

REGULAR Meeting
BELVEDERE-TIBURON LIBRARY AGENCY
Belvedere-Tiburon Library, Tiburon, California
March 17, 2025

AS APPROVED ON APRIL 21, 2025

Roll Call, Present: Chair Anthony Hooker, Vice Chair Emily Poplawski, Pamela Goldman, Roxanne Richards, Katherine Sutton, Kenneth Weil

Members Absent: Treasurer Jeff Slavitz

Also Present: Crystal Duran, Lucy Churton, Ivan Silva, Betty Chao, Kristin Johnson, members of the public

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Hooker called the meeting to order at 6:17 pm

OPEN Forum:

Chair Hooker opened the floor to comments or questions from the public, and encouraged members of the public to stay for his statement after the public comment.

Ann Aylwin, a resident of Belvedere, said that she has been involved with the Library for 25 years, filling many roles on the Foundation and the Agency. She is one of the founders of Blackie's Hey Day, has been on many committees, and has worked with staff and volunteers. Ms. Aylwin said that she is speaking tonight as a member of public, and has been shocked and dismayed by the recent community statements and by the information in the Ark Article [regarding the Library personnel issue], and feels that not all sides of the story have been heard. She added that, prior to the Ark article, the only perspective on the issue reaching the public has been from the former employee. In addition, none of the speakers at the February meeting stayed to hear a different side of the story [after the public comment]. Ms. Aylwin personally checked in, recently, with a number of long-term Library Staff. She said that the Library is serving the public well, that the former visions of the Teen and Maker Spaces are now reality, and that these are just two of many positive facets of the current Library. She implored critics to trust the judgements and actions of the Agency Trustees and to give the Agency and Staff the respect and trust they deserve.

Bill Smith, a resident of Belvedere for 56 years, said that he has a long-standing relationship with the Library. He was on the Board of Belvedere Community Foundation when it was the conduit toward building the first Library [in the current location]. He suggested that those who are interested in the history of the Library read First A Dream. Mr. Smith addressed the Agency Trustees, stating that each of them has been selected by a local Government Agency (Town of Tiburon, City of Belvedere, Reed School District) after an application process. He has known a number of Trustees for over 50 years, and feels that they are intelligent and level headed. He is aware of the nature of legal matters, requirements of Closed Sessions, and requisite limitations on discussion of the contents of each of these. He said that he and his wife, Ann Aylwin have recently received emails containing 84 pages of writings from the former employee, Milos Petrovic. In addition, he noted that the Ark article contained a statement by the former employee stating that one of Trustees is too young. Mr. Smith feels that this indicates a fundamental misunderstanding of the Agency's role in the community. He felt that these writings represent one unhappy employee among all the other happy ones. He added that complaints about fair and thorough personal and

legal issues should not be debated in a public forum. Mr. Smith expressed support for Director Duran in what she is doing.

Jeanette Carr, Belvedere resident, who has also been here for many years, said that her main concern is that this [public discussion and pending legal action] is too divisive in the community. She wishes the conflict would have gone to mediation before lawyers became involved. She asked why discussion and compromise were not engaged before the matter became a legal one. Spending money on lawyers is not what the community wanted in its Library. Mrs. Carr hopes that the situation will be resolved outside of costly legal action.

Mo Newman, a Belvedere resident for 50 years and long library supporter said that she came to last month's meeting to support Milos Petrovic, and has not able to get any information on the other side, and was not able to stay at the last meeting. She said that she does not like the secrecy, that the local public citizens have paid everything for the Library, which includes legal fees, and that freedom of speech is the most important component of democracy. She wants to hear what is going on. She said that "this is our Library, and we have a right to be at every meeting, there should not be closed meetings."

