

FRBL Board Meeting Minutes – August 20, 2025

Meeting 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 no additions or deletions.
- Minutes from the last meeting approved.
- Board Members Jerry Bradley, Nani Banks, Carol Pearson, Jil Richards, Vickie Schauf, Julie Gervais, and Kim Metcalf were in attendance along with Library Branch Supervisor Charissa Wagner.
- President's Report
 - Minutes are on the website.
 - Website has been cleaned up to only show the current year with a link to previous years.
- Thank you to everyone that volunteered and helped with the store.
- Positive comments about the store from outsiders.

Library Branch Supervisor's report

- Lunch Program:
 - 22 days of lunch service.
 - 1,866 lunches served to kids (average of 84.8 per day).
 - 2,651 people attended (parents and kids).
- Summer Reading Challenge:
 - 527 people signed up, 380 finished.
 - 302 finished the book challenge, 78 finished the hours challenge.
 - 8,907 books and 1,803 hours were completed.
 - Staff members completed the challenge but were not eligible for prizes.
 - Roadrunner Ridge Foundation (through Desert Valleys) donated 50 gift cards.
- Summer Programs:
 - Friends provided support for in-branch programming and finisher bags.
 - Pizza Factory donated pizza coupons.
 - Golden Meadow Goats program and Magic Napoleon were popular.
 - Magic Napoleon stayed past his booked time to make balloon creations.
 - Reading Dragons program introduced, with 114 people starting and 42 finishing.
 - Will be brought back in the fall with a new set of dragons.
- August Programs:
 - Slower programming due to kids being back in school.
 - Fiber art friends meet twice a month.
 - Homeschool hangout started.
 - Open to new program ideas.
- Ebooks:
 - Access to digital libraries (Libby, Hoopla) with a library card.
 - Libby allows reading or listening to books online.
 - Hoopla offers movies, TV shows, and music.

Digital Library Resources

- A flyer is available listing the different library platforms.
- With a California driver's license, one can get library cards from different counties in California and access their digital material.
 - Examples: Kern County Library, LA Public, and Sacramento.

- Some library systems have more funds than others, which affects the number of copies of digital books they have.

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Membership VP Report

- 14 new members and 28 renewals since the May meeting.
- \$3,880 in dues and donations.

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Treasurer's Report: May, June, and July

Income (May):

- Library Bookshelf (May): \$62.63
- Movie ticket sale (How to Train Your Dragon on June 21): \$10
- Dues: \$205
- Donations: \$270
- Interest (Edward Jones): \$15.04
- Facility fund: \$150; Year-to-date total (as of May): \$6,150

- Expenses (May):

- Equipment: \$790.91
- Taxes: \$515.00
- Insurance (both facilities): \$1,216
- Newsletter: \$64
- Postage: \$73
- Stipend: \$162.90
- Summer Reading: \$87.57
- Bookstore security deposit & first month's rent of the facility store front: \$2,750

- Income (June)

- Bookshelf (June): \$38.85
- Bookstore (June): \$918.95
- Fundraising (June): \$390 (How to Train Your Dragon movie)
- Membership (non-store): \$190
- Membership (store): \$240
- Donations (non-store): \$41,700
- Donations (store): \$408.50
- Interest from Alta 1 (June): \$66.32
- A donation for May was eliminated by Zeffy due to a credit card fee challenge.

- Expenses (June):

- Seed money for the cash box (store): \$150
- Office of the Attorney General, Secretary of State, Charity annual registration (fees): \$25
- Stipend for a card project with Robyn Newcomb (part of Charissa's programming): \$24
- Total expenses: \$199

- Income (July)

- Bookshelf (at library): \$62.32
- Bookstore: \$921.94
- Membership (non-store): \$100
- Membership (store): \$100
- Donations (non-store): \$2,000
- Interest from Edward Jones: \$1.14

- Post Office closed out an old mail account: \$31.47
- Facility fund donation returned: \$150
- Expenses (July):
 - Bookstore expenses: \$3,343; year-to-date total: \$6093.66
 - \$1,026 for supplies to set up the store
 - \$942 to Southern California Edison
 - \$868 deposit (refundable)
 - \$29 connection fee
 - \$1,375 for July rent

Facility Restricted Funds

- As of the end of July, \$6,093 has been spent.
- The actual grand total from prior years is \$13,000.
- Restricted funds can only be used for the specific activity that's designated.
- The goal is to draw down the facility fund to zero.

