

**PIMA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

September 24, 2024, 5:00 p.m.

Meeting was held both at Joel D. Valdez Main Library, 4th Floor Boardroom,  
101 N. Stone Ave, Tucson, Arizona and virtually via Microsoft Teams

- Present: Chair; Mariana Padias, Vice-Chair, Rebecca Peralta, Sharon Foltz, John Halliday, Craig Klein, Maria Iannone and Mary Ann O’Neil
- Absent: None
- Also Present: Amber Mathewson, Library Director; Dr. Francisco Garcia, Deputy County Administrator; Jessica Thornburg, Deputy Director; Renee Bibby, Library Services Manager; Ken Zambos, Library Services Manager; Sharla Ronstadt, Library Services Manager; Margot Natividad, Library Technical Services Manager; John Stuckey, Facilities & Security Manager; Linde Furman, Main Branch Manager; Lorenia Diaz, Main Branch Manager; Laura Lopez, Administrative Assistant

**1. CALL TO ORDER: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT**

Meeting called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chair Padias. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and the Chair read the Land Acknowledgement Statement. The Chair then gave a brief overview of the Library Advisory Board’s responsibilities.

**2. CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

**Key Comments:**

- Logan Phillips expressed support for library staff and called for increased funding.
- Jo Riestler raised concerns about funding gaps, recruiting issues, and how future closures may affect the digital divide.
- Brian Edney questioned financial management and suggested seeking business funding.
- Margot Natividad highlighted challenges in staffing and the need for flexible, future-focused service delivery.

**3. INTRODUCTIONS**

Dr. Francisco Garcia, Deputy County Administrator was introduced

**4. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Futures Planning draft review and feedback**

- **Dr. Garcia’s shared:** Post-pandemic changes in how communities use library services, focusing on adapting infrastructure to meet evolving demands.

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- **Board Discussion:** Concerns about staffing, budget use, and library closures. Discussion on creating a long-term plan to address these challenges and how to engage the community effectively.

### Key Points:

- Sharon Foltz questioned the use of library funds for Early Childhood Education and possible staff reductions.
- Craig Klein stressed the importance of clear communication about any potential library changes.
- Director Mathewson indicated that the original draft plan was authored by the Library Leadership team. An updated draft timeline for the Futures Planning community engagement outline was shared including community surveys and forums. Mathewson also provided an itemized handout of the Project Design, Construction and Cost Estimate for the Main Library that was previously requested.
- Responding to the question of low gate count related to lower library operational hours – hour for hour gate count is down 26% from pre pandemic numbers.

### B. Staffing Issue

- Library recruitment is ongoing with several positions filled and in process, however challenges remain with the length of time for recruitment, pay and attracting qualified staff.
- Amber Mathewson shared that the library department is looking to streamline hiring processes and continues to work with County HR for best practices.
- The library is also working to provide smaller, more manageable recruitments.
- Suggestions from the Board included approaching the Library Foundation to provide scholarships for individuals seeking a master's degree in library science and asking the Foundation to provide incentive for individuals to work for the library for a certain number of years after receiving a scholarship.
- Mathewson indicated the library is poised to spend \$1M on security this year, which is indicative of the changing nature of public library service and the need to provide safe spaces for the public and library staff.
- Board member suggested the need reevaluating where library positions are posted for the public.

### C. Opportunities for Community Feedback

- Director Mathewson indicated that as indicated in the updated draft communication plan, the library is planning to gather community feedback through surveys and forums, ensuring the community is informed and involved in future decisions.
- Director Mathewson asked the Board to share their ideas in addressing trauma that might be felt by neighborhood if a library is closed.
- Board members indicated the desire to provide alternative solutions to the community, and specific details on how services will be delivered if a particular library location is no longer available.

### D. Alternatives to proposal in Futures Planning draft

- The board discussed alternatives to the current draft of the Futures Plan, including holding special events at potentially closing libraries and considering full funding without closures.

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- The board is expecting more details in a community engagement plan.
- John Halliday shared comments on the best practices in strategic planning as outlined by the American Library Association. Halliday questioned the process for planning and the metrics involved in the draft plan.
- Board Member Halliday shared statistics from libraries in other western states and suggested a more in-depth review of IMLS statistics.

### **Board Motions:**

John Halliday motioned to begin a robust planning process based on ALA/PLA best practices, Sharon Foltz seconded.

Yes votes: 2

No votes: 2

Abstained: 3

The motion did not carry (5-2).

Sharon Foltz motioned to delay the community survey by 30 days and involve Library Advisory Board and senior staff of the Library Friends and Library Foundation in the review process, Craig Klein seconded.

Yes votes: 4

No votes: 2

Abstained: 1

This motion carried (4-3).

## **5. ADJOURNMENT**

John Halliday moved, and Sharon Foltz seconded adjournment of the meeting. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 7:23 pm

**Next Meeting:** October 3, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.

Submitted by: Laura Lopez, Assistant to the Library Director