

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Sebastopol Library Advisory Board

August 15, 2023, 4:30 p.m.

Location: Sebastopol Library 7140 Bodega Avenue, Sebastopol 95472

Attendees: Kee Nethery, Walt Frazer, Mary Shiff, Tong Ginn, Dena Bliss, Helena Whistler, Una Hall, Fred Engbarth (Commissioner), Sue Fujita (Friends of Sebastopol Library), Stephen Zollman (City Council Liaison), Erika Thibault (Library Administration), Jaime Anderson (Library Administration), Debaroh Doyle (Commissioner)

1. Kee Nethery called to the meeting to order at 4:31 pm
2. Introductions were made.
3. Agenda was approved.
4. Minutes from 8/9/23 Special LAB Meeting: Several minor edits were suggested. Walt made a note of these – the two main edits were to change the word “advised” to “suggested” and to change Beale comment about “advocating for the library has been a struggle for Rose” to clarify this was a struggle due to “administrative reluctance.” Minutes approved with the modifications.
5. Announcements: None.
6. Public Comment on non-agendized items. Public comment is limited to three (3) minutes per topic, unless otherwise noted: None.
7. Discussion Items:
 - a. Draft Letter re: Sebastopol Branch Manager

Dena – the letter should be directed not just to the Commission, but also to Erika

Una – I wasn't at the last meeting when the letter was first discussed, but I agree the response from administration was disproportionate to the alleged infractions. Met with Mathew privately to hear more about what happened. The secrecy has led to people's imaginations running wild. Mathew's reputation has been harmed due to the lack of transparency. The letter doesn't seem to have an ending. Need to add a closing such as “Sincerely” and sign the letter

Mary – there are 4 times where the letter doesn't use proper tense.

Grammatical corrections were noted by Walt

Dena – let's sign the letter from the entire LAB

Fred – if the LAB approves the letter today, the LAB Chair should sign it on behalf of the group. Do we want to open up the letter as a topic of discussion for any non-LAB members present today?

Erika – Thank you for inviting me to attend today. I can speak to the disciplinary process we have agreed to follow as part of our collective bargaining MOU, but I won't be able to speak to this specific personnel matter you're discussing

Sue – (addressing Erika) is it normal for an employee to come to work one morning and by the end of the day be told to leave?

Erika – it depends on the severity of what has happened. Sometimes for an egregious case, yes. Sometimes if the library needs to immediately begin an investigation or needs to put an immediate stop to actions that are continuing or it anticipates will continue, yes.

Sue/Una – it was a really horrific day when this happened to Mathew. Because he was told to leave so abruptly with no explanation, we all assumed the worst, like he may have committed a felony. We later learned that some of what he has been accused of goes back many years.

Erika – we follow the timeline outlined in our MOU. Disciplinary matters have to be handled in a timely fashion and if we're unable to keep with those timelines, we request an extension with the union

Sue – please only do this kind of abrupt action in the future in the most egregious of situations (such as a crime)

Helena – from my time as a previous Commissioner, I recall annual staff evaluations were not always done in a timely fashion. When I worked at the County, supervisors were required to complete evaluations on time and this was enforced. Previous SCL HR Mgr Patrick Preston used to track this and share at the monthly Commission meetings stats about how many evaluations were being completed on time vs overdue. Can we do this again? I'm not asking for names, just a percentage of completion rate

Erika – we can look into this and talk about it. I'm not sure of our current completion rate. I would need to check with HR

Una – if the alleged infractions were serious enough, they should be included in the employee's evaluation the year they occurred. Otherwise, anything older than that should not be included

Tong – was Mathew getting annual evaluations on time? Was he being notified of deficiencies? Is there a statute of limitations? Who is Mathew's direct supervisor? Has this person completed a current evaluation?

Erika – Barbara Maes is his supervisor. Staff are evaluated for the specific 12mos of the evaluation period, not further back

Una – was progressive discipline follows here? Was Mathew told ahead of time he needed to improve in certain areas?

Erika – I can't comment on that

Fred – the MOU lays out the progressive discipline procedure the library follows

Erika – in this case, because it's going to arbitration, the arbitrator will decide

if the discipline imposed was appropriate

Tong – is Mathew allowed representation in the arbitration process?

Erika – yes, the union will represent him

Group consensus to add LAB members' individual names who were present at today's meeting to the bottom of the letter + "Jennifer" (?) who was not at the meeting but expressed support for the letter via email. Walt will finalize the document with the changes discussed. All voted in favor of the letter with modifications discussed.

8. Agenda Items for Next Meeting: September 27, 2023, 4:30 pm at Sebastopol Library, 7140 Bodega Avenue, Sebastopol, CA 95472
 - a. Elections
 - b. Cameras
 - c. Election of Officers
9. Additional Public Comment: None
10. Adjourn: 5:06 pm

Minutes taken by Jaime Anderson