

Friends of the Ridgecrest Branch Library

Board Meeting Minutes, 19 November 2025

Board members present: Jerry Bradley, Carol Pearson, Nani Banks, Sandy Bradley, Julie Gervais, Debbie Pio, John Freeman, Jil Richards, Kim Metcalf, RBL Supervisor Charissa Wagner and new volunteer Deb Fields.

Call to Order:

- Meeting of the Friends of the Ridgecrest Branch Library (FRBL) Board was called to order at 1:02 pm.
- Agenda approved with revisions.
- October minutes approved.

President's Report

- Board Vacancies:
 - Vicki Schauf is leaving the board but will continue to volunteer at the school and do online sales of higher-priced books.
 - Jil Richards is leaving the board. Jil was presented with the coveted Golden Reading Shaman as a thank you for her service.
- Introductions around the room for new volunteer Deb Fields
- Vacant positions: Vicki's, Jil's, and Secretary.
- Current board members willing to stay on for another year.
- Debbie Pio is a candidate to be a Member at Large.
- Deb Fields is a candidate for the Secretary position.

VP of Books

- Question about Jil's retirement; Julie is replacing Jil. Jil used to run one to three book sales a year.
- The building used for sales is damaged and not a good facility. Forced to rent space and trying to make it profitable.
- Bylaws changed to create a position called VP for Sales, selling books, art, and knick-knacks.

RCL Branch Supervisor's Report

- October book programs went well.
- Maturango Museum presented on the First Peoples.
 - The Choctaw tribe from Bakersfield also presented; we learned that Code Talkers also existed in WWI, not just WWII.
 - Good attendance despite the opening night of the fair.
- Halloween Programs & Fairgrounds Reading Challenge

- o Halloween programs were well attended with crafts and activities in a life-size Candy Land.
 - o Fairgrounds reading challenge:
 - The Desert Empire Fair donated entry tickets to the kids/teens who completed the challenge along with four unlimited ride wristbands for kids/teens to win.
 - 135 people completed the challenge.
- Library Services
 - o The library is closed to the public but offering express services Wednesday-Saturday from 11:30 AM to 3:30 PM and curbside from 11:30 AM to 6 PM Wednesday-Friday, and 11:30 AM to 3:30 PM on Saturdays.
 - o Browsing boxes are available with a selection of books, changed weekly, and suggestions are taken.
 - o Carry-out activity bags are less popular than expected.
- Infrastructure Improvements
 - o Fluorescent lights were switched to LED lights.
 - o Light switches were installed for public lights, replacing the use of breaker switches.
 - Previously, 16 breaker switches were used to turn the lights on and off daily.
 - Other branches with similar setups also benefited from this infrastructure grant.
- Hiring
 - o Interviews for an office services technician were completed.
- Fundraiser
 - o A mystery theater fundraiser is scheduled for November 2026. Daniel Stallings from Master Mystery Productions will be involved.
 - o The Friends of the Library would get a portion of the ticket sales.
- Holiday Closures
 - o Closed for Thanksgiving (11/27, 11/28, 11/29).
 - o Closed on December 5th for annual all-staff training.
 - o Closed on 12/24, 12/25, 12/31, 01/01, and Winter Recess (December 26th, 29th, and 30th).
- Reopening Plans & Book Access
 - o Hoping to fully reopen at the end of January.
 - o Patrons can request books online or call the library.
 - Shipments arrive on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
 - Notifications are sent when books are ready for pickup.

- Curbside pickup is available.
- o Handwritten lists can be brought in for staff to request items.
- o When the weather is nice, library staff sit outside with browsing boxes from 11:30 AM to 3:30 PM.

Membership VP Report

- 13 renewals and 4 new members were recorded.
- 4 thank you letters were sent for donations of \$100 to \$200.
- Donations come in via the library, Zeffy, or the store.

