

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE
COALINGA-HURON LIBRARY DISTRICT
Tuesday June 11, 2024, 5:30 p.m.
Coalinga Library – Program Room**

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Mr. Crawford, President; Mr. Chavez, Vice-President; Mr. Campbell Clerk; Mrs. Culbertson, Trustee

TRUSTEES ABSENT: Mr. Diaz, Trustee

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Ms. Mary Leal, Director of Library Services; Ms. Jacqueline Collings, Administrative Assistant

I. OPEN SESSION/CALL TO ORDER

Call to Order: President Mr. Crawford called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

Roll Call: Board members present: Lisa Culbertson, Francisco Chavez, Roger Campbell, and Tom Crawford

Pledge of Allegiance: Pledge of Allegiance lead by Mr. Crawford.

Approval of Agenda: Mr. Chavez moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mrs. Culbertson. Motion carried unanimously.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

- C-1 Approval of May 2024 checks 18257 thru 18292 in the amount of \$113,267.63 of which payroll was \$54,467.63.
- C-2 Approval of minutes for Board Meeting held on May 14, 2024.
- C-3 Approval of minutes for Special Meeting held on May 21, 2024.
- C-4 Approval of 2024-2025 Board Meeting Schedule.
- C-5 Approval of Volunteer List for CHLD.

Mr. Crawford asked for a motion to approve. Mr. Chavez moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Mr. Campbell. Motion carried unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Vosburg: Coalinga Huron Library Board,
Today I am speaking to you as a library staff member, and a taxpayer.

I wanted to express my concerns for moving forward with the construction project because I feel that the staff has been historically underpaid, resources have been stretched thin, and our patrons suffer due to lack of funding for programs and services offered at the library.

Library staff has historically been underpaid at the Coalinga and Huron Library compared to other agencies and other library districts. In Coalinga at the school district there are two positions that mimic positions that we have here at the library, require limited education, and pay for more than our library does. It has been stated that if we want to make that kind of money, we should work for the school district. For instance, An Information Technology Analyst 2 at the library tops out at \$51,9k per year while the lower position of Information Technology 1 tops out at \$66,9 at the school district. The Technology 2 position, the same position that I have here tops out at \$88,732 at the school district.

The library staff members at our district barely make minimum wage, while the same or similar position at the school district makes \$58,194 at the school district. A library technician at the school makes more than I do. None of these positions require more than a few years' experience and a HS diploma.

It has been falsely stated that we do not have a reliable funding source as other agencies.

I disagree because Measure B funding is more than adequate to pay library staff a decent living wage. Measure B is not a savings account as previously stated to the board.

This is a decision, not a fact. Fresno Library currently pays 325 well paid positions out of Measure B monies.

According to the 23-24 budget the library carried over 2.4 million dollars, and in the May 14th, 2024, proposed budget for 24-25 the library is expected to carry over another 1.2 million taking the Measure B fund to around \$3.6 million was asked to be spent on new construction.

All the while the staff is sitting on chairs that were purchased from the thrift store, staff members are forced to share rooms when on training, sometimes with 4 females sharing a room with 1 bathroom and no personal space, and the staff and public don't have access to filtered water like the school, and park and rec do.

Instead of funding a project for a program room, we should be putting solar on the roof to combat the insane electric bills that could have a positive cash flow effect on the library.

We could replace the roof, more of the indoor piping, add in filtered water stations, part-time staff for Coalinga and Huron, increase our collections, programs like summer reading, replace staff chairs, increase our training budget, and pay our staff and our director a living wage.

I want to know who gave the authority to save the Measure B money for projects, rather than to spend it on the top items in the priority list. I looked at the board minutes dating back to 2020 and cannot find any resolution from the board to save this money.

I want to make you aware, there was a recent grand jury report that scrutinized how the money was spent at the Fresno County Library pertaining to Measure B money citing lack of administrative oversight from the boards and an investigation into how public funds from Measure B are being used.

Measure B has grown from 451k in 22 to 648k in 23, that is an increase of 43.6% , estimated property tax revenue according to the budgets you have approved when revenue has increased from 602k in 23-24 and is expected to increase to 750k 24-25 at a 24.5% increase, and it was stated at Dec 2023 board meeting that Measure B money is not being used to survive on.

If I was the board, I would like to see a budget that shows current revenues and expenses, and then actual amounts spent from the previous years all on one page so you can see the percentage increases and decreases of actual numbers, this would allow you to make good decisions.

According to Henderson at the April 19th, 2022, meeting our revenue received was 385k above the estimated revenue in the budget, and our expenses were below budget by almost 200k. Thats 585k that was over budgeted.

We have the money to pay staff decent wages, do the required maintenance, increase programming and materials, outreach to the public, and let us make you all look good.

We cannot do that while we are taking all the money meant for those things and storing it as a savings account for future projects. In fact, by doing that we are losing purchasing power of the money as prices are going up at massive rates according to inflation and CPI rates.

We are not asking to be paid like millionaires, but people at Mc Donald's making more than library staff members is ridiculous.

