

Notes on Library Meeting

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Meeting Call to Order

- Meeting of the Friends of the Ridgecrest Branch Library (FRBL) Annual Meeting called to order at 1:04 PM.
- Agenda approved without adjustments.
- Minutes of the last meeting approved without comments.
- Board Members Jerry Bradley, Carol Pearson, Jil Richards, and Nancy Saxton were in attendance along with FRBL member Sandy Bradley.

President's Report – Election of Officers

- Election of board candidates moved up in the agenda.
 - Two members at large positions confirmed; third position held by the past president if they choose to remain.
- Slate of officers:
 - Current officers: Nani Banks, (Treasurer), Jil Richards (Book Sales VP), Carol Pearson (Membership VP), John Freeman, (Member at large), Jerry Bradley, (President).
 - Candidates for Members at Large vacancies: Vickie Shoaf, Denise Gorman.
- All positions were approved by a unanimous vote.
- Secretary position remains open; can be filled at any time.

Library Director's Report

- Upcoming branch closures:
 - November 28th-30th for Thanksgiving.
 - December 6th for all staff training.
 - December 23rd-January 1st for winter recess.
- Current project: Thanksgiving cards for seniors.
 - Cards delivered to Bella Sera and High Desert Haven.
- Infrastructure updates:
 - Four new AC units received; heat HVAC upgrades completed.
- Periodicals were discussed.

Membership VP Report

- 21 membership renewals and 17 new members since the last meeting.
 - Most renewals occurred during the recent book sale.
- Positive feedback on the increase in new members.
- Possible factors for new memberships:
 - Wider distribution of sale announcements.
 - \$3 coupon offered to new members.

Treasurer's Report

- October financial report:
 - Bookstore revenue: \$28.
 - Donations totaled \$6,671.55, primarily from the Rotary Club fundraiser.
 - Interest income: \$867.56.

- Year-to-date financials:
 - Total income: \$24,000 against a budget of \$16,000.
 - Total expenditures year-to-date: approximately \$8,600 with a budget of \$14,000.

Expenses and Budget

- Recent expenses and reimbursements:
 - Library Director's Expenses submitted through late October.
 - Anticipated increase in expenses by a few thousand dollars.
- Funds at the end of October:
 - Starting balance on January 01 2024 : \$143,047.
 - Current balance: \$158,688 with outstanding liabilities of \$1,007.

Book Storage Status

- No recent contact from the school district regarding storage.
- Received used banker boxes from Kern County Superior Court.
 - Boxes are in good condition, better than many existing ones.
- Current storage status:
 - Started with 979 boxes, currently down to 879 after book sale.
 - Only ongoing sorting is of history books by Julie and Gunner.
- History items being categorized as old and new based on publishing dates.
- New members list includes 17 individuals, but only 8 or 9 expressed willingness to help.
 - Limited responses received from the Newsletter article regarding the Help database update.
- The newly formed McFarland Friends group was given two boxes of hardbacks by FRBL.
 - Inquiry about further needs from McFarland pending.

Online Sales Challenges

- Scott indicated online book sales are struggling due to Amazon's policy changes.
 - Sellers are moved down the list for issues, affecting visibility.
- Robert reported similar challenges with eBay book sales.
 - Suggestion that online selling may not be a viable market.

Creative Leasing Discussion

- Wayne Silva discussed creative leasing options with Jil at the book sale.
 - Proposed giving landlords a percentage of sales for reduced rent.
 - Suggested exploring more landlords for potential rental agreements.
 - John will follow up with Wayne.

Future Meetings and Building Pursuits

- Ongoing attempts to set up a meeting with Corey from the county.
 - No dates confirmed yet; the responsibility lies with them to respond.
- Continued interest in the old library building, but no new updates available.

Book Donations

- Acceptance of book donations on a case-by-case basis will start in January.
 - Eight boxes of donated mountaineering books from Jerry anticipated before January 1st.
- Specific preferences for donations outlined.
 - Not accepting magazines, media, or old non-collectible books.

- Focus on selling newer hardbacks, biographies, children's books, and craft books per Fall book sale preferences.

Sales Overview

- Sold a mix of items including religion and business textbooks.
- Approximately 500 boxes were organized for sale.

Inventory and Pricing

- Hardbacks sold for \$1, paperbacks for 50 cents.
 - Collectibles marked higher.
- Bargains for 25 cents included older cookbooks and science/math books.
 - Significant sales of 25-cent items noted.

