

FRBL Board Meeting Minutes – March 19, 2025

Meeting Call to Order

- Meeting of the Friends of the Ridgecrest Branch Library (FRBL) Board was called to order at 1:03 PM.
- Agenda approved with no additions or deletions.
- Minutes from the last meeting approved.
- Board Members Jerry Bradley, Nani Banks, Carol Pearson, Jil Richards, Vickie Schauf, and Denise Gorman were in attendance along with Library Branch Supervisor Charissa Wagner.

President's Report

- Movie: Julie was asked to schedule movies with the movie theater.
 - Suggested she contact Nani to work out times.
 - Suggested scheduling two movies (July and August/September) to make more money.

Library Report (Carissa)

- Tiny art show is on display.
 - People painted on four-inch canvases.
- Reading challenges:
 - In N Out Burger Cover to Cover club for ages 4-12 (read/listen to five books/hours for a free item from In N Out).
 - Bingo-based reading challenge in April (details forthcoming).
- Infrastructure grant: No details yet.
- Zip books are still available.
- Collecting plastic for Wacom to get a bench outside of the thrift store.
- Spring break is coming up the first week of April.
 - Additional programs will be offered during the day.
 - Carry-out activity bags will be available for different age groups.
- Collaborative art project:
 - People paint sections on a giant canvas drop cloth.
 - The finished panels will be hung up in the children's room.
- Budget amounts are going to be slightly less than anticipated.
- Summer Reading Challenge planning is underway.
 - Working on getting programs situated for June and July.
 - Seeking donations for bonus finisher prizes.
 - Lunch at the library dates have been confirmed.
- Summer reading program will be June 3 through July 11, except for June 19 and July 4.

Membership Report

- Gained five renewals since the last meeting, including a \$5,000 building fund contribution from Dan and Mary Kus.

- Barbara Lupei finished the brochure, which is similar to the old one but with differences in cost and an acknowledgement of being a nonprofit.
- 250 brochures were printed.

Treasurer's Report for February

- Income:
 - Library bookshelf: \$54.19
 - Dues: \$130
 - Interest: \$0.63
 - Total: \$184.82
- Expenses:
 - Postage: \$73
 - Librarian's stipend: \$289.10
 - Total: \$362.10
- Beginning of year balance: \$162,332.98
- End of February balance: \$163,640.84
- Outstanding liabilities as of the end of February: \$330
- Total facility fund at the end of February: \$8001
- Another \$5,000 came in during March, bringing the total facility fund to \$13,001.

Old Business: Book Storage Status/Options

- Meeting with Jerry Bradley, John Freeman and Kim Metcalf was held to discuss options for finding a new facility.
- Discussed options for a book storage facility and some pros and cons for each one.
- The Oz house is not a facility that we currently want to pursue.
- The old library building is still something to pursue.
 - John will try to set up a meeting with the board of directors of the quilt guild to see if we can work out an arrangement.
 - The goal is to find the quilt guild a roomier facility that meets their needs better than the current building.
 - The current space is not ideal for quilting.
- The old library building would only meet the need for a storefront.

Monroe School Option

- School district has been very good to FRBL over the years.
- School district would likely pay utilities.
- Retail sales might not be allowed.
- Risk of being displaced if the school district needs the space.

County Land Donation

- Trying to get an audience with the county supervisor to request land donation.
- There is precedent for land donation to museums.
- If land is donated, the organization would still need to fund a building and pay for utilities.

Commercial Rental Space

- Advantage: Could get back into business quickly.
- Good location for retail sales.
- Disadvantage: Would have to pay utilities and rent, and may or may not make a sufficient profit.

Buying Commercial Space

- Buying a commercial space could be an option if a cost-effective one can be found.
- Action items include meeting with county supervisor.
- Kim has contacts and arrangements have been made to look at a building on Friday.
- John and Jerry looked at a building at 701 North Balsam.
 - It's across the street from the school district offices.
 - It's 800 square feet and costs \$800 a month.
 - There's a parking lot beside the building.
 - There's a fenced yard behind it.
 - Home Depot sheds could be placed in the yard for storage without permits.

Book Sales and Side Gigs

- Vicki Schauf expressed concern that book sales alone may not provide enough income to offset rent and utilities and a "side gig" might be needed.
- There's likely to be less demand for books right now.
- A side gig would be needed.
- Previously, two hours of book sales on Saturday generated several hundred dollars a month.

Potential Business Models

- The bookstore could adopt a combination book and thrift shop model and/or incorporate a coffee shop.
- The biannual sales used to bring in \$12,000 a year, but last year only brought in \$4,000.
- Other options include consignment for artists or crafters.

Options for Space and Revenue

- Current options: find other revenue sources, get space at James Monroe for storage (but may not be able to sell there), or set up tables on the lawn.
- Another option is to rent a space for six months to a year to experiment, but there's no data to determine if it would be worthwhile.
- The man camp east of town may be dismantled, and the buildings could be used for dorms or potentially acquired for the bookstore.
- The county could donate land for the buildings, which would be more affordable than buying land with a building.

Building and Location Considerations

- Operating in a residential area could cause issues with the city or neighbors.

- A cancer treatment facility at 1517 North Downs, with over 3,000 square feet and a parking lot, may be available.
 - The building being considered has enough space to sublet to antique dealers or artists.
 - This could provide additional income but might be a "headache."

Current Book Storage Building

- There is no update from the school system regarding their plans for the existing storage building.
- The next board meeting is in May, and FRBL should try to be there to make a pitch.
- Access to the room with the online materials is needed, but it's unlikely to be granted.

Starting from Scratch

- We could start from scratch if we have to.
- We could easily come up with 30-40 boxes of books due to pent-up supply.

Retail Space and Storage

- The board will continue to look at options for retail space.
- A site in Inyokern might make it harder to get volunteers to drive 20 miles round trip versus a mile or two in Ridgecrest.
- Book disposition status is still in limbo.

Fundraiser

- Kim wants to do a fundraiser for the organization and can get the little building next to the Spring Hill Suites hotel for free.
 - The hospital provides it for free to nonprofit organizations.
 - The space was previously donated for Totally Tables.
- It should be noted that Kim is not being paid to do these fundraising events; it's a volunteer effort.
- Vicki motioned that Kim plan the fundraiser, it was seconded, and all were in favor.

Renting a Storefront

- The board discussed whether to investigate renting a storefront.
 - It would be a great thing to do, but it might need more than books to carry it.
- The board should not sign more than a one-year lease.
- There was a motion and vote to authorize the President to investigate other options and possibly rent a location.
 - If something looks good, an email will be sent to everyone.
- Jil will contact Jeff Moore to request access to the annex to retrieve some valuable books.
- Meeting adjourned.