Minutes of the
ALAMEDA FREE LIBRARY BOARD MEETING
September 10, 2008

The regular meeting of the Alameda Free Library Board was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL	Present:	Ruth Belikove, President Mike Hartigan, Vice President Karen Butter, Board Member Alan Mitchell, Board Member Gail Wetzork, Board Member
	Absent:	None
	Staff:	Jane Chisaki, Library Director Marsha Merrick, Recording Secretary

CONSENT CALENDAR

An asterisk indicates items so enacted and adopted on the Consent Calendar.

A. *Report from Library Director Highlighting Activities for the Month of September 2008. Accepted.

B. *Draft Minutes of the Regular Library Board Meeting of August 13, 2008. Approved.

C. *Library Services Report for the Month of July 2008. Accepted.

D. *Financial Report Reflecting FY 2008-09 Expenditures by Fund through August 2008. Accepted.

E. *Bills for Ratification for the Month of August 2008. Approved.

Director Chisaki mentioned an error in the Director's Report. A volunteer had been in touch with staff to do a Spanish "sing-along", not "story time", at the West End Library.

President Belikove asked if the Foundation needed any help for the Michael Pollan event, and volunteered to sell 5 tickets.

President Belikove asked for a motion to accept the Consent Calendar as presented. Member Wetzork so moved; Member Butter seconded the motion which carried by a 5-0 vote.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS, NON-AGENDA (Public Comment)

Marc Lambert mentioned that he didn't see anything in the August meeting's draft minutes about moving collections from the branches to the Main as part of the neighborhood library improvement process. Director Chisaki responded that weeding the branch collections has been going on for some time, and didn't feel it was necessary to mention in the minutes. Lambert inquired about the Bechtel grant, but Chisaki had nothing new to report on the subject. Lambert wondered how the Animal Shelter kiosk in the Main Library's lobby was doing. Chisaki said there have been over 1,000 hits a month, but didn't know if adoptions had increased as a result. Per a request from Member Butter, Chisaki will contact the Police Department to see if they have any correlating data.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Neighborhood Library Improvement Projects (J. Chisaki)

Director Chisaki met with the Public Works Director on project management details; caps will be set on how much is spent on each item. $60,000 is set aside for permits, etc., which leaves approximately $2 million intact for the actual work. It was decided there would be no formal MOU between Public Works and the Library, as they are both general fund departments. The last few tweaks are being put on the RFP which will be released soon. Project manager Laurie Kozisek, City Engineer Barbara Hawkins, and possibly Bob Haun of the Housing Authority will participate in the screening and selection process. A committee will be formed to oversee progress, with Member Wetzork as the Chair/Library Board liaison. Chisaki ran through a list of the people and organizations that would be involved, and because it came up as an even number, suggested a second board member for the committee. Vice President Hartigan said he would be amenable to sitting on the Committee if they found a need for another member.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Art Exhibit Committee (R. Belikove)

The committee had met the previous afternoon and all members showed. They continue to find new exhibits so the calendar going forward is filling up. The next showing will be children's art from the Monart School, followed by an individual exhibit by the school's Director, Aliea Wallace. The committee would like to see some diversity in the displays, so they got a list of artists from The Frank Bette Center, and will call around to get an idea of what types of artwork are available. The committee has spoken with the Alameda Museum, and may get presenters who can talk about the history of Alameda as well.

B. Alameda Free Library Foundation (A. Mitchell)

The Foundation continues to work hard on the upcoming Michael Pollan event that will be held on October 19 at Auctions by the Bay on Alameda Point. There were no other Foundation activities to report on at this time.

C. Friends of the Alameda Free Library (M. Lambert)

Marc Lambert had the most recent copy of the Friends newsletter and drew attention to a picture taken at the End of Summer Reading Program Ceremony which featured several Library Board members. The By-Law and Budget Committees have finally been convened, and they met with the Friends' President on August 21st.

D. Patron suggestions/comments (Speak-Outs) and Library Director's response.

A patron requested that the "My Space" website be blocked, because teens use it to chat and it distracts others who are trying to study. The Library is indeed a place to study, learn and read, but it is also a place to attend programs, community events, and maybe have a cup of coffee in our Café, making this a popular community meeting place. There are other sites very similar to "My Space" that would have to be blocked as well, and these are used by teens and adults alike. Blocking these sites would make many of the Library's other customers very unhappy.

