

LARKSPUR LIBRARY BOARD
Minutes of Regular Meeting- January 9, 2017

Roll Call: Present: Chair Joan Foley (arrived 6:17), Jeff Gunderson,
Jeannette Giacomini, Michele Melka (arrived 6:25),
Noel Shumway

Staff: Library Director Janice Akel

Acting Chair Giacomini 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, November 14, 2016

M/s, Shumway-Gunderson, and approved 3-0-2 (Melka, Chair Foley absent) to approve the Consent Calendar as submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments.

BOARDMEMBER REPORTS AND COMMENTS

There were no reports.

LIBRARY DIRECTORS' ORAL REPORT

1. 2016- Year end review
2. 2017- Directions & goals

Library Director Akel report they were half way through the current fiscal year and are at 48.9% of expenditures- pretty much on track. She noted staff did a great job given the challenges of the year- patrons were largely unaffected. The Food for Fines program was a huge success. The Independent Journal press release was a big help. She noted staff would like to get more publicity for the good things that the library offers.

Chair Foley arrived at the meeting.

Library Director Akel reported they continue to suffer from the inadequacies of the library building. There are programs that staff is not able to offer or sustain in the current location. The children's programs suffer the most because of the small space downstairs. Staff is no longer able to offer the Friday 4:30 p.m. program as the presenter is no longer available and there is no one on the library staff who can devote time to this spot. The Friends of the Library pays for the children's programs. She would like to re-think the entire Children's Program for this year. A part-time Children's Librarian left and the position is indefinitely frozen. She noted the library does not have a really good young adult collection and does not service that population very well. They get a good attendance in the morning for the toddler program- 50 to 60 kids. The Summer Reading Program is also very well attended.

Chair Foley asked about the vacant part-time position. Library Director Akel stated the individual came in three afternoons a week. Although one of the staff has the designation of Children's Librarian she fills a number of roles in the library and can provide only a limited amount of time to this role.

Library Director Akel discussed the deficiencies in the building, including the wiring and heating. Boardmember Shumway asked about the on-going renovations to the City Hall complex. Library Director Akel stated the work did take longer than expected, partly due to the age of the building. Chair Foley stated once the walls in an old building are opened up it can become a "can of worms".

Boardmember Melka arrived at the meeting.

Boardmember Shumway stated perhaps the Board should be more candid and frank in the Annual Letter they send to the Council about the deficiencies and not try to paint such a "rosy picture". Chair Foley agreed and stated they could discuss how they are trying to work around the challenging environment. Library Director Akel agreed- they can 'tweak' some things but cannot make it significantly better. She noted the facility serves many people and in a number of roles. Boardmember Shumway pointed out that Library Director Akel was a "fresh set of eyes". Library Director Akel discussed the City's General Fund and how much is allocated to the library.

OLD BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Update on library hours

Library Director Akel presented a brief staff report. She noted the library now closes two hours earlier on Monday and Tuesday.

Chair Foley stated she thought that the Board had decided to take a "wait and see" approach to this. Library Director Akel stated that the matter had been discussed with the City Manager who had signed off on this change. The library was realigning its services and operations to best meet all community needs. Chair Foley was concerned

with this and stated the Board, although advisory in nature, has a voice. Their opinion should have been acted on and the library hours not reduced. Boardmember Shumway agreed and stated in his opinion the City Manager overstepped his bounds and usurped the Boards authority by not communicating with them. He asked that this be part of the official record. He would also like the Council liaison, Mayor Haroff, to attend the Board meetings.

Chair Foley stated she would like the City Manager to attend an upcoming meeting and discuss the Board's "advisory" role. Library Director Akel stated she would talk to the City Manager about this.

Boardmember Giacomini asked when the new hours started. Library Director Akel stated "this week".

Chair Foley asked about the current allocation of staffing. Library Director Akel stated the department now has more pages but fewer library assistants. She was paying employees a library assistant salary to do page duties, such as shelving, etc. She noted at mid-year the department was well over the 50% allocation for part-time staff. Chair Foley stated she is always concerned about making cuts because they never come back. Library Director Akel stated the current fiscal year budget is very tight and she will look to the Board, the Friends, and the Foundation for recommendations going forward.

Boardmember Gunderson noted the mid-year budget expenditures were at 48% and he asked if there were any upcoming expenditures that might put them over 100% at the end of the fiscal year. Library Director Akel stated "possibly"- they do have a commitment to MARINet including the new broadband system that will cost around \$8,000. This may come out of other city funds but some costs are out of her control.

Boardmember Gunderson stated the Board would support Library Director Akel as much as possible in the upcoming budget process.

NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Election of Library Board Chair- 2017

M/s, Shumway-Gunderson, and approved 5-0 to elect Boardmember Giacomini as Chair and

M/s, Giacomini-Foley, and approved 5-0 to elect Boardmember Shumway as Vice Chair.

2. Discussion of the Library Foundation's letter of December 23, 2016, in response to the Library Board's letter of September 20, 2016 concerning the LLCC.

Boardmember Foley discussed the Survey Monkey questions and how they could illicit biased answers when important information is not given. She noted the Foundation letter called for some upcoming joint meetings. She agreed that scheduling joint meetings with the Foundation, the Friends, and the Parks and Recreation Commission was very important. They need to find some common ground.

Library Director Akel stated she attended the recent Foundation meeting and they were very positive about moving forward with a new facility. Several of the members were vocal about the need to scrap the former design and come up with a new one. There is also a concern about how to fund the project and sustain operating costs in a new facility.

Boardmember Shumway stated it was very important to get everybody in the same room and reach a consensus.

Boardmember Gunderson stated the funding issue has to be attached to a design/proposal that will be presented to the public- they need a "picture". He noted the Foundation letter did discuss the need to address the increase in operating expenses. This is an important component of the process.

Teresa Roze, a library patron, asked for a copy of the letter.

3. Discussion on the Board's 2017 position and plans for moving forward on the LLCC, including attending the City Council January 18th meeting where the City Manager will report on the LLRC

Chair Giacomini encouraged the Board to attend the upcoming Council meeting if possible.

Mr. James Holmes, Larkspur, stated there several concerns with respect to building a new facility: 1) Difficulty with finances; 2) The need to relocate (Why can't the library stay where it is?) People might say they want a new library but that does not mean they would be willing to pay for it. There is a lack of two important ingredients in moving forward: 1) A consensus design; 2) Funding for the facility. The potential opponents fall into four basic groups: 1) Those satisfied with the existing library; 2) Those that question the need for a library at all; 3) Those who would like to see a new facility but feel there are other priorities (street repair, etc.); 4) Those who have concerns with the particular project for various reasons. He urged the Board to not underestimate any of these constituencies. The library is not a big problem at this time and it works, unlike other things in the City. He wondered if it was pragmatic to move forward at this time

STATUS REPORTS:

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

Library Director Akel stated she attended the recent Foundation meeting. Boardmember Shumway asked if the Foundation discussed any target dates for fundraising. Library Director Akel stated the Foundation does receive some donations tagged for the new facility- they are kept in a separate account. They sent out an annual fundraising letter in December.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Chair Giacomini stated the following items would be on the next agenda: 1) Discussion of Library/Community Center process.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Chair Giacomini stated the next meeting would be held on Monday, February 13, 2017.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Giacomini 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.

Janice Akel, Library Director