

SANTA CRUZ PUBLIC LIBRARIES  
A CITY-COUNTY SYSTEM

LIBRARY JOINT POWERS BOARD

MINUTES

March 2, 2009

Central Branch Community Meeting Room  
224 Church Street, Santa Cruz

7:30 PM PUBLIC MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Supervisor John Leopold, Citizen Nancy Gerdt, Citizen Barbara Gorson, Councilmember Katherine Beiers, Councilmember Jim Reed, Citizen Leigh Poitinger, Councilmember Mike Rotkin, Supervisor Mark Stone, Councilmember Sam Storey

Staff: Susan Elgin, Acting Director for Santa Cruz Public Libraries

II. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA OF MARCH 2, 2009

**Supervisor Stone moved, seconded by Councilmember Rotkin**

**that the Board approve the agenda of March 2, 2009.**

**UNAN**

III. APPROVE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 2, 2009

**Councilmember Rotkin moved, seconded by Supervisor Leopold**

**that the Board approve the minutes of February 2, 2009.**

**UNAN**

IV. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Citizen Gorson thanked staff and the Acting Director for working on solutions for budget savings and wanted to recognize the personal sacrifices the library staff has made in order to achieve these savings. While being closed on Fridays is not easy for the public, she and the other Board members acknowledged the continued excellent service provided to patrons in this difficult time.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

None

VI. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

A. Pat Downs Bright. "Briefings...." California Library Association, January 2009.

## VII. REPORTS OF ADVISORY BODIES

Teall Messer, Vice President for the Friends of the Santa Cruz City-County Library System reported the following Friends' activities:

- Munching with Mozart
  - \*Next Concert 3/19/09
- February 15<sup>th</sup> is the Annual Volunteer Recognition Brunch at Live Oak
- Three Friends Chapter's have been actively organizing and fundraising
  - \*Felton
  - \*Boulder Creek
  - \*Scotts Valley

Michele Mosher, Friends of the Felton Library reported the following activities:

- Paula Poundstone Event at the Rio Sold Out
  - \* Event brought in about \$1,400
- 5<sup>th</sup> Annual San Lorenzo Valley Poetry Contest, April 29<sup>th</sup>
  - \* Theme: Nature
  - \* Four age groups (4 yrs old – Adult)
  - \* Poetry Reading with Community Notables
- Felton Library Bequest
  - \*Article: "A Windfall Gift for the Felton Library" in the February 18, 2009 Valley Post
  - \*Longtime Felton Residents Kenneth and Shirley Whalen left behind roughly \$100,000 for the library in their wills.

"Kiehl (former Felton Branch Manager) said the pair exemplified the community spirit that made the library a gathering place, one of the noncommercial public spaces in Felton. It separated Felton from the other towns, she said, which makes a gift like this less likely somewhere else. 'I've worked at many libraries around here, but Felton really had the strongest feeling of community.'"

## VIII. MEMBER REPORTS

A. Felton Library Task Force

Citizenmember Gerdt stated that the report would fit into the Felton Grant application in Other Business.

B. Scotts Valley Report

Councilmember Reed reported that the meeting to go over preliminary proposals for the Scotts Valley architectural designs was postponed until March 4<sup>th</sup>. Twenty-nine proposals were submitted for review.

## IX. STAFF REPORTS

### A. Library Survey

Patrons' survey has gone up on the library's website to gather patron's information on library usage.

### B. Child Product Safety Update

In a last minute decision, the federal government delayed by one year the safety regulation that required libraries to test books and materials for lead content.

### C. Guidelines in preparation of FY 2009-10 Budget

Susan Elgin, Acting Director, reported the following:

- \*CNG Van will be replaced by a retired truck from the City Corporation Yard at no cost to the library
- \*Would like to proceed with a 4% savings as an assumption for next year's budget
- \*Will talk with the City's Finance Director about the legal limit for reserves

### **Councilmember Rotkin moved, seconded by Supervisor Stone**

**that the Board move to direct library management to produce a 16-month-budget and that it will aim for being 4% below county revenue projections. Management will return with recommendations about a reserve and work with the board's budget sub-committee.**

**UNAN**

## X. OTHER BUSINESS

### A. Discussion of Library Services & Budget Priorities FY 2009-10

Susan Heinlein, Director for the Friends of the Library, sent the board several suggestions from Friends Board members on the budget and ways to reduce operating costs. These suggestions will be forwarded to board members. A few topics that were mentioned more than once were the following: using volunteers more than we do, more aggressive and creative in fundraising, implementing a range of fees for library use. Other topics that came up with regard to services were: keeping young children programs and the value of CD's and DVD's.

Susan Elgin reminded the board that in the LJPB Agreement with regard to volunteers, they are to be used to enhance library services.

Citizenmember Beiers does support the idea of charging for library cards and does understand increasing fees.

Supervisor Stone wanted to clarify that the board's position has been to keep libraries free of barriers to use.

Councilmember Rotkin would like to have management and library staff recommend combinations of reductions for the upcoming budget because they have a professional working knowledge of the library. In addition, the depth and breadth of the budget shortfalls are serious to the point where closing branches may need to be an option whereas in the past this option has been ruled out.