Treasurer's Report

- Bookshelf at the library brought in \$36.32.
- The bookstore brought in \$1343.69 (without memberships and donations).
- Memberships (non-store): 230.
- Donations (non-store): \$805; Donations (through the store): \$3,950.
- Edward Jones interest: \$2,658.38.
- Total expenses: \$5,127.89.
- Advertising: \$159.21 (Ridgecrest Cinemas, Desert Empire Fair handouts, bookstore news miscellaneous).
- Miscellaneous: \$32.78 for 150 copies of letterhead.
- Librarian stipend account: \$276.86.
- September Southern California Edison: \$47.77.
- October rent for the bookstore: \$1375.
- Total: \$1891.62.
- Pizza Factory income year-to-date: \$83 + \$25.
- Outstanding liabilities: \$1,600 (November rent) + \$246 (advertising stamps, November newsletter).
- Year-to-date expenses are close to budget, but income is way over budget.
- The facility fund is for specific donations earmarked for the facility and is being drawn down first to cover store-related expenses like rent and utilities.
- Goal is to draw the facility fund down to zero.
- Sales have been going up about 5% a month in revenue (excluding the grand opening period).
- "There's some thinking that people are going to be Christmas shopping at secondhand stores this year."

Store Manager's Report

- Thank you to John for help with ads, expanding hours, and the song.

- Angel Thompson has donated eight bookcases, 22 boxes of books, and more are coming.
 - She doesn't want a donation receipt.
 - Suggestion to thank her with a Friends membership or a \$50 gift certificate.
- Ken Amster is looking into getting volunteers from the high school's scholar program.
- In touch with Jay Nolan Services about getting clients to volunteer once a week.
- Scheduling and Sign-Ups
 - Sign-ups for work/volunteer times are available.
 - There is a desire for a direct website link for sign-ups instead of relying on email invitations/scrolling through old emails to find the link to SignUpGenius. It was suggested to create an account on the website.
- Thanksgiving
 - Closed the 11/26th-11/28th, open on the 11/29 (Small Business Saturday).
- Christmas & New Year
 - The store will be closed on 12/24 and 12/25.
 - Considering being open on Friday, 12/26 and Saturday, 12/27 for after-Christmas sales, possibly with a 10% discount.
 - There are enough people available to work those days.
 - Thoughts on being closed Wednesday, 12/31 and Thursday, 01/01, and open Friday 01/02 and Saturday, 01/03.
 - It was mentioned that rent continues whether the store is open or not, suggested to be open if volunteers are available.
- Extended Hours
 - Extended hours are 10 AM to 4 PM on Fridays and Saturdays.
 - The possibility of continuing extended hours into January and February was discussed.
- Volunteers and Membership
 - Discussion of membership status for volunteers determined that volunteers should be at least 15 years old and encouraging membership is good, but it shouldn't be a barrier for young volunteers or those volunteering through an organization. So membership is not a requirement for volunteering.
 - Seasoned members should always supervise new volunteers, regardless of membership status or age.
 - High school volunteers may not need store codes and can focus on tasks like sweeping or making change under supervision.
- Upcoming Events
 - Tammy Pounds will be hosting an event on 11/29.

- The times may be adjusted to 12 PM to 3 PM due to extended hours.
- o Ken Amster will be at the store on 12/06 from 10 AM to 12 PM to promote and sign his books.
- o Potential special event guests might include Eileen Shipley (an artist with a new book coming out), Nancy Crawford (a watercolorist), and possibly RidgeWriters.
- Friday Night Market Experience
 - o The Friday Night Market presence was primarily for public awareness rather than direct sales.
 - o Many attendees expressed awareness of the store and intention to visit.
 - o Approximately 60-80 people visited the booth.
 - o Coupons for a free book with purchase were distributed.
- Member's Only Sale
 - o A member's only sale was held with a 30% discount. Food and drinks were donated.
 - o Attendance wasn't overwhelming, but sales were good for a normally closed day.
 - Revenue before the discount was around \$800, with \$200 from donations.
 - Net revenue was approximately \$500.
- Sales and Discounts
 - o The store is projected to make around \$2,000 this month.
 - o Rainy day sales had mixed success (Saturday was strong).
 - o Offering sales and discounts is seen as a good way to encourage repeat visits.
 - o Aside: Square only allows sales by categories, not individual items. Square is only set up by books, non books art, not even arts books and non books donations. There is no way to do discounts without revamping square.
- February Fundraiser 02/21
 - o Myrna is working on the menu and the room is reserved, Mediterranean themed.
 - o Tickets should be available for purchase by the end of December to allow two months for sales.
 - o Mary Lundstrom is interested (in tickets??)
 - o The Zeffy site can be used for ticket sales. Tickets are limited, and Zeffy has a way to set a limit on number of tickets available/for sale.
 - o Tickets will also be available for purchase at the bookstore (some people like physical tickets).
 - o Ticket sales tend to go exponentially, with most sales occurring in the last few days.
 - o Expecting 14 tables/Eight people can sit at a table
- Raffle/Silent Auction