Dr. Thomas Cromwell, long-time Belvedere resident, said that he was dismayed about the Ark article, and that it was his first exposure to the current issue. He previously served on the Agency for 2 terms, including Chairmanship. He said that this library, a project completed, is the bell-weather of libraries in this community. He added that he served as Agency Trustee on a nationwide search for the new Library Director. Crystal Duran was the candidate appointed, and Dr. Cromwell is happy to have been a part of appointing her. He has also given lectures here on disaster preparedness, and the Staff have been more than helpful. He was personally involved in expanding a music program at the Library, and Director Duran was very enthusiastic and supportive. The program, "Hootenanny," has now grown from 5 to 35 members. Every other Friday afternoon, the community comes to the Library to sit and sing. Dr. Cromwell has also worked with Director Duran in preparing to use the Library as a hub during a disaster, and has been meeting with Tiburon and Belvedere Council Members to prepare an MOU. Both are extremely enthusiastic about current Library Director. He advised the community not to let a personnel problem get in the way of this major asset to the community.

Lisa Essa, a resident of Belvedere, said that she has been enjoying the Library for many years and loves the Maker Space. She said that has encouraged friends in other communities to use the Maker Space, and she also emphasized that the expensive equipment needs to be used maximally. She expressed thanks to Maker Space Librarians Ivan Silva and Birgitta Danielson, whose trainings make the equipment user friendly. Ms. Essa said that she has used items which she created in the Maker Space to decorate at home, and to decorate hospital rooms for children at USCF in a program started by Belvedere resident Lindsey Holmes. She said also plans to make holiday greeting cards for veterans and will seek the support of Maker Space Staff to assist her with this project; she couldn't do it without them. She added that the Staff are patient, highly knowledgeable, and assets to the community.

Annette Harris, Tiburon resident, asked the Agency Trustees to answer the question: "What is the reason that the consultant's report was not made public to the other residents of the Town of Tiburon?"

Susan Norton, a Library Volunteer since 2013, says that she works in the Library's back office repairing books. From that vantage point, she has heard and seen a fair amount of the culture and interaction, directly from employees and from general conversations. Ms. Norton has seen a number of Staff come and go over the years, and she has observed both great results and strife during her tenure. She feels that the Library works best for everyone when a cohesive Staff get along and respect one another. Each Staff member is equally important, no one Staff is more important than any other. When there is lack of respect for other Staff and for the rules of the organization by any Staff, that doesn't work for Staff as a whole. The Agency and Library Director are charged with managing the inner workings of the Library. There are policies and procedures in place for this purpose. Ms. Norton said that she is confident in the Library's processes and in the Agency and Management to accomplish their charge. She supports the termination of employees when necessary. With respect to employee morale, a consultant's report is one thing, but Ms. Norton hopes that those concerned for employee morale extend their consideration to the chilling effect on Staff when people from outside the Agency come in and want to disrupt internal decisions.

Brenda Bottum, a Tiburon resident for 10 years said that she began volunteering at the Library in order to be more involved, and has since become even more involved, and feels that was great decision for her. Ms. Bottum serves on the Library Foundation and the Art Committee. She speaks tonight representing herself, not as a part of the organization. She noted that, having just returned from several weeks away, she was recently approached by six Staff members, regarding the article in the Ark newspaper. The Staff were frustrated by the article, love working here, agree with the internal personnel decision, and want to work with team players. Ms. Bottum also asked Staff how they feel about the Library Director, and heard from all six of them that things have gotten so much better. The Staff expressed a liking for Director Duran and for their jobs, and a desire for the personnel issue to end. Ms. Bottum said that she has personally worked with Director Duran, and has encountered an open door. She added that Director Duran came to the Library just three years ago, and had many goals to accomplish while coming into a new organization. A new leader coming in to an organization always requires creating a new culture, which takes time. The Staff expressed appreciation for Director Duran bringing them together with the help of the consultant. Ms. Bottum feels that it is legitimate for a leader to hire a consultant, who can enhance the work to be done, especially when a specific goal is desired. She appreciates that Staff recognize the changes Director Duran is trying to make.

