

Minutes — Sonoma County Library — Healdsburg Library Advisory Board
Wednesday, September 13, 2023, 5:30 PM

1. Call to Order & Introductions. The meeting was called to order at 5:30. Present at the meeting were Healdsburg LAB Chair Becky Simons; LAB Members Paul Grill and Margaret McPeake; Ron Edwards, Healdsburg City Councilmember; Tracy Logan, President, Friends of the Healdsburg Library; Andy Elkind, Healdsburg Library Commissioner; Sarah Vantrease, SCL Public Services Division Manager; and Healdsburg Library Branch Manager Jon Haupt.

2. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting. The minutes were approved.

3. Public Appearances. There were no public appearances.

4. Discussion Items

4.1 Library Refresh Update. The new lease has been completed with the City of Healdsburg. Andy offered thanks to Library staff and City personnel including City Manager Jeff Kay and special thanks to Andrew Sturfels, Assistant City Manager, for shepherding this lease through to completion. A lease had not been completed since 2006.

The lease features typical arrangements and includes a very reasonable plan for navigating major repairs; the City and the Library will work together and see what can be worked out when such situations arise. This was part of an overall plan to revise and send a standard lease to municipalities whenever the lease comes up. The terms and conditions of our lease are comparable to other municipalities. Having this lease was imperative at this point since the City applied for a grant for the library building that would require the lease to be in place.

Work continues with refresh planning, with major items already wrapped up and at this point, our communications with Noll & Tam have mostly been about minor questions such as colors and minor differences in furniture sizes. Everyone is awaiting the answer on the grant proposal from California State Library and then work may begin and the timeline may be set.

5. Reports

5.1 Library Director's Report. September is Library Card Sign-Up Month, and a campaign was started including a new map of Sonoma County created by our Graphics Department. The map features all of the library locations throughout the county; you can get a sticker from each location you visit, including if you hop on the BiblioBus. This welcome brochure map will spread the word about our locations and services. We are in the midst of a fun celebration for Latin American Roots, featuring an array of programming across all branches. Now that we have a librarian hired to coordinate it, new efforts for our BiblioBus include moving away from single one-off events, by and large, to regular stops in communities with no library. For example, Geyserville will have a regular visit. The BiblioBus schedule online lists all regular stops.

SCL has hired a new Deputy Director, Dara Bradds. There is a search underway for a new Community Engagement Division Manager who will lead our new division, with a goal to support all the outward-facing initiatives of the library.

5.2 Commissioner's Report. Financial controls continue to improve under SCL CFO Myrna Lopez. Erika has released a preliminary summary of responses to the poll around the sales tax by Godbey Research. This poll was set to assess the current “temperature” of how people feel about the library and a potential tax renewal measure in 2024. Many were pleasantly surprised to see that the library has good support at this time, in general. Somewhere in the range of 55–60% “definitely support” the measure, 20–30% “probably support.” That indicates we’re starting from a good base of support. Over the next year, all affiliates will need to get out and talk to people about what we’re doing. As part of that, the library is undertaking an outreach effort to bring people in who don’t have library cards. In all, the Godbey poll received 800–900 responses. It will be important to stress that the measure will not be a tax increase; it is only a tax renewal, continuing what the library currently has.

5.3 Branch Manager's Report. Jon noted how well things have gone bringing Lara on as our Teen Librarian since Fall 2022; in previous years, staff would be excited if 6 or 7 teens appeared at an event; our current Wednesday teen events bring in between 20–30. Although we noticed an uptick in attendance of teens at the library prior to her arrival, the popularity and success of these events is in large part due to Lara’s expertise and dedication to the community.

We continue to bring the BiblioBike around town, with Donna at the Farmer’s Market monthly in the Summer and Charity bringing it to Storytime in the Park. This Fall we will be heading to the Community Center for a special labor force workers resource fair and to Día de Muertos. We are also reviewing the possibility of bringing the bike to other locations around town, in low-key pop-up style events. Those events will offer the chance to see the bike, engage with library staff, and pick up a book. We expect to be using the BiblioBike extensively when the building is closed.

5.4 Friends' Reports. Tracy offered a report on behalf of the Friends of the Healdsburg Library. FOHL has stopped accepting book/CD/DVD donations for the time being, at least until after the upcoming book sale in November. The Friends will be spending a lot of time figuring out what they will be doing during the Refresh time, since they will not be accepting donations nor holding book sales.

5.5 City Council Liaison Report. Councilmember Ron offered a report on behalf of the City Council. The City of Healdsburg is working on the naming of the park on the north end of town. At the next Council meeting, the hotel project will be on the agenda—the proposed hotel near John & Zeke’s. There is a lot of controversy around it, and also lots of community involvement in the decision. The “bubble bar” has gotten a lot of attention, including 130 comments on Facebook. Interestingly, many people comment on Facebook with their opinions about the topics, but no one came to the Planning Commission to comment.

6. Other items. There were no other items.

7. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 6.29.

Upcoming Meetings. Wednesday, December 13 at 5:30 p.m.