



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Date: 4/21/2025
Time: 6:30 p.m.
Locations: Teleconference and
Arrillaga Family Recreation Center
700 Alma St., Menlo Park, CA 94025

A. Call To Order

Chair Orton called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Present: Crockett, Herrick, Orton, Pollack, Shafer, Sisbot, Westcott
Absent: None
Staff: Library and Community Services (LCS) Director Sean Reinhart, Assistant LCS Director Nick Szegda, LCS Supervisor Rose Waldman, Librarian II Desiree Wong, Library Assistant III Juan Quinonez

C. Public Comment

- Oak Knoll School representative George Sisbot suggested the library sell branded merchandise to raise funds and awareness of library programs.

D. Presentations and Proclamations

- D1. Presentation. "Library outreach: Bringing the library to the community" (Attachment)

Supervisor Waldman, Librarian Wong and Library Assistant Quinonez made the presentation (Attachment).

E. Regular Business

- E1. Approve the meeting minutes from the March 17, 2025 meeting (Attachment)

ACTION: Motion and second (Crockett/ Westcott), to approve the minutes from the March 17, 2025 meeting, passed unanimously.

- E2. Select Commission Chair and Vice Chair for 2025-26 (Staff Report LC-2025-014)

Assistant Director Szegda introduced the item.

ACTION: Motion and second (Westcott/ Shafer), to select Herrick as Chair and select Pollack as Vice Chair, passed unanimously.

ACTION: Motion and second (Herrick/ Crockett), to replace Herrick with Orton on the ad-hoc subcommittee, passed unanimously.

F. Informational Items

- F1. Commission attendance report (Staff Report LC-2025-015)
- F2. Library Commission work plan progress update (Staff Report LC-2025-016)
- F3. Library and community services department statistics and recent activities (Staff Report LC-2025-017)
- F4. City of Menlo Park fiscal year 2025-26 budget process and timeline (Staff Report LC-2025-018)
- F5. Library Commission tentative agenda calendar (Attachment)

The Commission added the following items to the tentative agenda calendar:

- August – Commission report out on current work plan goals
- September – City Council approval of next year's work plan

G. Commissioner Reports

- G1. Ad-hoc subcommittee update (Staff Report LC-2025-019)

Commissioners Shafer and Westcott reported out on conducting a focus group discussion with the Friends of the Library board April 22 and that the completion of a literature review to define terms and concepts to be used when working toward the "library of the future" concept.

- G2. Individual Commissioner reports

Commissioner Westcott reported out on an upcoming documentary on libraries called, "Free For All: the Public Library."

Commissioner Crockett reported out on the meeting of the Friends of the Library Board (Attachment).

H. Adjournment

Chair Orton adjourned the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

Nick Szegda, Assistant Library and Community Services Director



LIBRARY OUTREACH:

Bringing the Library to the Community

Library Commission – April 2025

LIBRARY PRESENTATION SERIES

All dates and topics are tentative and are subject to change:

Library Overview:
Who We Are and What We Do
September 2024

Library Programs:
Enrichment through Experiences
November 2024

Library Statistics:
What Does the Data Tell Us?
January 2025

Library Outreach:
Bringing the Library to the Community
April 2025

Library of the Future:
What's Next for Libraries and for MPL
June 2025

Library Budget:
Collection Development and Operations
July 2025

WHAT IS OUTREACH?

Outreach is comprised of "services for those who are infrequent users or nonusers or as services for those who are traditionally underserved, [with a goal of providing] equitable delivery of library services to all people through the development of programs, policies, practices, and behaviors which make the library available to all people."

American Library Association, "Outreach Librarianship"
<https://www.ala.org/educationcareers/libcareers/jobs/outreach>



OUTREACH AT MENLO PARK LIBRARY



[Home](#) / [Government](#) / [Departments](#) / [Library and Community Services](#) / [Library](#) / [Account services](#) / [Books by Mail](#)

Books by Mail

The Books by Mail program provides free access to library resources to our community. Materials are mailed directly to customers who have barriers to access our libraries.

Who is eligible for Books by Mail?

Books by Mail is reserved for residents in incorporated Menlo Park that are unable to come into the library and/or carry home checked-out items for reasons including but not limited to:

- Are over the age of 62
- Have a long-term or permanent mobility impairment
- Are immunocompromised

How do I register?

Fill out the [online application](#). Your application will be reviewed and if approved, you will be contacted by staff to make your borrowing requests.

Do I need a special library card?

You will use your Menlo Park library card. If you do not have a Menlo Park library card and are a qualifying resident, one will be issued to you.



CURRENT OUTREACH

Services to Schools

- Class field trips to the library
- Staff visiting classrooms
- Staff visiting school assemblies
- Tabling at school events
- Private storytimes
- Library card drives
- Providing services to City-run Preschools, School-Age child care, and summer camp programs.



CURRENT OUTREACH

Services to the Public

- Tabling at community events
- Books by Mail
- Marketing library programs
- Partnerships with Library Foundation, other area libraries, other city departments, and local community groups
- Engaging with patrons in the library to spread the word outside of the library.



