



Friends of the Ridgecrest Branch Library
Board Meeting Minutes, 21 February 2024

Board members present: Jerry Bradley, John Freeman, Jack Davidson, Jil Richards, Carol Pearson, Terri Middlemis, Nani Banks, Nancy Saxton. **Library Supervisor:** Charissa Wagner.

Jerry called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM.

The agenda was approved without amendment.

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved without amendment

President's Report:

- Before launching into the formal agenda, Jerry offered an apology for not seeking board approval for initiating a facility fund. No one expressed any concerns over the matter with only positive comments proffered.
- Jerry informed the Board that instead of allowing the new members to be admitted to the Board as Members at Large, according to our by-laws one of them should have been designated Secretary. After some discussion the issue was tabled until the March meeting to allow Board members to cogitate on the matter. Issues to consider include: How to fill the position and, depending on the solution, whether or not the by-laws need to be amended; how willing/unwilling each individual is to volunteer or accept appointment to the position
- A fund has been created for the expressed purpose of buying or leasing our own facility. Although no vote was taken, there seemed to be universal approval of the idea.

Librarian's Report: Charissa reported:

- Stay & Play mentioned at last meeting, is a grant funded program expanding on an existing program (Play & Chat) which offers free play for kids to build social skills while caregivers chat with each other. Stay & Play will offer a light snack for the kids present and a resource representative of interest to caregivers. All 12 sessions have a resource representative booked and include car seat safety checks, burn and scald prevention, nutrition, CAPK/Oasis Family Resource Center, stress management, and more. Flyers are available in the library and info is being posted on Facebook.
- Kern Literacy Council will be in Ridgecrest on Sat 3/9 from 12-2 pm along with Senator Shannon Grove. They will be promoting the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, Kern Literacy Council services including The Tutoring Network, and Senator Shannon Grove will read a story twice (about 12:20 pm and 1:30 pm). There will be opportunities for kids to explore early literacy toys and building sets, a donated book giveaway, and Easter cards for local seniors (a program that we have partnered with a local Moms group who delivers cards to High Desert Haven and/or Bella Sera at Easter and Thanksgiving).

- Summer Reading Challenge is in full planning mode and we are looking for organizations that might want to sponsor a program by paying for supplies in exchange for publicity/recognition in places like Facebook, branch signage, and on the calendar. The sponsorship opportunity also applies to performances in the summer. Jerry brought up that having restricted funds is burdensome on the accounting system to create specific accounts to track the funds that were donated for a specific (restricted) purpose. The reason some donated funds have been handled that way starting 2023 is because several years ago, a donor who wished to remain anonymous as much as possible donated some money to the library with the intent of the funds being used at my discretion for the library, so I directed it to FRBL instead of our branch donations fund with the county. I mentally earmarked it for furniture replacement. When I asked about using those funds in 2023 for new furniture, I was told that I could not have those funds for furniture because they had not been specifically designated at the time of donation, so the money had likely been absorbed and/or used by that point. There was some discussion about an unofficial accounting of the funds that will not require restricted fund accounts to be created in the future so that any donations I acquire and want designated for specific projects will happen without the need for creating additional specific accounts.
- Lunch at the Library will be happening again this summer but only in partnership with SSUSD. Specific dates are not yet decided. Kern County Superintendent of Schools has declined to provide lunch to Ridgecrest for the term after SSUSD this summer due to coming from Bakersfield. Lunch at the Library provides a free lunch to anyone 18 and under from Tue-Fri between 11:30 am and 12:30 pm. Adults who bring a child with them are able to purchase a lunch.
- Reading challenges are happening on a monthly basis now, with reading or listening to 300 minutes or 5 hours. Time is logged on Beanstack software but branch staff can enter for people who bring it in on a piece of paper. There is an additional yearlong challenge from Kern County Library with a color of the month. Each month from Feb-Dec, a color is featured and people are asked to read or listen to a book with a cover that primarily features the color of the month. There is a special display section to help make it a little bit easier for people to participate. We would love to have more participants to increase our branch numbers in our friendly competitions.
- Infrastructure grant project details and time frame are not yet determined as Ridgecrest is slated for the fall of 2024 or the spring of 2025. More details will be available as it gets closer, but there are other branches being worked on at this time. Southwest and Lamont are currently closed with some of the Bakersfield branches going next. More info is available here. <https://kerncountylibrary.org/infrastructuregrant/>
- Jerry asked about funding needs and Charissa advised that there would probably be a need associated with installation of the new book drop.

Vice-President, Membership Report: Carol reported:

- Since our January meeting we have gained 10 renewals.
- Based on a comparison of our November '23 and January '24 newsletter distribution, we increased emailed newsletters from 202 to 233. Printed, mailed newsletters decreased from 115 to 73. The mailing costs decreased from \$182.96 to \$112.15. Future changes will likely be more modest.

Treasurer's Report: Nani Banks reported:

- As of 31 January income for the month and YTD totaled \$1,349.24; expenditures were \$303.73.
- Account balances are:

Checking/cash:	\$ 32,388.79
Savings:	\$ 474.99
Certificate:	\$111,228.47
Total:	\$144,092.25
- Nani requested and received approval to have our CA tax return(s) prepared by Burkey and Cox.

Old Business:

- **Book storage:**
 - Jerry reported that it is no longer an option for us to use the store front facility directly behind the old Albertsons due to planned use by the school district, though we are not in immediate danger of being evicted from our current location.
 - Jerry took an action to look into possible availability of space in the Heritage shopping center.
 - Due to numerous issues, the Oz House is currently the option of last resort.
 - Several potential rent/lease sites discussed
 - John suggested we focus on finding "gifted" buildings with focus on Sierra Sands School District and Kern County. He is working on some potential sites.
- **Book Disposition**
 - John reported that setting up an on-line book sale operation requires more effort than our weekly sales can justify.
 - Regarding the Spring Book Sale (20-21 April), in an effort to move more books than at the Fall sale, it was decided that on the last day (21 Apr) from 12-3 PM we will offer a "bag sale" at \$5/bag.
- **Little Free Libraries** - Jerry advised he/we are looking for locations and stewards.
- **Saturday Movies** - Julie Gervais is working the issue. It could be good deal (fund raiser) for our organization.
- **CFC** - Due to lack of interest (no volunteers) the issue was dropped.
- **Business donors** - Jerry advised that he and John have the lead but stated that the facility issue has priority.

New Business

- **Review and Update List of Donors in Our Newsletter** - extensive discussion ensued around this issue regarding criteria for recognition and acknowledgement thereof. It was agreed that there is a need to update the list. Nani and Jerry will review the financials and suggest criteria for recognition at the next (March) Board meeting.
- **Need to increase donations** - Jil passed around a donation letter used by Beale and suggested we do something similar. Jerry stated that our donation income left a lot to be desired.
- **Potential Sources of Income** - It was pointed out that we have very limited fundraising venues. There was also a brief discussion around an upcoming "Community

Garage Sale” and, based on previous experience, it was determined not to be worth our while to participate.

- **Need to change our policy of not accepting book donations** - Although there was some discussion around this issue, there was no conclusion reached or decision made. Consequently, we are going to leave the policy as is for now.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 3:42 PM. The next Board meeting will be **Wednesday, March 20, 2024 at 1:00 pm** in the library meeting room.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Davidson, Acting Secretary