



**Minutes of the  
ALAMEDA FREE LIBRARY BOARD MEETING  
November 12, 2008**

The regular meeting of the Alameda Free Library Board was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Ruth Belikove, President  
Mike Hartigan, Vice President  
Karen Butter, Board Member  
Alan Mitchell, Board Member  
Gail Wetzork, Board Member

Absent: None

Staff: Jane Chisaki, Library Director  
Marsha Merrick, Recording Secretary

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

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

- A. \*Report from Library Director Highlighting Activities for the Month of November 2008. Accepted.
- B. \*Revised Minutes of the Regular Library Board Meeting of September 10, 2008. Approved.  
\*Draft Minutes of the Regular Library Board Meeting of October 8, 2008. Approved.
- C. \*Library Services Report for the Month of September 2008. Accepted.
- D. \*Financial Report Reflecting FY 2008-09 Expenditures by Fund through October 2008. Accepted.
- E. \*Bills for Ratification for the Month of October 2008. Approved.

Member Butter mentioned the door count at the Main for September was much higher than in past years. Director Chisaki explained this was because the door counter had not been working properly at first. The branch door counts had also risen, and Chisaki said that extensive weeding was done on their collections, making books much easier to find. Additionally, the Supervising Children's Librarian has been bringing classes through the branches by their schools to familiarize students with this resource. Butter also noticed that homebound patrons had declined; Chisaki said they had lost quite a few this year, but the service is advertised around town at care homes, Mastick Senior Center, etc.

Per a question from Member Butter, Director Chisaki spoke about the state of the budget, what cuts had already been taken, and what was on the table for the future if there was a request to cut more.

President Belikove had read in the Director's letter about the new book drop awning and shelf that will be installed, and asked if there was a possibility of putting an additional book drop in the back of the building. Chisaki explained this had been investigated previously, but it was found that there was no way to accommodate a book drop at the rear of the building.

President Belikove asked for a motion to accept the Consent Calendar as presented. Member Mitchell so moved; Member Wetzork seconded the motion which carried by a 5-0 vote.

#### ORAL COMMUNICATIONS, NON-AGENDA (Public Comment)

Audience member Li Volin spoke up about the recent fund-raising program the Library Foundation had hosted with food author Michael Pollan. Ms. Volin thought the event had been absolutely fabulous, and others in attendance at the meeting echoed her sentiments.

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

##### A. Neighborhood Library Improvement Projects (J. Chisaki)

23 architectural firms showed up for the mandatory branch walk-through. They asked a lot of good questions; their proposals are due on November 24. Laurie Kozisek, project manager for Public Works, had located floor plans for WEB and aerial photos of both branches that Director Chisaki will put up on the webpage. The first meeting between Library, Public Works, Friends and Foundation representatives will be on Wednesday, November 19; 5-10 meetings will be held throughout the design phase of the project. Chisaki queried the Board on whether they would like to see West End and Bay Farm residents on the committee so there could be community input. Member Wetzork listed both positives and negatives for consideration; Member Butter was very much in favor of resident participation, as was Vice President Hartigan. Chisaki said a PowerPoint presentation could be put on the website for the community to view and submit comments that way. Butter said that is a good idea, but believes it is key to have community members on the committee so they can give their input "live" during the process. Chisaki will move forward in contacting the people they have in mind and inquire about their availability and/or willingness to sit on the committee.

#### NEW BUSINESS

##### A. Proposed Donation of Art from Gary Bukovnik (R. Belikove)

The Board looked over the picture from their packet and had a lengthy discussion on where it might be mounted. Several locations for the artwork were discussed, but due to the size of the piece, it was difficult to come up with anything reasonable. It was requested the painting be viewed before acceptance, to ensure it was in good shape and wouldn't need restoration efforts. The Art Exhibit Committee was tasked with drafting an Art Acceptance Policy before the next Board meeting, as something should be in place if the Library is offered other pieces of art. President Belikove, as Board liaison to the Art Committee, will bring this to their next meeting.

B. Art Exhibit Committee (R. Belikove)

The Art Exhibit Committee did not have its regular meeting in November due to it falling on Veterans Day, however, they will meet the following Tuesday. The Art Exhibit calendar is rapidly filling up; President Belikove mentioned the current exhibit by Peter Tonningsen, which includes many photographic images of Alameda. There will be a display of original graphic novel artwork coming up, and Belikove had brought in several books that were given to her by Image Graphics of Berkeley. There will be a Mata Ortiz pottery demonstration the following Sunday in the Library courtyard, and Belikove invited all present to attend. On November 19, there will be a program about Alameda's Neptune Beach in the Community Meeting Rooms.