Jodi Roberts, Director of Marin Museum of Contemporary Art, said that she has had the pleasure of attending the Library Art Openings and had participated in many Library Art Events. As a director of a small nonprofit, she gives huge kudos to Director Duran and the Library Art Committee for their outstanding programs. She said that programs like the Library's Art events don't happen without great leadership and partnerships between Staff and Volunteers. Ms. Roberts said that she wished to remind everyone in attendance of tonight's meeting of what has been accomplished at the Library.

Marty Winter, a Belvedere and Tiburon resident of 35 years, said that, to look for our community attitude, look at those who built this Library over many years, meetings, and volunteer hours. He added that the Library previously had a dynamic, personable Library Director, Debbie Mazzolini, and the community was happy with the way the Library was going. The community wasn't looking for dynamic change. The issue at hand is unfortunate. Hopefully, the two sides can come together. Mr. Winter said that he is not recommending the removal of Director Duran, but that is a possibility. He added that the

director search must have included a number of capable leaders. He doesn't believe that Director Duran has leadership qualities. Mr. Winter feels that the Agency is responsible for Management of the Library, while the Foundation is responsible for fundraising, and asked why the Library Director would be taking on the role of the Foundation? He added that he wants Director Duran to be "re-trained." He added that the Library needs to be a dynamic, creative space, with lifelong learning, and doesn't need remedial reading. He said that the Library is a community center, a nexus for intellectual development, for adults continuing to grow, and he wants the community to be able to come together and resolve this personnel issue.

Cynthia Ostroff, who is new to the Belvedere community, said that what she has been hearing in the public comments is unwelcoming and intimidating. The situation should not have gotten as far as it has in such an acrimonious way. She said that Milos Petrovic would greet her at the door, and that she had never before laid eyes on the Director, and didn't know who she was. She said that the Agency and the Director need to keep this Library welcoming to people with strong personalities and to people who are introverts. She said that she heard from a long-time resident that this Library is dysfunctional. She added that she feels it takes many different personalities to run a Library. The level of enthusiasm that Mr. Petrovic showed was appreciated by her, and she feels that the Director should have had the consultant work with him.

Barbara Winter, Tiburon and Belvedere resident of 35 years and Corner Books Volunteer, said that she enjoys working with Corner Books Manager Heather Lobdell, and that she remembers Debbie Mazzolini's greetings. Mrs. Winter is a major donor, and said that she has never been greeted by the current Director. She said that the Library needs people that greet people and are friendly, not a CEO, and that the Director should be out among the people. Mrs. Winter added that she is disappointed in the treatment of Mr. Petrovic, which followed no procedure that the public has been allowed to know. She asked that the Agency at least give him due process, and feels that they will find that he is needed in the Library. The Library needs different personalities. She said that the Library is a special place, that the bookstore is well used and has raised \$20,000. She added that she will be disappointed if the Agency continues to treat Mr. Petrovic in this way without revealing the process to the public.

Julia Shumelda, Belvedere resident, and a professional in leadership and cultural development nationally and internationally, said that she wanted to comment about the consultant's report. She said that, in her experience, when there is a toxic culture, that it is impossible to turn around. She feels that once a leader loses trust and is perceived to manage by fear and intimidation, trust cannot be re-established, and even if the leader's behavior changed, it wouldn't make a difference in a cultural context. She added that research shows that toxic culture doesn't turn around.

Mo Newman, Belvedere, asked to be added to the Public Records request for the consultant's report.

Chair Hooker closed the Public Comment at 6:56 pm. He thanked the community for talking about the personnel matter, and added that it is good for the Agency to hear what's important to the community.

Chair Hooker then read the following statement: The Belvedere Tiburon Library Agency follows the Town of Tiburon's Appeal Process Policy pertaining to disciplinary action.

Employees have the right to appeal disciplinary action through this process and the Board ensures that all appeal procedures shall follow this policy.