LIBRARY BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

President Belikove had listened to Michael Krasny's August 26 report on the future of libraries and found it very interesting and informative. One of the items touched on corporate participation to help fund and support Library programs, and Belikove thought this might be something to explore. Vice President Hartigan thought this was a very good, out-of-the-box idea, although it might be a huge administrative deal to manage. It was suggested that this venture may be better pursued by the Foundation, as Library staff is stretched very thin already. Gaming, such as what we now have, was another item mentioned in the report that had positive effects on bringing people to the Library.

Belikove advised the Board that Yom Kippur starts on October 8 at sundown, and by coincidence is the night of the next Board meeting. Belikove would like to attend, and with the sun going down earlier now, polled the Board about the possibility of an earlier start time for the meeting. The other Board members indicated this would not be possible, so would instead try to keep the meeting on track and have it end by 7:00. If Belikove has to leave before the meeting adjourns, Vice President Hartigan will take over in her place.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

It's once again time for ethics training. Letters will go out to all board members with details on how to complete this mandatory instruction on-line. The training will take a minimum of two hours at the end of which a completion certificate will be produced. These certificates all need to be turned in to the Library Administration Office for forwarding en masse to the City Clerk. If anyone needs help completing the on-line program, someone will be available in the Library Computer Lab to assist them.

Director Chisaki went on to talk a little about the State's and City's budget. The proposed State Republican budget plan included suspending funding for literacy programs. Fortunately, that plan was voted down. Walk-A-Mile for Literacy is coming up on Saturday, and it is doubly important now to participate or give a donation with the potential budget cuts to the program coming down the road.

The Library has received grant award letters for "On-Line Homework Help" through Tutor.com and also for "Digital Story-Telling", but no money will be forthcoming until the State's budget passes.

The Library/City budget is looking very grim. The Real Property Transfer Tax (Measure P) would benefit the Library if it passes, but it doesn't have a champion at this point and employees of the City/Library can't lobby for it. Member Butter indicated that the League of Women Voters just came out in favor of the measure, however, and it will be listed on their website urging people to vote yes. The City is putting together a factual presentation to show people where their City dollars are spent. It must be factual and non-partisan.

The acting Finance Director was brought in to be a change agent, and is keeping everyone within their budget lines. The Library has been asked to come up with a plan for an additional 5% cut, so a variety of scenarios are being prepared, including completely eliminating one of the Main's regular open days or totally closing one of the branches.

Director Chisaki went on to speak about Veicon, who is the vendor that manages our thin client (public computers) and print system. There have been numerous problems for which Veicon has been given deadlines to make fixes on, but they have not successfully responded to all issues. The City Attorney has been involved with all of this, so is well aware of what is going on; it is very likely that we will discontinue service through Veicon. Talks are already underway with Envisionware who manages the Computer Lab equipment; they will do an install for us but don't manage thin client systems, so David Boxton will take over the administration of this piece. Chisaki will keep the Board updated as things move forward with the vendor change.

On the upside of things, the Library is very popular. Storytimes have reconvened and the children are glad to be back after summer break. There have not been any incidents as yet with the students, which is always a good thing. Ideas are being formulated for our next Community Reads program. This year's program will have a mystery theme. The Foundation will be asked to help fund this series.

Per a request from Member Butter, Chisaki talked a little about the gift from the Shrader Family Trust. The Shrader's lived in Alameda a long time ago, moving to Berkeley in the late '70s. The lawyer didn't have much information about the Shrader's and urged Chisaki to get in touch with the trustees. Chisaki is waiting for a call back at this point. The money has been deposited into the Memorial Fund; Chisaki would like to buy a new TeleCirc system that will cost approximately $12,000 with part of it.

ADJOURNMENT

President Belikove asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Member Mitchell so moved; Vice President Hartigan seconded the motion which carried by a 5-0 vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Chisaki

Jane Chisaki, Library Director and
Secretary to the Library Board