Unrestricted Funds

- The \$40,000 donation was unrestricted.
- It is preferred that the funds be unrestricted because every time there is a donation for a specific purpose, another line item has to be created to track that.

Financial Report

- The year started at \$162,000 and the total balance on hand is \$203,000, with an outstanding balance of \$2,400.
- There's almost \$45,000 worth of donations this year.

Store Financials

- Jerry presented a spreadsheet to track the store independent of overall finances.
- For the month of June, expenses were more than sales.

July Financials

- The second page is for the month of July.
- Book sales and non-book sales were roughly the same for the month.

Graphs

- There are a couple of graphs that show income increasing up to \$2,500, but expenses are going down to \$6,000.
- Net income is a little bit under \$2,000 for the store.
- Store sales so far are not what they should be to even break even, much less make a significant profit.
- Hoping for sales, more inventory of non-book items, and more customers.
- "We picked the worst time in Ridgecrest to open a store in the middle of Summer."
- This report will be updated monthly to track viability of the store.

Store Manager Report

- The store is going through the inventory and refreshing it and updating it.
- A lot of books are going back to the facility, and then more books are coming back to be sorted.

Annex

- People are in the old building two, three times a week.
- The group needs to keep insurance active on the annex for now.

Bookstore Updates

- Refreshing the fiction section to be more updated.
- New sections were created in the nonfiction section to attract more buyers.

- A reminder was sent out for volunteers to sign up to work.
- Board members should be added to the mailing list for the app to give them an opportunity to work in the store.
- Average sales are roughly \$5 per person.
- A juice/slushy/coffee/soft serve store will open next door in four to eight weeks, which may increase foot traffic.
- More people are donating books.
- Non-book donations have not been exciting.
 - Need to consider a call for those donations.
 - Need to better describe what they're looking for, as some donations have been junk.

Movie Fundraiser

- We have yet to receive our portion of concession sales.
- It was worth doing, and Nani and Julie are appreciated for making it happen.
- It generates a lot of money for a limited amount of effort.
- Julie will check to see if they can do it again this year.
 - Fewer tickets were sold this year, possibly due to the Juneteenth holiday and Flex Friday.
 - July is usually a good month, but it depends on the movie available.
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Store Operations Review

- Revenues aren't great, but June and July were not full months of operation.
- Hopefully things will pick up as we get new customers.
- Lessons learned:
 - Sandwich board was put on rollers to make it easier to move.
- Need more room in the back.
 - Getting more shelves and fewer tables could help.
- A Sea Container could be a possibility.

Feedback on Non-Fiction Section

- Need more specific labels for non-fiction books.
 - Example: No religion or science sections initially.
- Sections have since been added.

Store Hours

- A comment was made about being open for people who work.
 - Counter: The store is open Saturdays, Flex Fridays and noon hours.
- Unlikely to expand hours due to volunteer constraints.
 - Flex Friday and Saturday options are available for those working Monday-Friday.

Store Environment

- Acoustics are poor due to hard ceiling and walls.
 - Books absorb some sound, but no acoustic tiles.
- CD player requested for music to improve the tone.

Store Maintenance

- Need a ladder, especially for art above bookcases.
- One bank of lights is out, and one bulb is out in another bank.
 - Four tubes were taken to the store, but no ladder to change them.
- A ladder donation would be appreciated.

Signage and Sidewalk

- A "Books and More" sign was made to hang from the eaves.

- The sign is blue with white lettering.
- Owner was contacted about cracks in the sidewalk and said he would address it.
 - Tape was put on the sidewalk to increase visibility of the step down.

Store Traffic and Hours

- One person noted that only one hour out of four was busy.
 - Suggestion to track busy times to optimize hours.
- Square dashboard tracks sales by time, with a peak around 1:00 PM.
- Tracking traffic in the parking lot could help determine optimal hours.
 - Gym traffic does not vary much, so the juice store opening may bring in new customers.
- "The bigger thing to do is to create the traffic."

Social Media and Advertising

- The store is on Instagram, Facebook, and Yelp.
- Yelp reviews were taken down due to a suspected algorithm that identifies solicited reviews.
 - The store still appears in Yelp searches.
- Jewelry to Go billboard:
 - Alvarado and his wife used to own Jewelry to Go and the billboard.
 - The vinyl on the billboard looks worn.
 - Jerry's son-in-law offered to pay for new vinyl and installation if they could use the billboard to advertise Friends.
 - Jerry needs to determine if Jewelry to Go still owns the license for the billboard.