A Library employee has appealed his termination from the Belvedere Tiburon Library Agency. Per the Library Agency's Appeal Process Policy, the Library Board must respect the employee's right to an impartial hearing before an independent hearing officer. The hearing officer will be selected by both parties from a list provided by the California Public Employee Relations Board. After the hearing officer evaluates all of the evidence and provides the Library Board with an advisory decision, the Library Board will make a final decision regarding the employee's termination. It is not appropriate for members of the Board to comment on the employee's termination, as such statements could be perceived as an attempt to improperly influence the appeal. The Library Board respects the employee's right to privacy and the confidentiality of personnel matters. While the employee has discussed some of those details in public, the Board is required by state law to keep personnel information confidential.

STAFF BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Chair's Report

Chair Hooker said that his statement, above, was his report.

2. Library Director's Report

Director Duran reported that Library will close early on April 24th, as the Foundation will host a special Donor Acknowledgement event that evening. Library Staff will support the event, and will notify patrons of the early closure ahead of time.

Library Staff have recently attended a variety of trainings, including a mental health first aid course. Skills gleaned from this training will be helpful for Staff in supporting individuals with different needs. Staff have also attended de-escalation trainings, and trainings on how to create a "neuro-inclusive" Library. Maker Space staff will attend Memory Lab training at the San Francisco Public Library.

The Compensation Committee will be meeting soon to discuss benefits. Ideas will be integrated into the budget process, and more information will be presented to the Agency soon.

The Library Green Takeover project has been Federally funded so far. In a check-in last week, participating libraries were compared on their co-design (with volunteers) progress. The Library has marked the greatest progress of any of the grantees in the development of volunteer collaboration and in the expansion of resources. Library Staff will host a program at the annual California Library Association meeting to share experience with other libraries. In light of the recent Executive Order regarding library funding, and in light of the Library having received \$100,000 total in grants from Federal Funding over several years, Director Duran asked the Agency to take up the challenge of advocating for libraries at the State and Federal levels. She stressed the importance of maintaining Federal funding for libraries, and referred to the related action item on tonight's Agenda. She encouraged Agency members to be a voice to government leaders on behalf of libraries, to work in unity with community members, and to strengthen the collective voice of the library community.

Trustee Richards and Chair Hooker asked about volunteer numbers at the Library. Director Duran said that the Library Green Takeover project is comprised of 2 Staff and 10 Volunteers, and that all Volunteers are new except for one high school student who has previously worked in the Teen Room. Director Duran said that new Volunteers have been attracted by the sustainability issues. Beyond the project, Corner Books has 43 volunteers, the Library also hosts a number of Teen Volunteers, and the Art Committee has a large number of Volunteers.

3. Belvedere Tiburon Library Foundation Report

Foundation Director Lucy Churton reported that the Foundation continues to receive annual fund donations. The annual fund achieved great results this year, and the numbers will be reported in the fall annual report.

Former Foundation member, Agency Chair, and amazing long-time volunteer and Library supporter Bonnie Spiesberger has left a generous bequest to the Foundation, and Directors Churton and Duran are working on a plan to best allocate the funds.

Foundation members are planning the aforementioned April 24th select donor celebration along with an October legacy celebration for the Library's 30th anniversary.

The Children's patio project remains underway with the current task of color selection for the surface pour. The pour work is awaiting a Town of Tiburon permit.

The Foundations' Volunteer Task Force committee will begin work in the fall to create a formal system for coordinating all of the volunteers in various capacities at the Library.

The Library Art Gallery is currently featuring the "Artist Narratives" show, in which the featured artists illustrate their own history and identity. This show will be featured in the Gallery until May 7th. A reception for the show will be held on Thursday, March 20th. An Art Call fundraising event with artist Deborah Orapollo will be offered on April 7th, and will probably sell out.

Director Duran commended Director Churton for her Foundation work, and noted that her work in her volunteer capacity keeps her at the Library on a full-time basis.

Trustee Richards asked for clarification regarding the Foundation's income, given numbers stated in one of the public comments this evening. Director Churton and Director Duran will clarify.

Financial Statements, February, 2025

Clerk Johnson reported that, with 67% of the budget year passed, revenues are at 60% of budget, normal for this time of year. One additional interest payment on the 1995 bonds will be made this fiscal year, followed by 3 final principal and interest payments through September of 2026.

