**Friends of the Ridgecrest Branch Library**

Board Meeting Minutes, March 18, 2015

**Present:** Sandy Bradley, Vickie Schauf, Vicki Siegel, Carol Pearson, Terri Middlemiss, Peggy Johnson, Roy Parris, Barbara Lyle, Charissa Wagner

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. The agenda was approved as amended. The minutes of the February 18, 2015 meeting were approved with the following clarification: According to the Bylaws, the Friends group is not authorized to spend its funds on county employee salaries, but it may spend its funds on children’s programs.

**President’s Report:**  Sandy Bradley reported that she attended the Board of Supervisors meetings on March 10th and March 17th via VTC. The library privatization discussion was on the March 17th agenda and numerous community members from Ridgecrest, Lake Isabella and Bakersfield attended and commented. Most of the public comments were in opposition to privatization. It appears that the supervisors favor pursuing all money-saving options and are in agreement that more money will not be spent on libraries. The supervisors acknowledged concern that volunteers are saying they will not work to support a for-profit organization, and Friends groups may not continue to raise funds. The BOS discussion resulted in the following recommendations: 1) Public meetings will be held in individual communities prior to going forward with a RFI. 2) A case study of the Shafter library will be conducted, also prior to the RFI. The Shafter library has made a successful partnership among the city, the county and the school district. A full account of the BOS meeting also appeared in the March 18, 2015 issue of the Daily Independent.

The FRBL Board expressed opinions regarding LSSI, the for-profit company that would manage county libraries if privatization occurs. This company would provide no pension plan for employees and benefits would be reduced. LSSI has made an attractive pitch to Kern County, but research indicates that their results are poor. Vicki Siegel commented that she has a personal contact who would attest to the disadvantages of working under LSSI. She will request that her contact write a letter which could be presented during a public meeting.

The difficulties of managing a library were acknowledged, i.e., keeping non-county employees, union involvement, sick leave and termination costs. It was agreed that Friends groups should present alternatives to the use of LSSI, such as adopting a model similar to Shafter or proposing that a non-profit organization take over management of the libraries.

**Librarian’s Report:** Sandy thanked Charissa Wagner for communicating and providing information to the Board that we may not normally receive. Charissa reported the following:

* Sarah Bleyl, Supervising Librarian, has communicated her appreciation for the support from the FRBL in the current possible RFI discussion. She encourages members to attend community meetings.
* Members are encouraged to send e-mails and letters to individual supervisors expressing opinions or concerns. E-mails are automatically filed and appear lumped together as a total number in the BOS agenda notes. Letters must be requested to be filed and are listed individually in the agenda notes.
* It was requested that any e-mails received by FRBL members regarding privatization be forwarded to Charissa for her information and reference.

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* FRBL members were reminded that as volunteers they may advocate for issues when and how they desire. Literature or petitions requesting community support can be posted in the sales room, since it is a community room.
* Nancy Kerr, Kern County Librarian, may not discuss LSSI privatization, since she is a former employee. Roy Parris asked if there is a deputy with whom LSSI could be discussed. Charissa said she would find out.
* Charissa noted that oil prices in Kern County are going up which could affect the budget positively, but budget information is still unknown. There is still the possibility that the library will lose an open day. The decision regarding Extra Help funding is pending budget review.
* Summer reading program planning is going well. So far, $1,400.00 has been spent on three big programs plus supplies.
* The “Checkout Club” is up and running.
* The Mojave branch is targeted to move and our branch may receive extra (better) shelving that is not needed in Mojave.
* Charissa was asked to develop more requests for FRBL funds.

**Treasurer’s Report:**  Vickie Schauf reported for Bill Eichenberg.

* There is a balance of $18,923.26 in the Alta One account. (Report attached to these minutes.)

**Vice-President, Membership Report:** Carol Pearson reported that membership numbers are as expected. There have been a few more generous donations included with membership renewals. She also reported that the flag used at book sales has been repaired and is ready for the next sale.

**Vice-President, Book Sales Report:** Vickie Schauf reported on the following:

* Book sales in the library have picked up in the last two months. $738.00 was the income in January and $710.00 in February. (Report attached to these minutes.)
* Plans are progressing for the spring book sale on Saturday, April 11th. Some volunteers have already signed up, but more are needed for set-up and take-down. Cashiers are needed for the morning hours. Some tables are also needed.
* Vicki Siegel reported that with the increased publicity budget, publicity will be excellent.

