

Friends of the Fresno County Public Library
Board Meeting Minutes
February 24, 2025
Zoom

MINUTES

PRESENT: Nancy Kast, Becky Brown, Nick Andrade, Shannon Wise, Rosa Huerta, Mark Kalchik, Jim Poptanich, Vicki Love, Brian Baker

REGRETS: Dan Dunklee, Butch Dies

ALSO PRESENT: Terry Eckman, Susan Renfro, Sally Gomez, Mark Halvorsen, Brooke Payton

1. CALL TO ORDER/OPENING REMARKS

- The meeting was called to order at 7:01 by President Shannon Wise.

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF REGRETS AND EXCUSED ABSENCES

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM JANUARY 2025 MEETING

- **Motion by:** Jim Poptanich
- **Seconded by:** Brian Baker
- **Abstentions:** Jim Poptanich, Nick Andrade, Mark Kalchik
- **Carried**

4. COUNTY LIBRARIAN'S REPORT – SALLY GOMEZ

- There is currently nothing new to report about the Clovis and Reedley building projects.
- February 11 was the first all-staff in-person meeting since before the pandemic. Others had been planned, but all had to be cancelled for one reason or another. Penny Hill was recognized for her over fifty years of service with the Fresno County Public Library.

5. DEPUTY COUNTY LIBRARIAN'S REPORT – TERRY ECKMAN

- Politi's new space is still in the design phase. The County is working with the building's ownership group, but it's been slow going so far.
- There have been no delays or problems with the Sanger remodel so far, so it should be on track to reopen by May 1. In addition to the HVAC renovation, there will be upgrades to the doors.
- Nancy Kast asked if the alarm code issue at Sunnyside has been rectified. Terry said he didn't think so, but would look into it.
- Jim Poptanich mentioned that Fig Garden FOL will be meeting with their new librarians for the first time in March.

6. LIBRARY ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF REPORT – SUSAN RENFRO

- Susan will be attending more FOL meetings this year, often alongside Shannon Wise.
- Shannon Wise asked about the t-shirt project we had started several months ago, given that Amy Johnson has retired and had been working on the design. Susan

will look into the status of the project and noted that Sunnyside is getting new shirts for their branch's anniversary.

7. LIBRARY ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF REPORT – MARK HALVORSEN

- The 2025 Poetry Contest, as in years prior, will have four categories: 3rd-5th grade, 6th-8th grade, high school, and adult.
- This is the program's 26th year. Last year, there were 210 submissions, and numbers seem to be rising, but the peak was during COVID. Susan Renfro offered to look into what the numbers have been like annually.
- Submissions will be open April 1-30 and all poems will be posted online for the public to read.
- The awards ceremony will be held on June 8 and all winners will be selected by local poets. The Library is requesting \$1400 in gift cards for prizes: \$700 for 3rd-8th and \$700 for 9th-adult.
- Shannon Wise asked about blog traffic for the contest's website. Mark Halvorsen and Susan Renfro said they would look into the statistics. Vicki Love asked if anyone reaches out to the local schools about participating, given the low number of entries.
- Jim Poptanich suggested that it isn't worth FOL's money if 17% of all entrants win a prize.
- It was agreed that there are lots of opportunities for more community engagement. Becky Brown suggested reaching out to Fresno State, and Rosa Huerta suggested contacting local newspapers, blogs, and community calendars. Susan Renfro will look into getting press releases to the schools better, since they will have to go through the Superintendent of Fresno Unified School District. Brooke Payton suggested reaching out to the Fresno Arts Council, given that Fresno is a City of Literature.
 - **Motion:** Jim Poptanich moved to approve the purchase of \$1400 in gift cards for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners in all four categories.
 - **Seconded by:** Rosa Huerta
 - **Carried.**

8. NEW BUSINESS

- Warehouse work day: April 15 from 9 AM to 12 PM at Derrel's Mini Storage at 4660 E Dakota. This is in advance of Independent Bookstore Day, which is on April 26. We'd like to have 30 volunteers or so and will reach out to Provost and Pritchard, who were our last volunteers at the warehouse.
- Branch Council gatherings
 - March 29, June 21, September 27
- Dolly Parton's Imagination Library: Brian Baker reported that the program has officially launched and is now accepting applicants at lfcfresno.org.

9. BOARD REPORTS

- **INTERIM PRESIDENT SHANNON WISE**
 - Annual Meeting: Saturday, March 15 at 9:30 AM. Board members should arrive around 9 to help set up the room and greet members.

- **VICE PRESIDENT, MEMBERSHIP AND NOMINATING – BECKY BROWN**
 - A friend of Becky's is looking to open a new black box theater Downtown with a café and potential FOL bookshop annex, which we could also use for Measure B meetings.
- **TREASURER—NICK ANDRADE**
 - Nick presented the December reports, which are not yet finalized for the year. The organization is in a strong cash position. Q4 Central Valley Community Foundation reports were not yet available at the time of this report. The legal fees noted in the report are due to the fact that we've engaged a nonprofit attorney to help with the bylaws.
 - We will be working on meeting with the accountant to discuss timing and expectations going forward. There have been some issues with reports and reimbursements being timely, and we are working on ways to solve these issues.
 - Susan Renfro asked about the workflow regarding things like Clovis FOL and their intended projects for the new building. Nick suggested that branch officers at least check in with the Executive Team before moving forward on any big, costly projects. Nancy Kast suggested that a funding agreement and check request happen concurrently so that both can be used, along with meeting minutes, to ask the Central Valley Community Foundation to move any funds necessary out of the investment account.
 - Given that the Clovis Friends are especially interested in installing a large fish tank, Brooke Payton suggested checking out the Hanford Library's setup.

10. OLD BUSINESS

- Revised bylaws are online and ready to be printed on the Annual Meeting invitations.
- Bookshop update:
 - The shop made something like \$33k in 2024.
 - April 26 is Independent Bookstore Day and we'll have special hours due to our inclusion on the Fresno Independent Bookstore Passport. Becky Brown and Shannon Wise volunteered to work.
- Brooke Payton asked if a person in charge of Real Property has been hired at the County. Terry Eckman said not yet.
- Brooke Payton asked if the Friends would provide a letter of support for the Tower District Library project. Jim Poptanich asked what the precedent was and Nancy Kast answered that as far as she knows, the organization has never made a statement in the past. It was agreed that we would table the conversation for a later meeting.
- **NEXT MEETING: Monday, March 24 at 7 PM at Fig Garden.**

11. ADJOURNMENT

- **Motion by:** Jim Poptanich
- **Seconded by:** Brian Baker
- **Carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:28 PM.**

Submitted by Sam Retton, Executive Assistant.