Supervisor Stone stated that the successful passage of local tax measures are a result of community support for local library service and he would not be in support of closing branches.

Councilmember Reed agrees with the library providing service without creating barriers to that service. Due to the current state of the economy, there is a fundamental imbalance of what the library wants versus the revenues coming in. The library is coming off its two best years in terms of sales tax revenue and the system has virtually no reserves. Councilmember Reed would like the Acting Director to look at all options for creating savings in next year's budget and bring these back to the board for review.

Councilmember Rotkin does not think this budget can be cut with the notion that the public will receive the same service level as before.

Supervisor Leopold would like to see county residents with adequate access to programs that are uniquely provided by the library and cannot be found elsewhere in the county.

Barney Bricmont, Friends of the Library Board Member, pointed out that library usage has gone up maybe due in part to the current state of the economy. Patrons now more than ever are looking for free services and access to information to help them look for employment among other important lifestyle choices.

Citizenmember Gorson agrees that the library will not be able to maintain the same level of service and the library will need to reduce spending in several areas. However, Gorson stated her priorities are saving programs and services for people in the county that cannot find alternative services elsewhere.

#### B. Felton Grant Application

Citizenmember Gerdt reported on the progress of the Felton Branch. When the economy went into financial crisis, the federal government stepped up with the stimulus plan to help local communities. After a call to Representative Anna Eshoo's office, the staff person there recommended an earmark for \$500,000, which would come out of the Transportation and Housing Bill. The idea is that it would be used to get environmental clearance, site development plans, design development, and other necessary components of preparing for the building of the new Felton Library Branch. The County will be the applicant and the application has been submitted.

C. Increase in Overdue Fines

**Councilmember Rotkin moved, seconded by Councilmember Reed**

**that the Library Joint Powers Board approve raising overdue fines from 25 cents a day per item to 50 cents per day per item, effective April 6, 2009.**

**And to have a report back to the Board in six months to review how many borrowers have been blocked.**

**AYES: Leopold, Gorson, Poitinger, Reed,  
Rotkin, Stone, Storey**

**NAYES: Beiers and Gerdt**

Citizenmember Gerdt is concerned with library fines for children and whether fines accrued will keep them from using the library.

Gale Farthing, Outreach Manager, commented that when children's cards did not have fines and adults did, many adults would use their child's card.

Councilmember Rotkin commented that children do get notices about library fines and if they do not have the funds to pay off the fines, they can volunteer their time at the library. There should be consequences for children not being responsible for returning their books on time. Other patrons are waiting for the items not returned.

Councilmember Beiers is interested in keeping children's fines low. She is concerned with children who do not have parents that are actively involved in their child's education, including the timely return of library materials.

Susan Elgin reminded the board that this increase will help fill the hole in the budget and if fines are not raised, then other cuts will have to be looked at within the library. In addition, fines are sometimes waived if a circumstance is warranted and this is up to the discretion of the branch manager.

Heidi Jaeger-Smith, Scotts Valley Branch Manager, reported that Scotts Valley is allowing teens and adults who cannot pay their fines the opportunity to volunteer in the library. Unfortunately, there is not any meaningful work younger children can do to work off their fines.

Supervisor Leopold commented that the Board will have to make a series of critical decisions over the next couple of months, and maybe even years concerning library service. The Board will have to decide how to keep library services while combating the declining sales tax numbers that the library relies on for revenue to run these services. Supervisor Leopold has a lot of empathy for people who are unable to pay their fines due to financial hardships but he is also concerned about the library employees that may be laid off due to budget constraints or the services that might need to be stopped because there is no longer the revenue to support them.

Councilmember Reed agreed that the Board will have tough financial decisions ahead and is in support of staff's recommendation to increase fines.

Richard Eberle, Central Branch Circulation Supervisor, commented that there are lot of borrowers, adult and children, who incur fines and never come back to use the library but there are patrons who incur overdue fines and are return users of the library whose vested interest is in being able to use the library. When the policy changed from fine-free for children to 25 cents there was support from parents who thought children should have the responsibility for borrowed library items and almost no complaints. He is in support of the recommendation proposed to increase fines.

D. Budget Transfer from Reserve to Felton Planning Process

**Councilmember Rotkin moved, seconded by Supervisor Stone**

**that the Board by Resolution #2009-02 move to transfer \$57,100 from the Felton reserve fund to the Library Budget to cover upcoming costs for plan reviews, drawings, etc. for the new Felton Library Branch.**

**UNAN**

E. Update on Library Director Recruitment

Citizenmember Gorson reported on the Library Director's Recruitment. The application deadline has passed. Twelve applications were received and six of those candidates reside in California. A number of them work in diverse communities, worked with boards, and have very good credentials according to the consultant. Seven of them are already at the Director level and two of them are currently at the Assistant Director level. The next step will involve the consultant who will provide input on candidates and rank them for the Board. Then the hiring sub-committee will work to narrow the candidate pool and move on to the interview process.

XI. NEXT MEETING

April 6, 2009

XII. ADJOURN

The regular meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kira Henifin, Clerk of the Board

All documents referred to in these minutes are available in the Library Office.