

PIMA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

November 15, 2024, 3:30 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: **Mariana** Padias, Chair; Vice-Chair Rebecca Téllez Peralta; Anna Sanchez, John Halliday, and Sharon Foltz

Absent: Craig Kleine Mary Ann O’Neil; Maria Iannone

Also Present: Amber Mathewson, Library Director; Marissa Alcorta, Deputy Director; Jessica Thornburg, Deputy Library Director; Em DeMeester-Lane; Kate DeMeester-Lane, Library Services Manager; Vicki Lázaro, Library Services Manager; Beth Matthias-Loghry, Library Services Manager; and Laura Lopez, Assistant to Library Director

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

2. INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions around the room to introduce County Administrator Jan Leshar to the Library Advisory Board members.

County Administrator Leshar explained the draft report:

- There are significant maintenance issues, driving discussions about the future of the downtown library, no firm decisions have been made.
- The leadership is exploring a variety of options, with a clear commitment to maintaining a library presence downtown.
- Concerns about funding and program priorities, particularly regarding PEEPS, are being addressed to reassure stakeholders that these are separate issues and have been considered in the broader context of library services.

She clarified the financial structure and addressed concerns about potential conflicts between library funding and the PEEPS program. She emphasized that:

- Both programs are well-supported and are expected to continue.
- The library’s budget includes transfers for shared county services, but this is standard practice and not a diversion of library resources.
- There is clear budget oversight, ensuring transparency and accountability in how funds are allocated and used.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. Big picture: How do we move forward from the Futures draft report?

Budget issues:

a. The property tax base and PCPL funding:

County Administrator Leshar summarized;

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- **Library Tax Rate** and Funding Increase: The tax rate remained stable for several years but increased when the transition to fund the PEEPS program began.
- **Budget and Transfers:** The library's increased budget and transfers for capital projects ensure that both PEEPS and library services are adequately funded without detracting from each other.
- **Maintenance Concerns:** The library's deferred maintenance issues highlight challenges in managing facility upkeep, especially when ownership and responsibility are split between the county and the city.

There was a discussion that clarifies the financial complexities and provides context on how community initiatives and budgetary decisions have shaped the current state of library services and the PEEPS program. It also acknowledges the ongoing concerns about facility conditions and the need for a comprehensive approach to address maintenance and funding stability.

b. Effects of PEEPS

- **PEEPS Funding:** The integration of PEEPS into the library's budget was part of a strategic shift that resulted in increased funding needs. The program has historical ties to local advocacy and is now a permanent part of the budget.

c. Main Library maintenance issues, negotiations with City of Tucson

- i. Details of discussions with the City of Tucson's City Manager about how to move ahead on critical facade maintenance now, and long-term negotiations on the future of the building.
 - The library's deferred maintenance issues highlight challenges in managing facility upkeep, especially when ownership and responsibility are split between the county and the city.
- ii. Details of discussions related to potential new locations for the Downtown branch
 - While there are significant maintenance issues driving discussions about the future of the downtown library, no firm decisions have been made. The leadership is exploring a variety of options, with a clear commitment to maintaining a library presence downtown.

Staffing:

- a. PCPL staff workload (increase in tasks closer to social services and not library services):
 - Discussion touched on the stress faced by library staff, particularly in branches with higher incident rates.
 - Future changes in social service funding and how it may impact library operations were mentioned as concerns.
- b. Increase efficiency of hiring process
 - Director Mathewson explained some of the changes in the HR process and how this has improved the process.
 - Ms. Leshner stated that the issues with the HR process are not unique to the library.
- c. FTEs lost since 2019

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- d. Increasing number of FTEs since new libraries keep opening without commensurate increases in allotted staff
 - Staff presented a PowerPoint and explained the headcount and FTEs and the changes throughout fiscal years.
- e. How can LAB support efforts to make the best use of PCPL staff time while still providing communities with the resources they need that may not be strictly library-related?
 - Staff will keep the Library Advisory Board informed on the progress.

Next steps: Process for determining the future of PCPL:

- a. Robust community engagement
 - There is a draft survey for community input, but its rollout was paused due to previous issues.
 - The board emphasizes the need for external validation or oversight for the engagement process to regain public trust.
 - The timeline suggests community outreach will begin early next year, after the holiday season.
- b. Transparency in decision making
 - There is a strong focus on improving transparency with board members and the public to avoid surprises, especially following past miscommunications during the draft report process.
 - The board stresses the need for frequent updates on community engagement and project planning.
- c. Timing of next report, decisions, recommendations to Board of Supervisors
 - Appreciation and Future Steps:
 - The board members expressed appreciation for the staff's efforts and preparation for the meeting.
 - It was agreed to take a step back and develop a clearer plan based on the feedback and concerns raised.
 - There is a collaborative effort to address issues, rebuild trust, and ensure effective community engagement moving forward.

4. ADJOURNMENT

John Halliday moved to adjourn meeting; Sharon Foltz seconded. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 5:06 p.m.

Next Meeting: December 5, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.

Submitted by: Laura Lopez, Administrative Specialist III