Advertising and Attendance

- Windy weather affected attendance.
 - Did not realize the gem and mineral show was the same weekend.
- Mixed results from advertising efforts.
 - Coverage in the Swap Sheet, but no visibility in the Daily Independent, despite providing them with Book Sale copy.

Lessons Learned

- Consider not doing Sunday sales based on turnout.
 - Flex Friday might be a better option than Sunday.
- Positive feedback on volunteer assistance.
 - Pack-up completed efficiently with help from various community groups.

Book Sale Revenue

- Total revenue from book sale: \$1,673
 - Membership revenue: \$235
 - \$118 given away in coupons
- Previous Fall sale revenue (in 2023) was approximately \$2,400
- Discussion on pricing strategies for better sales
 - Suggested offering "by the bag" or specific genre options
 - Past attempts at grab bags did not sell well

Little Free Libraries

- Nancy's library is still operational and full
 - Contains 25 books, including many children's books
- Discussion on other libraries
 - Hospital LFL has poor quality books
 - Dart library has been vandalized and will be relocated
- Activity levels at various LFLs
 - The Belle Vista LFL sees weekly visits from construction workers and delivery personnel, in addition to general public

Little Free Library Setup

- Costs for setting up a library range from \$200 to \$500
- Anyone can place a library on their property

- Libraries can be purchased online
- Friends of the Library have been involved in donating books and libraries

Budget Considerations

- Discussion on library projects for next year's budget
 - Regular funding includes periodicals and stipends for the Library Director and the Summer Reading Program.
- Furniture funding is either secured or has potential funding sources
 - Funds can be used for purchasing materials or supplies on Amazon.

Current Projects and Needs

- No immediate big Ridgecrest Library projects are identified.
 - Interest in a story walk, but concerns about maintenance and vandalism.
 - Similar challenges faced with little free libraries.
- Need to build a budget for January with potential new projects.
 - Recent grant from Rotary provided an additional \$6,500.
 - Suggestions to compile a candidate list for projects.
 - Explore other branches for funding ideas.

Trust Fund Status

- Branch trust fund has evolved from just books to include other materials.
 - Originally called the book trust, now used for various branch needs.
 - Current amount in the trust is approximately \$12,000.

Trust Fund Management

- Using trust fund may be easier than reimbursement depending on the item.
 - Amazon purchases via the trust must go through the county.

Budget Considerations

- Suggestion to increase funding into the trust for better local management.
 - Consider a "straw man budget" with specific amounts for trust and stipend.
- Money in trust is controlled by trust rules; other funds are not.
 - Need to decide on budget breakdown before the next meeting in January.

Community Engagement Ideas

- Discussion about a FRBL bookmobile to increase book sales and outreach.
 - Could sell books at events, increasing frequency of sales.
- Concerns about logistics and costs associated with maintaining a bookmobile.
 - Discussion on utilizing a bus or larger old vehicle for book sales because of bookmobile capacity restrictions.

Book Donation Process

- Need to establish a clear process for accepting donated books.
 - Previous experience led to an overwhelming number of books.
- Newsletter mentioned accepting donations after the holidays.
 - Plans to determine a systematic approach for accepting books moving forward.

Announcement for accepting books

- Specific books will be accepted
- Not on a regular basis; may vary by month
- January acceptance details
 - Overwhelmed capacity may lead to cancellations in subsequent months
- Logistics of book drop-off discussed
 - Use of the annex for storage
 - Need for volunteers to assist in moving books

Donation Acceptance Operational Considerations

- Concerns about restaurant operations
 - Avoid interference with restaurant patrons
 - Limited drop-off options; only one entrance available
- Alternative drop-off locations
 - South side breezeway can be utilized
 - Signage to guide donors to appropriate drop-off areas

Board Member Updates

- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
 - Jack volunteered to work on SOPs
 - Previous bylaws updated; focus on SOPs now
- Recognition of departing board member Nancy Saxton and Jack Davidson
 - Golden Reading Shaman statuette was awarded to Nancy for service
 - Acknowledgment of contributions to the board

Editorial and Membership Changes

- Judy Fair Spaulding's relocation
 - Will continue as editor remotely
 - No objections expected to continue remote editing
- Potential new secretary
 - Judy may be considered for secretarial role

Contributions and Budgeting

- Kern County Superior Court contributions
 - Questioning if they should be added to contributors list
 - Potential recognition based on value of contributions
- Action items for next meeting
 - Charissa to create and distribute a straw man budget for the next year
 - Carol to notify new Board Members and add their contact details to distribution list
 - Jil to create and distribute process for accepting books