



**Minutes of the
ALAMEDA FREE LIBRARY BOARD
MARCH 8, 2006**

The regular meeting of the Alameda Free Library Board was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present:	Karen Butter, Board Member Alan Mitchell, Board Member Mark Schoenrock, Board Member Jane Chisaki, Acting Library Director
Absent:	Leslie Krongold, President Ruth Belikove, Vice President
Staff:	Marsha Merrick, Recording Secretary

CONSENT CALENDAR

An asterisk indicates items so enacted and adopted on the Consent Calendar.

- A. *Report from Library Director highlighting Library Department activities for the month of March 2006. Accepted.
- B. *Draft Minutes of the Regular Library Board meeting of February 8, 2006. Approved.
- C. *Library Services Report for the month of January 2006. Accepted.
- D. *Report from Finance Department reflecting FY 2005-06 Library expenditures (by fund) through February 2006. Accepted.
- E. *Bills for ratification. Approved.

Board Member Mitchell moved to approve the Consent Calendar as presented. Board member Schoenrock seconded the motion which carried by a 3-0 unanimous vote.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Materials Security and Inventory System. (J. Chisaki)

Acting Library Director Chisaki updated the group on the RFID tagging progress. As of 03/08/06, over 24,000 items have been tagged by staff at the Interim Main Library. Chisaki indicated that if the tagging process gets completed earlier than expected, the Interim Main would re-open prior to the anticipated date of March 20, 2006. After the Interim Main's re-opening, the Bay Farm Island and West End Branches will tag their collections on Fridays when they are closed. Also of note, in the 2 ½ days the Main Library had been closed, the West End Branch had over 4,000 visitors - around half the amount they usually see in one month's time.

Board Member Butter inquired as to when the new RFID system would be activated. Acting Director Chisaki responded that the system will be live at all three libraries in November when the new Main Library opens.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Communication from the Library Board to the City Manager and the City Council (J. Chisaki)

A letter from the Board to the City Manager regarding the hiring of a new Library Director came under discussion. Unfortunately, the draft letter was not available for review, so Board Member Butter gave a synopsis of the concerns addressed.

After some discussion, it was suggested that the Board take a vote which would give Board President Krongold the authority to send out the letter on their behalf. Member Schoenrock so moved and Member Mitchell seconded the motion which carried by a 3-0 unanimous vote. Board Member Butter indicated that she would communicate the information to President Krongold.

B. Alameda Free Library Foundation (A. Mitchell)

Board Member Mitchell took over Foundation liaison duties from Vice President Belikove, and gave a report of items discussed at the last meeting. Since the mural behind the Circulation Desk is important to have prior to the opening of the new library, the Foundation voted to fund the "Oracle of the Tree". If there is a donor interested in funding the mural, the Foundation will gladly accept the donation. A new logo and letterhead were presented and the Foundation will move forward with getting that printed and send letters to the community soliciting donations. There has been no movement to date on the gala fundraiser planned for October 28, 2006. One meeting was held, but there has been no follow-up as yet; it seems that it is difficult to find a date and time that works for everyone.

C. Friends of the Alameda Free Library (M. Skeen)

Friends President Skeen announced there will be an author night program on April 7, 2006 at Books, Inc. with local author Eleanor Wiley speaking on her book "There are No Mistakes". All are encouraged to attend this event, as well as the Friends next book sale May 5, 6 and 7 at the O' Club on Alameda Point.

The Friends have formed a 10-person committee to plan the grand opening November 2. Currently at issue is the staffing for the Café that will be housed in the new Main Library. The committee will meet again towards the end of March.

Ms. Skeen shared that a letter to the City Manager was sent that day expressing concerns on hiring a Library Director before the grand opening of the new Library as well.

Board Member Butter asked for confirmation that the Friends would be selling used books in the Café. She further inquired if the Friends thought that this might impact their regular book sales in any way. Friends President Skeen could not predict the affect, but said that they were still committed to carrying on the twice-yearly tradition at the O' Club on Alameda Point, as they do not want their inventory to build up too much.

D. Library Building Watch (L. Krongold)

With Board President Krongold absent, there was no news to report for the Library Building Watch newsletter. However, Acting Director Chisaki announced that Recording Secretary Merrick had volunteered to take over this piece, as Board President Krongold's time had become quite limited.