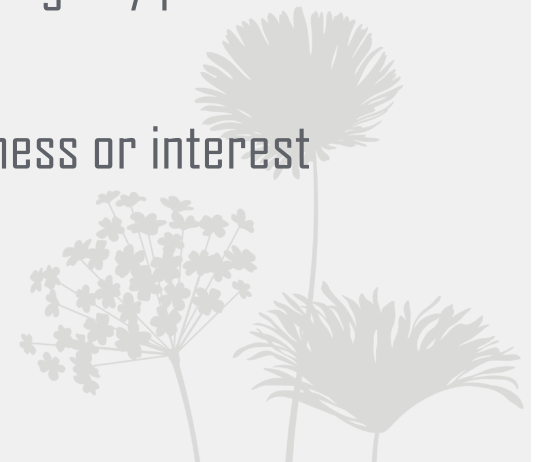
BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

Benefits of Library Outreach

- Makes the community aware of library services
- Connects services to people who would not normally visit a library
- Increases community literacy through access to information
- Builds networks with other libraries, and high stakes community groups
- Creates a ripple effect - the community promotes services

Challenges to Providing Outreach

- Lack of resources, not enough staff and/or time
- Coordinating with other organizations can be challenging
- Loss of institutional knowledge by partners and in-house
- Lack of community awareness or interest



LOOKING FORWARD

School Outreach

- Tailored “choose your own” visit package
- Continue fostering connections built through 2023 and 2024
- Back to school nights
- Increase connections with homeschool groups in the area

New Library Visit page on City website:

<https://menlopark.gov/Government/Departments/Library-and-Community-Services/Library/About-the-library/Library-visits>

[Home](#) / [Government](#) / [Departments](#) / [Library and Community Services](#) / [Library](#) / [About the library](#) / **[Library visits](#)**

Library visits

Come to the library

Menlo Park Library and Belle Haven Library are happy to schedule private library visits outside of our regular business hours for school groups, homeschool groups, and other children's groups.

During a class visit, our staff can provide a variety of activities to teach students of all ages about the library and the resources we provide. Activities may include:

- Private Storytime performed by a library staff member
- A tour of the library
- Learn about our book return machine
- Learn how to find books by completing a library scavenger hunt
- Learn about resources available at our libraries
- Learn more about the Dewey Decimal System
- Learn more about upcoming library hosted events and programs

Bring the library to you

For those who are unable to visit the library, we are happy to schedule a time where a library staff member can visit your classroom, school, or special event. Activities may include:

- Private Storytime performed by a library staff member
- Information on how to get a library card
- Information about resources available at our libraries
- Information about upcoming library hosted events and programs
- A library station or table at your event manned by a library staff member

Library visits are not just for kids! We are happy to attend events hosted by other organizations, visit local high schools, community colleges and job centers, and attend local community events.

LOOKING FORWARD

Public Outreach

- Partnership with colleagues at BHCC: Resource Fair (March)
- Partnership with local orgs & CMP Sustainability: Love Our Earth (April)
- Partnership with Atherton Library: Farmer's Market
- Increased social media presence
- New graphic-wrapped cargo van (coming soon).

Tie-in Programs

- Youth Poetry Voices (April)
- Summer Reading (June-Aug)
- 1000 books before kindergarten (September)
- Library Card Art Design (September?)
- Winter Reads (November-January)





THANK YOU

To: Report out to Library Commission
From: Kim Crockett, Library Commission Liaison to Friends of the Menlo Park Library
Re: Summary update – Friends of the Menlo Park Library Board of Directors Meeting April 14, 2025

I attended the Friends' quarterly Board meeting on April 14, 2025 during which I reported on The Library Commission's Ad Hoc Subcommittee's work and described the upcoming Focus Group scheduled for the Friends on Tuesday April 22, 2025 in the Elm Room, Arrillaga Rec. Center.

Staff attending for first portion of Friends' meeting, Nick Szegda and Rose Waldman, gave Library status, programming and plans updates, highlighting the urgent need for a new AMH as the 12 year old machine is dying. If and when the AMH breaks down the disruption to library services is severe. Cost associated with a new AMH is approximately \$160,000 or more, depending on company used to provide, all options appear to be based outside US (Germany, Sweden, Canada) raising concerns about rising costs and timeline for replacement. Discussion ensued regarding the BHCC AMH, timeline, costs, library budget, Friends' cash position and planning.

Friends' status reports:

Volunteer Coordinator shared current needs and updated on progress managing Friends 53 volunteers, emphasizing need to assign volunteers into areas that need work (Amazon Online Sales processing and Wednesday afternoon volunteers strong enough to physically bring in full carts) as well as to fill upcoming Friends Board vacancies on current 11 person Board. Former Oak Knoll third grade teacher, Bill Quarre, is joining Friends as a volunteer overseeing children's books.

Financial Update: At end of third quarter, Friends revenue is \$157,313.77 which represents 98% of fiscal year plan (\$160,000) and will likely exceed plan by \$30,000. On-site Book sales (Bookstore, Quarterly and other Book Sales) exceeded prior years by a significant amount and Amazon online sales exceeded prior years as well. Donations, dues and interest are well over plan too.

