 5<sup>th</sup> at Book Passage in honor of former Library Director Frances Gordon. It was a wonderful, well-attended event. Library Director Akel stated the event earned over \$800. In addition, several people volunteered to serve on the Friends of the Larkspur Library. Chair Foley stated it was a sold out event and they decided to hold it in a different area of the store. Library Director Akel stated they have a wonderful partnership with Book Passage.

**LIBRARY DIRECTORS' ORAL REPORT**

Library Director Akel stated today was her one-month anniversary as the new director and she is primarily taking stock, recognizing strengths and weaknesses in the department, and trying to make improvements to the current facility. She has started to look at staffing to make sure it is adequate and noted there were a number of individual who work part-time, some working only a few hours per week. Chair Foley asked if

those individuals worked on the weekends. Library Director Akel stated “yes”. She noted the department had a number of volunteers and she was concerned about the recordkeeping on these individuals as well as the part-time staff. She noted she also had some concerns regarding liability for the volunteers. She is looking at the services that the department is providing and was surprised that out of the 7,000 library cards issued in Larkspur only 700 were for children. Chair Foley stated it might be easier for kids to use his or her parent’s card. Library Director Akel agreed but stated she would like to look at doing more for children. In terms of services, they do not have a structured Adult Program. Other libraries tend to have a series of programs scheduled for the year, especially during the winter season. She would like to maximize what could be done in the current facility.

Boardmember Shumway referred to the staffing issue and the one position that has been “frozen” for a while. He asked if the Zimmer Trust was a way to free up some money. Library Director Akel stated she was told that the budget was a “bottom-line” budget and they could move some funds around. They could save some money by reducing the number of library assistants and increasing the number of library page hours. Chair Foley asked what a library assistant would do that a library page could not do. Library Director Akel stated a page is involved with maintenance and general housekeeping- putting books on and off the shelves, sending them to other libraries, checking books that come in, etc. Library assistants can take that up a notch or two- staff the circulation desk, answer phone calls, handle patron inquiries, set someone up on a computer, etc. To have the library assistants do the “housekeeping” is not efficient. Chair Foley stated the library assistants that she interacts with are very knowledgeable, helpful, friendly, etc. The Larkspur Library is known for its incredible customer service and she did not want this to change. Library Director Akel stated this would not change- there would always be a reference librarian, library assistant, and circulation assistant on duty. She will make sure all the bases are covered.

Library Director Akel briefly discussed some of the current technical issues and noted they have been having some problems with MARINet over the last few days. They discovered they had been “hacked”. The broadband system “Scenic” will be on-line in a couple of weeks.

## **OLD BUSINESS ITEMS**

### **1. Update on Library’s automatic door opener**

Library Director Akel presented a brief staff report. She stated the door was installed but it did not work since there was no electricity to plug it into (something the company did not inform staff about). The City called an electrician and it is now working.

Boardmember Shumway stated he missed it the first couple of times he came to the library. A sign should be posted temporarily to inform people about this new feature. Chair Foley agreed- it is very subtle.

## 2. Zimmer Trust- City Council approval, press coverage

Library Director Akel presented a staff report. The Council approved the staff recommendation and the money is “in the bank”. She asked the City Manager how much interest would be gained per year and he responded “about \$5,000”. Staff is being overly conservative with the money. She noted there was some publicity which could encourage others to make donations.

Boardmember Gunderson stated an endowment does not generate a lot of money and true “endowments” are in buildings and facilities that are used for generations.

Chair Foley stated there really was no use for the money now but they need to keep the idea of the new library in mind- this could be used as seed money. Library Director Akel agreed that they would need matching funds.

## 3. Friends of the Library- Fundraiser and membership drive

Library Director Akel presented a staff report. She noted the Friends will be meeting in mid-December and are keen on getting new members. The last library she worked at had a very active Friends of the Library organization. She has a lot of ideas to share.

## **NEW BUSINESS ITEMS**

### 1. Discussion of Larkspur Library/Community Center letter and possible joint Meeting with the Library Foundation, Friends of the Library, and Parks and Recreation Commission

Chair Foley stated the letter was sent and they have received several responses. She asked where they wanted to go from here.

Library Director Akel stated the Parks and Recreation Commission met recently in a joint meeting with the City Council and will be meeting in a regular meeting on November 17<sup>th</sup>. The Commission thanked the Library Board for its commitment in moving the process for a new Library/Community Center forward. The Commission looks forward to a fruitful collaboration with the Library Board.

Chair Foley stated she would like to set up a joint meeting with the Parks and Recreation Commission and then get the Friends and the Foundation involved. She wanted to meet no later than January to get the momentum going. Library Director Akel stated the Commission is ready to meet with the Board. Chair Foley stated she would like to see the Commission write a letter in support of the Library/Community Center. They need to build consensus.

Boardmember Melka stated they also need to tap into the people who use the library every day and get a public consensus in support of a new library. The problem will be funding the new facility and they will probably need to get some type of public financing (bond, tax, etc.). She asked if they could set up a site to collect signatures in favor of the new facility and do more networking.

Boardmember Gunderson stated Boardmember Melka was right- they need to create a groundswell of support in order to fund the project.

Library Director Akel had questions about the process and when the momentum seemed to shift. Boardmember Gunderson stated the momentum stalled when it was realized the schematics for the building were not to everyone's liking. Chair Foley stated it also stalled when the anonymous donation was taken off the table. Boardmember Gunderson stated it would be nice to get to the point where they were two years ago.

Library Director Akel stated it was important for them to promote the library as much as possible and to be forward thinking in terms of what a library can offer.

Chair Foley stated she would get in touch with Recreation Director Dick Whitley to try to set up a joint meeting with the Commission and the Library Board, perhaps in December.

## 2. Discussion on library hours and potential change for Monday and Tuesday evenings

Library Director Akel presented a brief staff report.

Chair Foley noted most of the public libraries in Marin County have late hours during the week. Most of them are open until 9:00 p.m. at least three nights a week.

Boardmember Shumway asked about the number of late night patrons. Library Director Akel stated they might get six or seven patrons, two or three that are regulars. They do not run programs on these nights and are paying library assistants to do page work (shelving books, etc.). She was not sure this was a good use of City funds.

Boardmember Shumway stated he did not want to send a message to the Council that the library was not important. Library Director Akel stated Monday night was not a good night to stay open late- Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday are the busiest nights. Saturdays are fairly constant and some libraries are open from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. (not 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.). Given the budget that they have, they might be able to put this money to better use staff-wise.

Boardmember Melka agreed with Library Director Akel and she supports the idea of the new hours.

Chair Foley would rather take a “wait and see” approach. She, and probably a lot of other people, would not be able to get to the library before 7:00 p.m. She is hesitant to make the library “smaller and smaller”. She agreed that it does not make sense to stay open late on Mondays. Once they scale back the hours it would be very hard to go back.

Boardmember Gunderson agreed with the suggestion about the Monday and Tuesday night hours but would want to switch those hours to someplace else. Maybe they should be open until 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays.

Library Director Akel stated she would take another look at this and report back to the Board.

### **STATUS REPORTS:**

1. Reports from the Library’s Support Groups (Friends, Foundation)

There were no reports.

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Chair Foley stated the following items would be on the next agenda: 1) Discussion of Library/Community Center process; 2) Discussion on library hours and potential change.

### **NEXT MEETING DATE**

Chair Foley stated the next meeting would be held on Monday, December 12, 2016. The meeting would start at 6:15 p.m.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Foley adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Toni DeFrancis  
Recording Secretary

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly and regularly adopted at a regular meeting of the Larkspur Library.

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Janice Akel, Library Director