Total operating expenditures stand at 68% of budget, with spending ahead of last year's 61% due to full staffing and increased programming.

Personnel expenditures are at 63% of budget, on par, Circulation Materials and Data at 85% due to subscription purchases, including MARINet early in the fiscal year, Technology Services are at 70%, just above par, due to early subscription purchases, Program Services are at 55% of budget, low for fiscal year-to-date, Building Expenditures are at 78% due to higher insurance, building maintenance, and utilities costs, and Agency Administration costs are at 100% due to extraordinary legal expenses.

About \$28,000 of the \$50,000 expansion excess funds have been used to create better internal Library signage, buy furniture for Project Refresh (as indicated by community preference in the Strategic Plan), and fund part of the Children's Patio Expense. About \$38,000 has been spent on the I'lee Hooker Memorial Garden. These items are uses of reserves, and some will be partially funded by donors.

The Library currently has about \$2.5 million in cash (due to recent receipt of half-year taxes), with 16% or \$550,000 in Building and Insurance Reserve, and 53% or \$1.8 million in Operating Reserve.

4. Committee Reports

The Compensation Committee will meet this week, and a Finance Committee meeting will be scheduled soon.

CONSENT CALENDAR

6/7. Motion to approve the Minutes of February 24 and March 11, 2025 and the Warrants for the Month of February, 2025 made by Trustee Weil seconded by Trustee Poplawski.

Ayes: all present in favor

Absent: Treasurer Slavitz.

Noes: None.

All in Favor. Motion Passed.

TRUSTEE CONSIDERATIONS:

8. Presentation on the Library Makerspace by Librarian Ivan Silva

Maker Space Librarian Ivan Silva, said that the Maker Space aligns with the Library's Strategic Plan goal for all ages to be creative, to connect, and to engage in lifelong learning. He expressed appreciation for expanded staffing in the Maker Space, with Librarian Birgitta Danielson working on his team. He looks forward to working with more volunteers through the Foundation's fall Volunteer Committee launch.

Mr. Silva said that the Maker Space began with only one small 3D printer, and now has much additional equipment, including a laser cutter, a heat press, 2 sewing machines, and all of the digitization equipment in the Digi-lab. All Maker Space stations have "how to use" documentation in place, and will soon have "how to use" online videos, making it easier for Staff and Volunteers to help patrons get started.

The reservation system for using the Maker Space has been updated, and is now more mobile phone-friendly. The system also allows Staff to distinguish between new and returning reservations.

Mr. Silva presented statistics on the Maker Space, showing that appointments increased to 1,930 from 351 in the prior year, a 450% increase. He is tapping the space's potential for teaching/training events, which increased from 27 to 39, with attendance at 4-to-6 patrons. The space is not practical for more than 10 attendees

Patrons are using the space for podcasts (both experienced and new users), publishing: a 10-year-old recently published a history of Nintendo, and preserving memories (2,000 hours of memories have been preserved so far, including weddings, births, and 1970's Jeopardy shows). Mr. Silva hears "great stories" as patrons are in the process of preserving their special history.

All of the work that patrons are doing can help Staff develop prototypes to support more patrons, local organizations, and to collaborate with schools.

Mr. Silva has been working with Landmarks and California Revealed (a digital archive). Patrons and organizations can create additional content with the stories behind their creations. Mr. Silva would like to purchase kits, including digital media creation tools for patrons to check at to do projects at home. He would also like to create Badging Curriculum for kids who use the space, to encourage them to learn and to accomplish maker goals, and to attract more young users. The main users of the Maker Space are currently local artists and entrepreneurs.

Mr. Silva has been involved National Maker Space Leadership. This Friday, he will be hosting the Berkeley Public Library so that their staff can learn more toward launching their own maker space.

Librarian Birgitta Danielson recently attended a Maker Space workshop with the San Francisco Public Library, also increasing her skills to lead creative projects.