Minimum wage increased from 2020 to 2024 from 12 per hour to 16 per hour that is a 33% increase, and if you factor in fast food wages at 20 per hour that is a 66% increase. Our Library specialists since 2020 have received 5.5% which is not even near inflation or CPI.

This led to major wage compression between Library Staff and Specialists positions. Our last raise starting in 2020 to 2024 didn't even come close to inflation that was around 21% not to mention inflation moving forward.

In July of 2021 when the current contract took effect, the salary difference between the Library Staff and Specialist I position at salary step I was 28.13%; the difference between the Library Staff and Specialist II position at salary step I was 46.61%.

As of January 1, 2024, the difference between the Library Staff and Specialist I position at salary step I is 9.94%; the difference between Library Staff and Specialist II position at salary step I is 25.75%.

In a matter of three years the Specialist I position has suffered wage compression of 18.19% compared to the Library Staff classification. The Specialist II position has suffered wage compression of 20.86% compared to the Library Staff classification.

All we want is to be paid a living wage.

I don't think that is unfair. I have sent you all our public comments and fact sheet via email.

Thanks, and have a great day.

Mrs. Sanchez: She read some letter written by staff members.

To whom it may concern,

I am writing you this letter to inform you of the way we the staff feel. We feel like the project should be put on hold for now, and our salaries, contract negotiations and concerns should be

addressed first. We have not received a cost-of-living increase in years, and yet the prices of everything continues to rise. We have not been given raises that equate to the cost-of-living. Yet we are required to do more. We have had staff members leave and not be replaced. Leaving the rest of us to pick up the slack to maintain a steady workflow.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

I like to approach the Library Board at this time of negotiations and let you know how sad dispirited I feel about the library.

Is hard to understand that a board that knows how low is our pay rate would be going back and forth with this negotiation wasting your time and spending more money than necessary.

I have work for the library way more than 10 yrs. and with the minimum wage increase I am barely making a few dollars more than minimum wage. My workload has increased in the few past years double than what it used to be, we haven't had part time people working for a few years, we now have to work programs for the community (what I think is great) but this shows that we go above and beyond our job description. We used to have volunteers besides the part time employes but now volunteers fulfill the part time people increasing workloads to fix mistakes.

I think the library is very important to the community and this board knows it, because it also negotiates the public schools teachers living necessities and we have the same hardships.

It is also beyond me how the board can be thinking about a remodeling worth millions of dollars when some employees are making few dollars above minimum wage after working here for so many years. I hope you reconsider these proposals before spending unnecessary money when we need it, for our cost-of-living.

To Whom It May Concern:

I feel that the program room should be put on hold until staffing problems are handled. Coalinga is already short staffed without the new program room; Huron is short staffed. The head librarian is opening the library on Mondays in Huron because they must be opened.

There is only two people to cover the hours in Huron. The Huron staff only has 2 full time staff so if one is sick or has to be off the other is working alone, that is an accident waiting to happen. It's not that we feel uncomfortable by ourselves, it's hard to even go to the restroom sometimes. If head librarian is sick or has to take off, then what happens when we have to close? The board needs to address the problems they already have before going ahead with this project. Staff needs to be heard.

Thank You for your time.

Dear Board Members,

As an employee of the Coalinga-Huron Library District, I would like to address some concerns I have regarding the library. I feel the library needs to hire two part-time people, one for Coalinga and the other for the Huron Library. Huron library currently has only two staff members working

at the library. We have been asked to volunteer and work at the Huron Library, so that one person is not alone. I do not mind covering in Huron, but I feel this defeats the purpose of having more than one person in Huron. This will leave limited coverage in Coalinga when staff members are on vacation, call in sick, etc. These hiring would be an extra person, to help and cover lunch hours on Saturdays, when there are only two staff members working on Saturday and especially in Huron where it is much needed.

I am fully aware that we are a public entity and work with the public, I am aware we are here to serve the public. Unfortunately, there are times we encounter characters that make us uncomfortable. I feel our safety should be considered.

I feel that we should not have to ask for donations for our Summer Reading Program, the money should be budgeted for programs.

In closing I feel we should be paid what we are worth.

Thank you for your time.

Mr. Bernard: Coalinga resident this library means so much to me and for lot of us. I am here today to speak for some of the staff they live in my neighborhood and when I have the time to visit neighbor to neighbor talk. Sr. no offense to you, but you have lived through America to see the transformation of what an educational library can do. The only thing I came here to tell you as a concerned citizen of this community, please the very least you can do today is to give this staff a living wage. They deserve it, I want them to come to work happy and ready to work to help people.

Mr. Gregory: To whom it may concern,

I would like to bring attention to some of the things that have taken, and not taken place as an employee of the Coalinga Huron Library District. Staff members including myself have taken on duties that they we were initially not hired for. We have been down at least 3 employees since before 2020. Why have those positions not been filled? Have they been eliminated? We as a staff have generously picked up the slack with no end in sight, no appreciation, not to mention compensation. How has the Board gone on without noticing things like sudden closures at a branch, and lack of staff is concerning. Staff must work alone on weekends so that we can get our lunch break, and breaks. It is unsafe, and unnecessary as there is a simple fix, lets fill those previous part time positions.