Chamber and Media

- The store is a member of the Chamber, which reposts their posts.
- They are on Yodel, which the Chamber uses.
- Nick Rogers wrote an article about the store.

Potential New Location

- There's a building on Panamint Street that might be rented for \$700/month.
 - It's smaller than the current space.
- Fawn's karate studio is in half of the building, and the other half is currently empty.
- This location could be a backup negotiating tool for renewing the current lease.
- It could be used as a paid storage facility.

Furniture and Store Atmosphere

- Feedback: There's no place to sit down and look at a book.
- A comfortable chair would be nice, however, there is not enough real estate for chairs.
 - A nice chair could be put out as a for-sale item.

Friday Night Market

- It takes place at the fairgrounds on Friday nights, from 5 to 9 PM.
- Vendors sell handmade items and food. There's usually a food truck.
- The market gets "pretty decent" traffic, "a couple hundred over the evening."
- Ideas for the Library's presence:
 - Brochures
 - A video looping, showing the store
 - A banner with the store's address
 - Hand out flyers with coupons for a dollar off in the bookstore.
 - "Blind dates with a book"
 - Bring stained glass or little birds to showcase other items besides books.
- Upcoming dates: September 12th, October 10th and 24th.

Tammy Pounds Book Signing

- Scheduled for September 6th, from 11 AM to 1 PM.
- The library will provide a chair, a table, chairs for parents, and a rug for kids to sit on.
- Tammy Pounds will read her books, sign them, handle sales, and donate a portion to the library.
- She will also create the flyer and bring a sandwich board with balloons.

Other Marketing Ideas

- **Swap Sheet:** Check if the library's free ad is in the current issue.
- **Facebook:** Repost library Facebook posts on "for sale in Ridgecrest" sites. The library's postings get about 13,000 views per month.
- **Schools:**
 - Consider marketing in schools, especially private schools like Emmanuel Christian School or Montessori.
 - One volunteer is buying gift certificates to hand out at Halloween for Kids.
 - Explore the possibility of providing tutoring or courses for charter school students, with the charter school paying the library.

Store Traffic and Sales

- Some people attending karate or parkour aren't paying, the charter school is.
- Julie is considering a special sale to increase traffic, like a members-only sale with a discount.
 - The grand opening and soft opening were the best sales days.
- Someone offered to donate Anne Rice hardbacks, suggesting a Halloween theme for display and a sale event.
 - A Halloween sale event could involve people paying to have their kids scared.

Membership Appreciation

- A members-only sale could be held at a separate time or day to avoid checking membership at the door.
 - This could also encourage people to buy memberships.
- Giving members perks, like free entry to the museum, is a good idea.
- Need to give people reasons to come to the store, attracting members to events.

Children's Books

- Children's books are hard to come by, but Emmanuel Christian donated duplicates from their library.
- Children often buy books on Saturdays, with charter school parents purchasing them.

Fundraiser

- October is too busy with college events, fairs, and Relay for Life.
- November is busy with holidays.
- January and February have fewer events.
- There's no perfect time, so decide on a date and draw from the interested demographic.
- There are often multiple events happening simultaneously in the city.

Fundraiser Discussion

- Speaker suggests setting a date and deciding when it will be okay to proceed.
- A book theme could open the event up to anything, such as a destination or specific theme.
- Speaker suggests using books to incorporate the theme on the tables.
- Speaker suggests a Valentine's Day theme dinner around Valentine's Day.

Separate Fundraisers

- There are two different fundraisers: one for the Friends and another the library is working on.
- The library fundraiser will be aimed more at families, so it won't bring in as much money, but it will get the word out.

- The dinner fundraiser would charge a little bit more to make some money off the tickets.
- Speaker suggests a western theme with western books and a western barbecue.
- February 21, 2026 was selected as a planning date for the Fundraiser.
- The theme can be figured out later.

New Business: Charissa discussed a potential Murder Mystery Fundraiser

- Daniel Stallings, a master mystery production writer, will do a fundraiser for the Friends in the fall of 2026.
- He writes murder mystery type performances.
- The fundraiser will be youth based, with kids as the performers.
- The event would be held on Friday and Saturday weekends after the library is closed.