

**Friends of the La Mesa Library**  
**Approved Board Meeting Minutes**  
**August 24, 2018**

**Board Attendance:** John Schmitz, Robin Theilmann, Bob Thatcher, Jon Lange, Justin Walker, Joyce Purcell, Bob Duff, Misty Thompson

**Board Absence:** Heather Pisani-Kristl

**Members/Guests in Attendance:** Joe Glidden, Eileen Schmitz, Veronica Estrada (Library), Migell Acosta (Library), Charles Jarman (Library)

**Call to Order**

John Schmitz called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. and welcomed the members and guests in attendance. Everyone introduced themselves.

**Approval of the Minutes**

Secretary Emeritus Eileen Schmitz presented the draft minutes of the July 26, 2018 General Membership Meeting. Joyce Purcell moved to approve the minutes with minor corrections. Justin Walker seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report**

Bob Thatcher presented the treasurer's report. The monthly reports were distributed before the meeting. This is the first month of the new fiscal year, and we spent \$9,200 on matching funds against approximately \$1,000 in revenues. Because of the large matching fund expense, we are below our budget for the year but that is normal. The floor was opened for questions. There were none. Bob Duff moved to approve the treasurer's report. Joyce Purcell seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**Membership Report**

Joyce Purcell presented the membership report. We currently have 227 members. The 50% discount continues. Robin Theilmann has told members who come into the bookstore that the membership dues will be increasing, but no one has complained. They have said it is still worth being a member. Bob Thatcher suggested perhaps posting a notice of the dues increase somewhere in the bookstore.

**Library Staff Report**

Veronica Estrada presented the library staff report. (Heather Pisani-Kristl was on vacation and will be back on Saturday.) She thanked the Friends for sponsoring the library's summer reading program. They had a great turnout for the "Radical Reptiles" reading event, over 100 people.

Veronica reminded all Friends board members and volunteers to sign up for the County's new online volunteer system, and she thanked those who have already done so. After signing up, people should have received a "congratulations" email. Some board members said they did not receive such an email, but the sign up process otherwise seemed to work. Veronica mentioned that volunteers can log their hours online once they have signed up.

## **President's Report**

John Schmitz presented the president's report on library expansion. He met last week with the City. The County has told the City it will have to pay approximately \$750,000 to satisfy its obligations stemming from the deal that created the current library. The City has already asked the County whether they can delay the payment or apply the payment to a library expansion. The County said no, but the City plans to ask again. They would like the Friends' support. John distributed his summary of the City's proposed options, a similar summary from the City Manager, and a draft letter from the City to the County regarding the funds. The City has said that if it can keep the funds, it will build a community room space that the library can use. The City would like to know if the Friends would support that effort and also whether the Friends would be willing to raise funds to support the community room space (or other expansion).

Migell Acosta gave an overview of the County library system and explained its funding. The library system serves all of the unincorporated areas of the County and some of the incorporated cities (including obviously La Mesa). It receives 0.7% of property taxes and has a \$46.5 million annual operating budget. It has no capital reserve. The County funds the building and expansion of libraries in unincorporated areas. They are funded out of the general County capital improvement budget, along with fire and sheriff's stations, etc. Generally the County funds one new library per year.

Migell said the historical practice is for cities to fund the building and expansion of libraries on their own—and then the County agrees to operate them. This practice is not legally required, but it has always been followed. Sometimes a city will partner with a school district to build a dual-use library. Whatever a city builds, the County will run to the best of its ability. But the County has no ability to force a City to fund a library building or expansion project. They are separate government entities.

The City has raised the possibility of building a community room that could be used by the Library. Migell believes 2,000 sq. ft. is an adequate size for a community room. They estimate about 7 sq. ft. per person standing and 15 sq. ft. per person seated. Ideally a community room would have dividers, A/V equipment, an adjacent "poet's patio," and co-located restrooms. They want it to be flexible for many uses. The City has mentioned 1,250 sq. ft. Migell said that size would be useable for some things, but it is generally too small. Poway has a 960 sq. ft. room, and they wish it were bigger. Alpine (2000 sq. ft.), Borrego (2300), and Imperial Beach (2400) have good-sized community rooms.

John opened the floor to comments. He mentioned that one hurdle is the unknown timing of any civic center improvements. The City is still weighing its options.

Joe Glidden was skeptical that the City could be trusted to keep its word to spend the funds on library expansion. They promised a new/expanded library before, but they have done nothing. He asked what the City was committing to this effort. The County is giving up its \$750,000 and the Friends are doing fundraising. What will the City do? John said we might be able to ask for matching funds for any fundraising.

To put the possibility of fundraising in context, Migell said that we should estimate that design and construction costs for a community room would be around \$1,000 per sq. ft. Lakeside is currently doing a community room, and it will cost over that amount. The City's estimate of \$600 per sq. ft. seems low.

Joe said that the City could raise the money if they wanted. The councilmembers raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for their campaigns and for other causes.

John suggested that perhaps the Parks and Recreation Foundation could partner with the Friends for fundraising, since the civic center improvements might include a park or open space next to the community room.

Migell said that some Friends groups have been able to raise millions of dollars for new libraries, including Fallbrook (\$2 million) and Encinitas (\$1 million). Lakeside raised \$200,000, including \$50,000 from one church.

Several board members pointed out that we do not have much talent in the Friends organization for fundraising. Joyce noted that we should get assurances from the City that the money will be used for library purposes. Bob Thatcher and others said it was possible that the County could reject all of the City's proposals (since they already had). John said he is not sure why the City thinks it will be different now.

John moved to draft a letter to the City Manager that the Friends are willing to support the City's position in the draft letter, but we will follow up with our concerns about how the money will be spent, whether the Friends would be expected to do any fundraising, and what the timeframe will be. Robin seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Bookstore Report**

Robin Theilmann presented the bookstore report. She distributed by email a proposal from Operation Book Support to sell donated books online. He takes 70% of the net profits and gives the Friends 30%. He requires the Friends volunteers to scan the books for him and set those he will sell aside. He will pick them up, set prices, and sell them through Amazon. Robin is not sure it will be worth it because it will require the volunteers to do more work for only 30%.

Robin talked with several Friends groups and did not get any negative reviews. Lemon Grove makes approximately \$900 per quarter. Bonita, which gets lots of donations, makes approximately \$1,000 per quarter. Skyline makes \$100-200 per month. During textbook season, they make more.

Justin expressed concern about the large proportion of profits going to the vendor. He also thought it was strange that he would not disclose his Amazon seller names.

Jon explained the process for the Friends to sell books through Amazon and keep 100% of the profits. Jon and Justin will meet with Robin to look at our book donations and see whether it would be worthwhile.

John proposed that Robin tell Operation Book Support that we were not interested. No one disagreed.

### **IT Report**

Justin said he would be setting up a separate meeting to discuss G-Suite and Google online apps.

### **Adjournment**

John adjourned the meeting at 5:50 p.m. Another group was waiting to use the Friends space.