

Citizen's Review Panel  
February 22, 2006

Members present: Robert Speechly, Victor Chavez, Mike Wyrick  
Members absent: Jan Kafton, Deborah Ikeda, Martha Rodriguez, Sallie Mook  
Others present: Karen Bosch Cobb, Wendy Eisenberg, Elida Mendoza

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Wyrick at 6:16 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 6:15.

2. Introductions: Introductions were held.
3. Roster Update and update on committee membership: Ken Moore's appointment is pending in District 1. Applications have been sent to Jose Barraza who asked to serve on the committee as a representative of District 3, and to Rico Aguayo who expressed interest in representing District 4. Victor Chavez & Martha Rodriguez will fill out new applications for reappointment. Karen was asked to be notified if anyone had suggestions for new members.
4. Adoption of Agenda: The agenda was adopted without change.
5. Approval of Minutes: The minutes of October 26, 2005 were approved as submitted.
6. Facilities Support Survey Update: The Library has selected the Godbe company to do a public opinion survey to determine public support for library projects. Godbe specializes in libraries, and they were one of 4 firms interviewed. Karen said Godbe is the same firm that did the first Measure B survey, and they were right on target with that survey.

A meeting was held with them to develop a list of 15 to 18 questions. The goal is to try to find out what people want. Do they want a branch built, or will they support a main library, or both.? Another area of the survey will be to determine if people are willing to pay additional taxes for a library. Brian Godbe feels that sales taxes seem to do pretty well in this area.

The survey will be conducted via phone to 800 to 1000 people sometime in March. A report will be presented to the Board of Supervisors. The Central Library Citizen's Committee is very interested in this survey. Other questions may include: Age category? Do you use the library? Are you willing to pay for parking? How long will you support a tax, 8 yrs, 10 yrs, etc.?

There is a general consensus that there is a mood for a new central library downtown.

- 7) Presentation from Wendy Eisenberg, Librarian, Talking Book Library

Wendy gave an overview of the services provided by the Talking Book Library (TBL) . She has worked at the TBL for 7 years, and has been with the library a little over 10 years. The TBL is part of a nationwide program begun in 1931 to provide reading materials to blind, visually impaired and physically disabled people. This program has been going on for 75 years. Reading materials are mailed at no cost. Fresno County Library has had a TBL branch since 1975.

The goal of the TBL is to bring reading to people who because of a visual or physical disability are not able to read standard printed books. The TBL has over 61,000 books available, and they continue to get more. Books are available in all genres, popular authors, and best sellers.

Getting enrolled as a TBL patron involves completing an application for service. The patron has to indicate how he/she qualifies for the program and what kinds of books they want. The application must be signed by someone who can verify the information, a medical provider, etc. The TBL serves slightly over 1,600 patrons in the counties of Fresno, Kings, Tulare, and Madera.

The Library of Congress Talking Book program catalog is mailed to patrons on a bimonthly basis in large print or cassette format and is also searchable online. Patrons can have a standing order for books, and they can also phone or email orders.

The books are specially produced by the Library of Congress. They are not commercial audio books. The Library of Congress hires people to narrate the books which are unabridged, cover to cover. The cassettes are not the standard cassettes. They are recorded at a different speed, and they do not work on regular recorder. Wendy demonstrated the reader with a copy of *The Story of My Life* by Helen Keller. The machine and tapes are provided by the Library of Congress.

Wendy praised her staff. They send out from 200 to 500 books per day. Most patrons have about 20 books out at a time. Before Measure B was approved, the staff consisted of Wendy and a Sr. Library Assistant, Ivy Bennett. The passage of Measure B allowed the addition of two full time Library Assistants, a part time Library Aide, plus 1.5 more hours open per day. TBL also has very dedicated volunteers. The Telecom volunteers are retired from the telephone company. They repair machines.

The shelf life of the tapes depends on how much they are used. The books are mailed in a case. There are some correctional facility inmates that qualify for TBL services.

There was some discussion about outreach, and diabetes clinics were suggested as a good place to distribute information.

The regional library in Sacramento can also provide books to TBL patrons which are no longer in the TBLB collection. Braille books are not available at the TBL. They are available from Sacramento.

There are over 40 cassette and Braille magazines available to patrons by free subscription.

TBL services are even available to U.S. citizens living abroad.

Wendy concluded her presentation by handing out brochures. She asked people to test their library branch to see if they have applications for TBL services. She said that not every library has a service center like Fresno des. Some prefer to have regional libraries. Fresno's TBL is a subregional.

Wendy said she is willing to go out and give presentations whenever possible.

The group thanked her for a great presentation.

9) Planning for next meeting

Tentative: June 7, 6 p.m. Location: Central Library 6 pm

Topics: a) Budget update; b) Facilities update

On June 6 there will be a library bond measure on the ballot.

Karen will bring information about the Godbe survey.

Steve Nitta will draft a letter to the BOS for the chairman by the next meeting.

10) Adjourn