Cash Position: \$766,735

Amazon online sales: Quality donations have turned into high \$\$ listings with strong revenue growth from prior year. Large estate and family donations with art, physics books and even federal prison guidebooks yielded high sale prices on Amazon.

Update on BHCC bookstore: the bookstore at BHCC is not doing well as compared to Main, needs better lighting and need more feedback on what community wants stocked.

The Ad Hoc Committee met by phone or in person, weekly on Wednesdays, since the March Library Commission meeting. It continues to work on scheduling focus groups which will occur throughout May and into June. It is testing the brief, Library of the Future exploratory survey tool as part of its work with the focus groups.

Library Commissioners Shafer and Herrick prepared the following report to focus discussion of all Commissioners during the Ad Hoc Committee's portion of the April 21, 2025 agenda. The Ad Hoc Committee will welcome comments and discussion by the full Commission and Library Staff of the topics outlined below. The Big Questions at the end of this term definition exercise, especially, will help the Ad Hoc Committee to begin charting the ways to write up the activity of the past year.

Introduction

The Menlo Park Library Commission has within its 2024-2025 work plan a goal to:

- Review library programs and services, identify potential service gaps for specific age groups or affinity groups, and advise to fill needs to create the "library of the future."

The Library Commission, itself, neither directs the work of city staff nor can it recommend fixes to immediate gaps it identifies. Its role and responsibility is to, "advise the City Council on matters related to the maintenance and operation of the City's libraries and library systems."¹ It does this through helping the Council to define the "scope and degree of library activities," to foster the "evaluation and improvement of library service," as well as to engage in "long range planning."²

In order for the Ad Hoc Subcommittee, which is leading the 2024-2025 Library of the Future effort, to communicate findings of its activity effectively to City Council and the Menlo Park community, some baseline definitions of terms like "library of the future" will need to be agreed upon by the full Commission. To this end, Commissioners Herrick and Shafer reviewed the general library literature related to the "library of the future" and have prepared this brief report for the full Commission to review and reflect on as it guides further work of the Ad Hoc Committee.

"Libraries of the Future"

- The library of the future is not separate from what libraries are currently doing; rather, it is a shorthand for a series of professional principles and technological and cultural changes that shape librarians' work.

¹ Menlo Park Library Commission website, "Roles and Responsibilities" section, viewed April 13, 2025, <https://menlopark.gov/Government/Commissions-and-committees/Library-Commission>

² Menlo Park Library Commission website, "Commission priorities" section, viewed April 13, 2025, <https://menlopark.gov/Government/Commissions-and-committees/Library-Commission>

- The conversation encapsulated by the term “library of the future” is a longstanding one in library science, occurring primarily in response to developing technologies and their implications for libraries, librarians, and users. These include, but are not limited to:
 - The rise of the internet and personal computers
 - Social media
 - COVID, the need for remote access, and long periods of social isolation
 - Large language models and generative AI
- Although the terminology brings to mind technology first and foremost, the library of the future is necessarily concerned with social issues as well. This includes how libraries can foster equity and access with regard to library services within their communities.

Equity and Access

- **Equity** is the process by which libraries take differences into account to support equal outcomes.
- **Access** is concerned with making library services accessible to as much of the community as possible.
- Libraries are community spaces serving community needs. The concepts of equity and access are frameworks for decision making and program development to help libraries meet those needs.
- Incorporating these principles often requires coordination between the library and its communities
- Both terms are rooted in a right to access information; libraries and librarians are facilitators, not gatekeepers

Community engagement

- The activity which a library pursues to reach out to people in its service area in order to serve their needs.
- The ways in which library staff respond to the inputs and ideas which engaged library users provide.
- Any programming which goes beyond traditional (knowledge discovery and sharing) service areas.
- Community Engagement is very much a defined practice within the field but its measurement is, generally, library-staff focused. How are library staff proactively seeking further input from their service area or how are they responding to feedback passively gathered?

The tools Menlo Park currently uses to assess its community engagement activities are periodic surveys, regular comment cards and the opportunity for public comment periods at Library Commission meetings, monthly.

Engaged community

- Is Menlo Park a community?
 - If so, what are the key attributes which define its community nature?
 - If so, does the library have a role in encouraging its community to be civically engaged? Culturally? Life-time learning engaged?
- If Menlo Park is not really an entity with a community identity, then are there communities within Menlo Park itself which can be defined as “engaged” communities?
 - What are the key attributes of these “engaged” sub-communities?
 - Are there sub-communities with key attributes which might become more engaged than they currently are, vis-a-vis library services?

Big Questions

The following questions are foundational to defining a community’s expectations of the range of services which its library, specifically, should offer. Additionally, the answers to these questions help city staff to allocate limited resources to promote access to public library resources as equitably as possible.

- Is it the role of a library to foster civic engagement?
- Is it the role of a library to foster literary or other cultural or educational engagement?
- If yes, are there definable boundaries to the sphere of cultural/educational activity which a library might realistically pursue?