In the beginning of 2020, I was asked to consider taking on a position, that was its own position, in addition to the position I was initially hired for August 2015. About two weeks later I was told I would now take on the additional position. What happen to me thinking about it? If that is not hostile, I don't know what is. At the time I thought maybe it was temporary until someone was hired for the position. We are now in 2024 and I am still doing said position without compensation and appreciation. My job description was never updated, I was not given another job description. This is on top of normal duties, as well as other duties we take on as a staff. Staff must prepare for our own monthly scheduled program. On top of preparing for our annual

Summer Reading Program, covering absences, and volunteering to cover here and there, and now to reopen the Huron branch on Mondays that went unnoticed for years. All to continue to serve our patrons in our communities, which is our priority.

It is disheartening to know that we as a staff go above and beyond our job and duties, and we must beg for a simple raise to cover simple daily rising costs. We all know how expensive it is to put food on the table, pay rising costs in utilities, and to simply fill our gas tanks with gasoline. Rising costs in everything from food to keeping suitable vehicle and home insurance to comply with the state. I guess eventually I will have to add part time employment elsewhere just to make ends meet.

When considering the renovation process, please consider staff members' salaries. Before the renovation process began, as a staff we all agreed to fix what needed attention in the library. Unfortunately plans for the addition came before anything was fixed. We have a leaky roof, a slamming back entrance door with a cracked window, we have an air conditioner that either makes my workspace freezing cold, or hot. All due to lack in planning. The room where I sit with 2 others also hosts the server. Our staff restroom is horrible, it needs better janitorial attention, and the toilet does not flush sometimes. The issue has been addressed many times with no permanent fix. We need better janitorial services; I do not think 2 visits a week is sufficient. Maybe then they can have a trash can for mothers to toss dirty diapers in, instead of being handed a bag to toss it in the trash can in the library because there is not one in the restroom. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, I hope that Board members take our thoughts into consideration when deciding on how to proceed now, as well as in the future. I also hope this renders better communication between board members and our Director, as well as library staff. We all have our patrons and communities best interest at heart.

Respectfully,
Anonymous

Mr. Vosburg, Jr.: Read a letter from a staff member.

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing as a concerned staff member about what is going on here in the library. There are things happening here that I've have learned from the master's degree program that is highly inappropriate.

The funds used for Measure B can be used for numerous things, but the priority of the tax was changed to keep qualified library staff and library services running. Using the funds that we have in reserves for building projects is terrible for staff morale, as it seems like we are not important enough to get paid for the work we do here in the library. Also, the money we have saved up can pay for part-time staff, especially in the Huron Library where there are only two people who work there. In fact, it is very unprofessional to ask the Coalinga staff to volunteer to work in Huron on some days because the library is extremely understaffed.

In my leadership class, we have learned that pay is a big issue in morale. If the staff isn't paid enough, the staff tend to have low morale. The staff in goes beyond what is require for us in our

jobs, but our pay does not reflect it. For example, my professor who is a library director, said in class that she changed the job descriptions for some of the jobs in her library, so that those staff member can get paid more money. It feels like those in charge are not advocating for the welfare of the staff.

The money we have saved up can be used to offer services and programs that the public seems to need. In the past, staff have been asked if we offered services such as tutoring, passport services, and language learning. For the first two mentioned item, we have to tell patrons that we don't offer these services, and for the last item, all we have is a user-unfriendly program on our website that I loathe to recommend to people. I feel like we can use the money to find out and offer the services that the public wants since there are other libraries in the system that do offer these services; and we should subscribe to a different language learning program that is user-friendly and accessible.

Aside from how Measure B is being spent, another problem here is the mean girl culture we have at work. Instead of nipping this in the bud, it seems like this demoralizing culture is being ignored by those in charge.

Also, where is the library's strategic plan? Other libraries do a strategic plan every few years and present it to their governing board. The last time the library did one was in 2020, and why haven't we gotten a new plan in the last couple of years?

That being said, I have taken classes where library case studies have been the focus. This library tends to follow the case studies I have learned about as we have no strategic plan, terrible budgeting, low pay, and a mean girl culture. I feel like the board should know how the staff feels and it take in consideration as union negotiations continue.

Thank you.

IV. CLOSED SESSION

- CS-1 Personnel Matter-Director of Library Services Contract/Extension: Government Code 54957
- CS-2 Conference with Labor Negotiator - Government Code #54957.6
Employee Organization: Local 39, Stationary Engineers.

Went into Closed Session at 5:56 P.M.

Back for Closed Session at 6:24 P.M.

Nothing to report.

V. ACTION ITEMS

No Action Items

VI. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

No Director's Update.

VII. BOARD MEMBER REPORT

No Board Member Report.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Crawford asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Campbell moved, seconded by Mr. Chavez. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 6:25 P.M.

DATE OF THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING: The next regular Board Meeting is Tuesday, July 23, 2024, at 5:30 P.M. at the Huron Branch Library.