E. Patron suggestions/comments (Speak-Outs) and Library Director's response.

The speak-outs were inadvertently left out of Library Director Chisaki's binder by Recording Secretary Merrick who was unaware that these were to be placed there. The two existing speak-outs will be brought to the April 2006 meeting, with any new speak-outs that might come in, to share with the Board.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS, NON-AGENDA (Public Comment)

SAB representative Marc Lambert indicated that BALIS is having a Tri-System Workshop at the San Francisco Public Library on April 1st from 9:00 a.m. until noon and the topic is "Beyond the Book Sale". This session is primarily directed towards Friends' groups, and it will present the opportunity for people to bring in other ideas for family-friendly fund-raising events. This information went out in the newsletter, and Marc is awaiting brochures that he can distribute.

On another topic, Marc's position as the BALIS liaison will be up in June, so a replacement will need to be found.

Jim Fisher and Jane Wellford of Berkeley were present in the audience, and asked if there was interest in hearing about their experiences with RFID. Mr. Fisher said that he had signed a petition against RFID in Berkeley, 99% of his reason being fiscal. He believed that Council spent an inordinate amount of money on this system, during a time there was supposedly a budget crunch. It had been presented as a way to save money, but it wasn't doing the job. A lot of this was based on the self-checkout feature which had encountered several problems. Ms. Wellford indicated that the Library staff was over-worked, and there was not enough money left to hire additional staff to pick-up the increased workload.

Director Chisaki related the experience that Alameda had with the self-checkout process, and it had been very good. When the equipment was first installed, there were staff designated to pull people out of the regular lines and show them how to use the self-checkout. The Express Check currently handles about 26% of the circulation at the main library. Director Chisaki also mentioned that she was asking for additional staffing for the new main library during the current budget planning process, since the new Library would be three times the size of the existing Interim Main.

Ms. Wellford then reported that the Berkeley RFID vendor, Checkpoint, had promised their system cost at \$685,000 installed, yet it has now cost their City over 2 million dollars.

Mr. Fisher and Ms. Wellford handed out some information from their Berkeley experiences, and the Board thanked them for their comments.

City Manager Debra Kurita was in attendance at the meeting and spoke about her background in public office. She also mentioned that she was a Bay Area native, so taking the Alameda City Manager position was like coming home. Ms. Kurita shared her views and an outline of her schedule of priorities for replacing the vacant Department Head positions: Planning & Building Director (filled); Assistant City Manager (filled); Alameda Point Project Manager (recruitment in progress); Police Chief (recruitment in progress); Library Director; and Recreation & Park Director. Ms. Kurita's commitment and practice on all of these positions is to encourage external and internal candidates to apply, in order to get the very best person for the job.

Board Member Butter expressed her concern that the Library Board was not being kept very well informed of changes to the new Library building, specifically the first floor ceiling treatment that Council had voted to add back in to the plans at the previous night's meeting. City Manager Kurita explained that inclusion of this on the agenda was decided on very short notice due to the fact that a quick decision was needed by the Contractor who was at a critical juncture in the schedule. Ms. Kurita apologized for the oversight, and gave her assurances that this was an unusual situation and would not become a regular occurrence.

Library Director Chisaki mentioned that the State had been at the site that day, and were absolutely thrilled with the looks of the new building and the progress that had been made.

LIBRARY BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

None.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Acting Library Director Chisaki handed out copies of the Value Engineering List to show where the first floor ceiling treatment had been removed from the plans. She went on to explain that when she heard about the change to add this back in, the Board packets had already gone out, and because the Council had not yet been informed, she did not feel it appropriate to pass the information on to the Board. After reviewing the rest of the package, there does not appear to be anything else that could be removed or added being this far into the project schedule.

Director Chisaki polled the board on publishing their personal e-mail addresses so citizens could contact them directly with inquiries or concerns. Members Butter and Mitchell had no opposition to the idea; Member Schoenrock stated he would rather have people come to the Library Board meetings so he could address their comments first hand. Director Chisaki will contact the absent members and ask their opinions on the subject as well.

There followed a short discussion on the logistics of turning the Interim Library's space back over to the school district once the new building is completed.

ADJOURNMENT

Board Member Butter called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m. Board Member Mitchell so moved, Board Member Schoenrock seconded the motion, and it was carried by a 3-0 unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Chisaki
Acting Library Director and
Secretary to the Library Board