- o Discussed getting an annual raffle license, which requires reporting to the state. Another option is holding a silent auction.
- o ABC Licenses required for each event; \$50 for beer/wine and \$75 for liquor.
- o Further discussion and plan closer to event date

Other Business

- There will be no meeting in December; the next meeting will be in January.
- Planning will continue via the Internet in December.
- Election for Board
 - o Kim is willing to serve for another year.
 - o A motion was made to accept the existing board members plus Debbie Pio and Deb Fields as the slate of officers.
 - o The motion was seconded and approved.
- Holiday Events
 - o Kim will donate cider to be served on weekend and at holiday events. More holiday-themed items will be put out for sale. Julie has a stand of Christmas books. There will be more ornaments and gift items.
- Book Storage Options
 - o Jerry and John shared their adventure of a probable Facebook scam. Hoping to purchase an Amish shed for storage, they were quick to suspect something was amiss when the “seller” asked them to use the Chime app for payment. They declined to pay via the app, and the people at the address the seller had given had no knowledge of a shed for sale. Phew!
- Annex Condition
 - o The annex is in poor condition after the rain, with trash and falling panels. Water got into Jil's hideout, requiring the removal of collectibles. A new place is needed to store the collectibles, considering a sea van or storage facility.
 - o They discussed approaching storage facilities to ask for a deal, possibly free storage for a short period.
 - o John and Debbie will head this project. \$500 is authorized to secure a storage facility.
- Donations
 - o Donations are coming in, but sales are also happening. The donation to sell ratio is approximately one to one.
- Advertising Initiatives
 - o Ken Amster contacted KSSI (radio station) about ad costs for nonprofits. Waiting to hear back on a quote/if they offer subsidized pricing.

- o Peggy at Swap Sheet provided a free 5x10 ad this week. We'll purchase a 4x4 at \$60 each for the next three weeks to see if there is an impact before Christmas.
- Sandwich Board Signs
 - o The old sandwich board sign has been cleaned up and will be used to display open hours (10-2, changing to 10-4). Julie can add to the sign that the store sells more than books. Noted that the sign should not be placed in the rain.
- Pizza Hut Literacy Grant
 - o A Slice of Literacy community grant program through Pizza Hut offers up to \$10,000. It is for public libraries and nonprofits improving literacy in Pizza Hut communities. A community reading program or book prizes could be a possibility.
- WACOM Donation
 - o WACOM donated \$812 for six months to Friends.
- Action Items and Volunteer Work
 - o John will explore storage facilities.
 - o Julie will work on staffing and store hours.
 - o Volunteer work beyond the register is needed, such as cleaning books.
 - o Text if there are things in the back that need extra looking into.
- Zeffy Grant Program
 - o Zeffy, the website used for taking cash for activities, memberships, and donations, has a grant program. Looking for anyone interested writing a grant proposal or pursuing grants.

Adjournment and Next Meeting

- The next meeting will be 01/21. Location TBD.
- Deb and Debbie need to provide email contact information to be added to the mailing list.
- A list of board members will be provided.