**Newsletter:** A reminder was given that articles are due by the last Friday in April (the 24th). Roy Parris reported that Penny Loper’s husband, Richard, suffered a heart attack and is recovering in a Riverside rehab center. It was agreed that if Penny needs help with the next newsletter, FRBL board members will step in to help. It was also agreed that flowers will be sent to the center in Riverside. Vickie Schauf collected donations and will send flowers.

**Old Business:**

* Status of summer reading program in Inyokern: Terri Middlemiss reported that the IYK school principal is supportive of the idea of the use of the school for the summer reading program and will inform Terri when approval is given. It is possible that the library will be open one morning and one afternoon per week during the summer for the children’s reading program. Charissa will order enough supplies for both the Ridgecrest and IYK library summer reading programs.

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* A short discussion of future library expansion and fund-raising ideas was held. The possibility of a bond issue to benefit the library was raised. It was agreed to postpone the fund-raising discussion to the next agenda. Sandy handed out a list of possible fund-raising ideas for members to think about for discussion at the next meeting.

**New Business:**

* Vicki Siegel announced that there will be a Volunteer Fest at the Village Retreat on Saturday, April 18th from 2-8 p.m. in celebration of National Volunteer Week. It will be a media event with vendors and music. Organizations that utilize volunteers will be represented. Sandy has registration forms for organizations. Sandy, Peggy and Terri volunteered to man a table at the event. It was suggested that privatization information be available as well as copies of the new edition of The Long Overdue Library Book. It was also suggested that a FRBL donation jar be placed on the table. Sandy will bring a table.
* Terri Middlemiss announced that a book giveaway is being planned by a parent volunteer for

K-5 Inyokern school children in mid-May. An open house will be held at the school and each child will be given a gently used book. It has been requested that FRBL donate books for this event. There are 170 K-5 children. Vickie Schauf will donate books from her office. It was suggested that Terri be able to take some children’s books for the event after the April 11th sale. FRBL members may also donate books. Books will be sorted by the IYK parent volunteer. Flo Eichenberg will be asked to pick out some children’s books after the sale.

* Roy Parris expressed his concerns regarding a perceived lack of support from the Kern County library leadership. He noted recent examples of concern and frustration: We currently have minimum wage, part-time employees, there has been no replacement for Marsha Lloyd and no opportunity to provide input or feedback directly. Nancy Kerr, Librarian and Sarah Bleyl, Supervising Librarian have been invited to FRBL board meetings, but have not attended. When they did visit the library, FRBL members were not notified. There are many questions that could be answered if the library leadership would meet with the FRBL board. It was recommended that there be a continued effort to meet with the library leadership. It was also recommended that Charissa send copies of the FRBL board minutes to the Supervising Librarian.
* Possible next steps regarding the privatization issue were discussed:
  + There should be adequate publicity for any public meetings held, such as banners, notices in the newspapers and the Swap Sheet.
  + Community members should be encouraged to attend BOS, City Council and School Board meetings to keep the issue in the public’s awareness.
  + Members were encouraged to write letters and e-mails and make phone calls to supervisors and media outlets. It was **moved, seconded and carried** that 300-400 copies of BOS contact information be made to be available in the sales room and at the book sale.
  + Members were encouraged to send e-mails to Supervisor Gleason requesting that he attend whatever local meetings are held to discuss privatization. It was noted that Sandy can find out from Denny Kline when the meetings will be scheduled.
  + It was reported that a petition was put out by the union which can be signed online. It was recommended that a FRBL petition be drawn up for availability at the book sale to be accompanied by the BOS contact information sheet. A separate table and volunteer would be needed for this. Sandy will draw up a petition and info sheet. The petition

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wording was discussed. It was agreed that it should be positive with the statement that the FRBL supports alternative sources of funding.

* + It was **moved, seconded and carried** that $350.00 be approved as a budget for any needed communications regarding the privatization issue, i.e., publicity and printing.
  + Sandy will create a bulleted plan of action as suggestions to the general membership and the public to be attached to these minutes and included in the next newsletter. This will be made into a handout which will be available in the sales room with the BOS contact information on the reverse side.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

The next Board meeting will be **Wednesday, April 15, 2015,** at 10:00 a.m. at the Ridgecrest Library Community Room.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Lyle, Secretary