C. Alameda Free Library Foundation (L. Engh)

Luzanne Engh, Foundation President, was in attendance to update the Library Board on what the Executive Committee and Board have been working on. Lots of good news about the Michael Pollan event - they netted just over \$10,000 and had also made great community connections through this effort. Special thanks go to Slow Food Alameda, who was instrumental in putting the food part of the evening together. The restaurants that participated were delighted to be part of the event and happy to know that it was in support of the Library.

The Foundation is reviewing and updating their mission statement and goals and objectives. The mission idea is that the Foundation seeks private financial support to supplement City and public funding in order to support the mission and goals of the Library, and to ensure that quality Library services continue in Alameda, now and in the future. The Foundation has approximately \$300,000 in cash, money market funds and CDs and would like to protect the principal of it. Instead of supporting individual programs, they would like to have guidelines for an annual contribution to the Library who will be able to use the money as they see fit. They would also set aside a certain percentage of any fund-raising programs they do. Engh asked the Board if they see this as a good direction for the Foundation to be going. The Library Board thought this was a very reasonable approach and encouraged Engh to move forward accordingly.

D. Friends of the Alameda Free Library (M. Lambert)

Marc Lambert was not in attendance to report, but had sent President Belikove an e-mail with his comments which she read for the Board. The book sale had been another success, netting over \$17,000. Thanks go to all who helped out, including the Coast Guard. The next Friends meeting will be on November 17 and the agenda will include consideration of the By-Laws Committee report, changing the membership year to coincide with the calendar year, and the 2009 budget. The Café is now serving sandwiches from Feel Good Bakery.

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

A patron wrote that the Alameda Library is too noisy. We are a community base as well as a traditional library and before and after special programs, such as author events or storytimes, there is more traffic and it can be louder. Staff is busy and can't always stop to "shush" people.

If there is a real problem with the noise level, please ask a staff person to intervene. Board Member Butter suggested the person might use the Quiet Reading Room as an option. Director Chisaki also noted that new signs will go up that tie in to the current “Free2” campaign, which shows (by being crossed out with a big red line) that you are not “Free2” do things like talk on a cell phone. This apparently has worked well in other libraries.

#### LIBRARY BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications from the Board.

#### DIRECTOR’S COMMENTS

Director Chisaki updated the Board on the switchover from Veicon to Envisionware. Many obstacles have been encountered during the process, and what was supposed to take 3-5 days has now taken almost a month. David Boxton, lead on the project, has been working literally day and night, and it is now at the point where extra help needs to be brought in to speed the process. Staff has not been given much information about what is going on because it is possible that the City may take Veicon to court. This has led to numerous complaints by the public who want to know what is happening, and staff can’t give any kind of explanation. One patron has now escalated his complaint to the City Council level. Every service the Library offers is still available, with the exception of public internet access, and the reason that is not up is because of the layers of security that need to be built in before public use. There is a small glimmer of hope this access will be restored the following week. Vice President Hartigan commented that this could be taken as a “warning shot across the bow” so to speak. If there are future plans to upgrade computer systems we must make very sure that we are ready to respond quickly, or risk the public’s displeasure. Chisaki said that every effort had been made, with planning done far in advance, to make this a smooth process, but with each step taken, new issues had come up regarding what Veicon had done to our system. Once all is said and done, however, Chisaki speculates this will be a much more manageable in-house system, as we will have full access to everything. Veicon had been unwilling to give us this, and it was a very difficult lesson to be learned. Hartigan commented that he didn’t mean any criticism to what we had done, but “lessons learned” is certainly key in this situation.

CLA is coming to San Jose this weekend; Chisaki will attend some parts of the conference, working around a scouting event that’s planned. The League of Women Voters has agreed to act as host for an “Inauguration Day” party in January in the Community Meeting Rooms. The big wall TV and the smaller TV on the moveable stand will be used to watch the swearing in ceremonies.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Board President Belikove asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 p.m. Member Butter so moved; Member Wetzork seconded the motion which carried by a 5-0 vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Chisaki, Library Director and  
Secretary to the Library Board