

CHICO FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
January 20, 2009

Present: Rob Atkinson, Debbie Cobb, Gerald Davis, Susan Davis, Ann Elliott, John Few, Betty Forbes, Diane Friedman, Marian Milling, Anne Morris, Anne Nordhus, Joan Olmstead, Susan Rauen, Mary Wahl

Guest: Derek Wolfgram, Director

Call to order: President Ann Elliott called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes of the November 18 meeting were approved (M/S/C Atkinson, Olmstead).

NEW BUSINESS:

Survey: Derek reviewed the results of the library survey (also available on the library website and in the Chico Enterprise-Record):

- Satisfaction is high, especially in the area of interaction with staff. Respondents want “more” (more computers, books, downloadables, books on CD) plus access to business advisors and local history.
- Most respondents were at least somewhat favorable to a bond issue and a small increase in sales tax. Any action on this must wait until we know what the state plans, and Derek advised it should be taken only in the form of an initiative organized by voters. Derek needs to work on staffing issues first so we have a clear picture.
- As to “shelf life,” the consultants would recommend another survey before any action is taken. Gerry noted that the economy needs to improve before voters will be supportive.

Budget: The general fund totals \$81 million. Projection for the next general fund is \$63 million. Normally the county tries to start each fiscal year with a \$10-15 million rollover, but that definitely won't happen this year. Each department is to prepare a budget less 23%, which translates to \$600,000 less for the libraries. The budget proposal is due to the county February 13, 2009.

Further scenarios with even more cuts will also be studied. Catch 22: If the budget is too low we risk losing eligibility for state library funding. We need to continue requesting City of Chico funding while at the same time having contingency plans in case of less or no funding. Increased fines will be part of any budget.

In order to balance this year's library budget, we need to reduce staffing by 12 full-time equivalents. Some cuts may be necessary before July 1, 2009. Hours will be reduced at all

branches. We can anticipate long lines, fewer story times, shorter computer time for the public. Since the Chico branch is responsible for over half of the county's library business, Derek is working on possible staff-sharing scenarios. Once the budget is turned in we need to inform the public and keep them abreast of developments. In addition to the bad news, people will also want to know how to help. Publicizing donations and including a cost per hour to keep the library open might be considered.

Action Plans: Marian advised that the joint groups formed a subcommittee to work on fundraising (such as license plate holders and other possibilities). Derek expressed appreciation to all the Friends groups for their energy and momentum.

The By-Laws specifically prohibit paying for salary and overhead expenses that should be covered by the county; however, there might be other ways to assist. The quandary is how to help financially without jeopardizing our other sources of funding. More volunteers will be needed, but again, not so many as to jeopardize staffing and employee morale.

Motion: that a committee be formed to study our budget priorities and ability to help. (M/S/C Few, Wahl) Committee members: Mary Wahl and Gerald Davis as co-chairs, plus Ann Elliott, Anne Nordhus, and Linda Leahy (who was drafted in absentia and will probably never be absent again).

Library Day in the District: Marian and Derek are participating in this. Please contact Derek if you are interested in being involved.

REPORTS:

Treasurer:

- Cookbooks: over 255 cookbooks have been sold. To break even, 401 need to be sold.
- Investments: Franklin account continues to reflect the market. USB: 85-90% of our money is in laddered CDs. Mary asked that the committee be informed as to CD maturity dates and amounts. Treasurer's report was accepted. (M/S/C Few, Cobb)

Librarian: February is Love Your Library Month, and "love your library" t-shirts will be worn on Fridays. The county will love our library by installing the restroom fixtures that have been in storage. Volunteer potluck will be held February 24.

Volunteers: Library donations honoring volunteers totaled \$400, reflecting 1600 hours of volunteer assistance. A long-time volunteer whose hours will soon exceed 10,000 will be honored at the potluck. Betty will make the presentation. Recent donations of \$2,500 have come in, part of which will be used to add and revise plaques.

Book Sale: Revenues are up, averaging \$1,000 a week. Attendance is also up and new people are coming to the sales. The paperback sales racks in the library are already generating income during non-booksale hours. In addition, volunteers are placing selected items for sale online.

Advisory Board: Two new members have been appointed to replace two whose terms have expired. A joint meeting will be held at 3:00 p.m. April 20th in Paradise. License plate frame sales: Marian said Derek recommends that one of the groups should act as fiscal agent for this. That will be discussed at the committee meeting.

ONGOING:

- Craft Fair: the fair netted \$1,858; kudos to Joan and Diane for their hard (and successful) work.
- Movie: “Swing Time” will be shown February 11 in the conference room.
- Library Signs: Mary continues her efforts with the City. Thanks for being our squeaky wheel!
- Membership Drive: Brochures are ready to go to the printer. Pros and cons of undertaking this expense were discussed. Consensus: do it for the publicity and for a healthy membership. John will contact the printer immediately.
- Program: Julie Bergman, Board President of the Central Asia Institute, will present the child’s version of *Three Cups of Tea* on February 18, 7:00 p.m. in the children’s room. Flyers are going out, and John will get the information to Mary for a press release.
- Third Grade Library Visits: Judging from the enthusiastic thank you notes, this program continues to be very popular.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Bookmark Contest: John requested \$150 for awards of \$25, \$15 and \$10 prizes. A motion for larger awards was withdrawn given the ages of the participants and the fact that their enthusiasm seems tied to winning rather than for a specific amount. Consensus: leave the money decision up to John. Judges will again be Margaret Bomberg, Macy Kelly, Anne Nordhus and Joan Olmstead.
- Book Drop Mattress: Diane recommended replacing or retrofitting the existing mattress to make it lighter and less cumbersome for those who need to move it every day. Consensus: Diane will contact Square Deal for an estimate to cover this project as well as re-covering a chair.

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

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