Mr. Silva expressed appreciation for the Agency and Foundation fundraising, their championing of the space, and sharing of their networks for community collaboration and wider visibility and use of the Library's offerings.

Trustee Richards expressed gratitude to Mr. Silva for being a steadfast employee and for creating new activities. She asked how Staff might control the fabrication of undesirable products. Mr. Silva said that the Maker Space Staff follow an internal policy and check each file/request received to make sure that the requested product is appropriate.

Chair Hooker suggested a Maker Space show of items created. Director Churton added that items could be showcased at donor event.

Trustee Sutton asked how the cost of supplies is managed. Mr. Silva said that supplies are purchased in bulk, and patrons are offered a fee schedule for supplies, or they can provide their own materials. The Maker Space fee schedule is maintained at a level of break-even/cost neutrality on the supplies.

Trustee Weill praised Librarians Silva and Danielson for their personal touch beyond the equipment in managing the space and supporting patrons.

Public Comment on the Matter: Victoria Fong expressed her appreciation for Mr. Silva's assistance in the Maker Space, and Vice Chair Poplawski agreed, along with Trustee Goldman, who said that her son uses the space frequently and speaks highly of it.

Director Duran said that Librarian Silva is always thinking about growth, with examples of the badging, public use of data, and citizen science, and that he is ahead of the curve and becoming a leader in the makerspace field. He represents the Library well, and has presented at a national American Library Association meeting. Mr. Silva said that he enjoys representing the Library and working with patrons, supporting free will and creativity. He reiterated that many stories are revealed in the process of patron projects and that he would like to explore how to share those stories. He added that there always remains much to do. He expressed appreciation for Librarian Birgitta Danielson's patron support and ideas.

9. Consideration of advocacy letter in support of funding for the California Library Services Act

Director Duran said that the Executive Order news on Friday regarding Federal funding for libraries and museums had been disheartening. California has been fortunate to receive \$16million annually from the Federal funding. The cuts mean that the Library will no longer have opportunities available to apply for additional grants. Federal funding was previously used to equip the Digi-lab. Director Duran said that it is now critical for this community to communicate with local and national legislators in support of Federal funding for libraries, that public pressure can potentially create change.

Director Duran referred to the letter included in the packet, which is addressed at the State Level. She encouraged the Trustees to approve the Chair's signing of the letter.

Public Comment on the Matter: Victoria Fong said that she had been fortunate to serve libraries at the State level, and thanked the board in advance for signing any advocacy letters, and encouraged them to share the letter and the push for advocacy with other communities. She thanked Director Duran for bringing this issue to light in the community so that communication with State and Federal legislators can be expanded. She suggested that the Library send a letter to the Ark and to the Marin Independent Journal to encourage the larger community to speak out to legislators on this issue.

Trustee Richards added that this is a call to action for the public. Director Duran said that the California Library Association provides easy efficient tools for advocacy and legislative communication online. This year the Association is having to fight at both the Federal and State levels. As Belvedere-Tiburon is a community which supports libraries, the more those present tonight can encourage other local constituents to speak up, the better.

Chair Hooker called for a motion to approve the advocacy letter.

Motion to approve the advocacy letter made by Trustee Richards, seconded by Trustee Sutton.

Roll Call Vote: Chair Anthony Hooker, Vice Chair Emily Poplawski, Trustee Pamela Goldman, Trustee Roxanne Richards, Trustee Katherine Sutton, Trustee Kenneth Weil.

Absent: Treasurer Jeff Slavitz

Noes: None.

All in Favor. Motion Passed.

10. Schedule of 2025 Meeting Dates

The next Agency meeting is scheduled for April 21, 2025.

Chair Hooker concluded that, with finances in good shape, the Maker Space activity, the good work of the Foundation, and the amazing number of volunteers, the Library is rolling along and doing well due to everyone's efforts.

Chair Hooker adjourned the meeting at 7:55 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristin M. Johnson, Clerk of the Belvedere-Tiburon Library Agency Board