

MINUTES

On August 14, 2023, the AMARILLO LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD met at 4:00 p.m. for a regular meeting at the East Branch Library, 2232 E 27TH, Amarillo, Texas.

VOTING MEMBERS	PRESENT	NO. MEETINGS HELD SINCE APPOINTMENT	NO. OF MEETINGS ATTENDED
Shawn Read, Chair	YES	18	17
Howard Rodriguez-Mori, Vice-Chair	YES	13	13
Lillian C Withrow	YES	10	10
John Esler	YES	8	6
Christy Gagnon	YES	8	8

Also in attendance:

Amanda Barrera
Cynthia Hunt
Jacob Workman
Silvia Shaver

DIRECTOR OF LIBRARY SERVICES, CITY OF AMARILLO
PROGRAMMING SPECIALIST, CITY OF AMARILLO
EAST BRANCH LIBRARIAN, CITY OF AMARILLO
LIBRARY SECRETARY, CITY OF AMARILLO

1. Call to Order and Introductions. Mr. Shawn Read, Chair, established a quorum and called the regular scheduled meeting of the AMARILLO LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD to order at 4:03 p.m.
2. Public forum. None
3. Approval of Minutes. Mr. Shawn Read, Chair, considered approval of the Minutes for the Regular Meeting held on JUNE 12, 2023. Motion was made by Ms. Lil Withrow, seconded by Mr. Howard Rodriguez-Mori, and unanimously carried to approve such minutes as written.

4. Presentation and Discussion by the Director of Library Services on Current Departmental Issues and Activities.

- A. FY 2023-2024 Library Budget: Mrs. Amanda Barrera stated that the new City Council is in the process of reviewing departmental budget ahead of the next Fiscal Year, which will start October 1st. Amanda presented three options at the first budget review's session that she had with the Mayor and the City Council on July 27th. After Amanda's presentation Mayor Cole Stanley asked what programs would have to be eliminated if a 25% reduction in force was implemented, and Amanda was tasked to bring those projections to a follow-up meeting. Currently, APL employs 77 employees across our five locations, so a 25% reduction would mean about 19 staff members. While some of that can be accounted for with vacancies we have currently, it would mean 11 layoffs of current staff. Service to the public would be impacted negatively in several ways, including the library not being able to provide programs on Saturdays and evenings, no longer being able to help people coming in for assistance with Citizenship and Naturalization paperwork, and an inability to continue partnering with local schools for educational outreach activities like The Battle of the Books. Also, the four branches would have to close on alternating Sundays.

Public comments started flooding in from the community to protest that course of action, and to express appreciation of what the library offers. Additionally, four individuals came to speak during the public forum at the City Council meeting on August 1st. As a result of this feedback, Amanda was asked to modify her proposal scheduled for August 9, with the following result: a decrease of 4.5 full time equivalents, which will translate to 3 full time and 3 part time positions.

The schedule for all five libraries would be unified. Monday-Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 7:30 p.m., Friday and Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and Sundays 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. That would be 64 hours per week at all five locations. Service hours would be increased at East, North and Northwest by 6 hours, but it would mean a decrease of the same number of hours for Downtown and Southwest. We do have a requirement from the Texas Library and Archives Commission to be open at least 64 unduplicated hours each week.

The new proposal reduces the library's budget for FY 2023-2024 from \$4.2 million down to \$4.0 million.

- B. Friends of the Library: Mrs. Amanda Barrera informed the Board that AMA-CON took place August 5-6. Attendees this year were able to take part in fun activities. They were able to snap selfies in front of the customized Ninja Turtle Van provided by Jason Ybarra; visit with authors J.M. Lee, Vivian Shaw, and Arkady Martine; and learn K-Pop dances from David Yi from Dallas. We had a voiceover artist, Chris Jai Alex, who came and spoke about his industry, and we had Cosplay special guests Philip Odango and Nikachu. We received several compliments from vendors and special guests on how organized and well-run the convention is.

The next Book Sale will take place September 8-10.

- C. Programming and events at all APL locations: AMARILLO READS in the Summer was a great success this year. We had over 3,100 patrons of all ages registering to participate. APL staff offered 64 programs to the public with 1,882 people attending in total. To break that down, we had 41 youth programs that were presented to 1,255 patrons, 9 teen programs that were presented to 90 patrons, and 14 adult programs that were presented to 248 patrons.

- D. Downtown Library Mural update: Mrs. Amanda Barrera shared that the Mural Committee met on July 18 and selected six designs that were submitted to the contest, which the Committee arranged into three groupings. Voting ends today, and once the winning designs are selected, the team at Blank Spaces will work with the winning artists to adapt the designs into a cohesive triptych; then once that concept is approved through City Hall the Mural will be installed at Downtown Library during the month of September. Then it would be officially entered into the roster of public murals in the Downtown area at the Hoodoo Festival at the end of September.

- E. *Stories of Exile* program series – Cynthia Hunt, Program Specialist told the Board that *Stories of Exile* Reading Groups for Public Libraries 2023 is a program created by the Yiddish Book Center, and Amarillo Public Library is one of only 29 libraries in the U.S. selected to participate in this project.

Stories of Exile is a reading and discussion program to engage teens and adults in thinking about experiences of displacement, migration, and diaspora. Using Yiddish literature as a portal, *Stories of Exile* features works that explore narratives of homelands, journeys, identity, and belonging. Four titles were selected, and they will be available for checkout through APL. Cynthia Hunt said that Amarillo's book discussion group will be led by her, and she also will lead a virtual discussion group offering CE credit to Region 16 educators. *Stories of Exile* will take place from September to December, with the book discussion group meeting on selected Thursdays at the Downtown Library.

Cynthia Hunt also reported that now APL patrons have access to Books Matter—children's and young adult literature by the ADL - Anti-Defamation League that recommends books about bias, bullying, diversity and social justice. Some of these are monthly featured books; each featured book comes with two discussion guides—one for teachers and one for parents and families. Cynthia Hunt applied for a grant to purchase 5 copies of each featured book. The Texas Holocaust, Genocide, and Antisemitism Advisory Commission (THGAAC) will donate \$5,000.00 and the Friends of the Library will donate \$5,000.00 toward the purchase of ADL Books Matter.

- F. Texas cloudlink: Amanda was pleased to share that at their quarterly meeting on July 17th the Coordinating Committee of the Texas cloudlink voted to accept the Harrington Library Consortium's application to join the group. All the libraries across the Panhandle will be getting access to over 200,000 additional e-book and downloadable audio book titles. We will be joining Balch Springs and Roanoke as the newest members, and prior to our inclusion 66 libraries throughout the state of Texas were members of Texas cloudlink. Our membership will go live between mid-September and the first of October.

- G. East Branch Activities: Mr. Jacob Workman mentioned that the Summer Reading programs were fantastic at East Branch. Jacob informed the Board that ESL classes will start in September, and will take place on Mondays and Tuesdays from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

5. Discuss Items for Future Agendas. Presentation of the Amarillo Public Library's Organizational Chart.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:16 p.m. This meeting was recorded, and all comments are on file with the City Library Department.

ATTEST:



Amanda Barrera, Director of Library Services



Shawn Read