



Meeting Minutes - Final

Library Board

Tuesday, September 3, 2024

10:30 AM

La Retama Central Library, La Retama Room

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A. Call To Order

Pat Craig called the meeting to order at 10:30 am.

B. Roll Call

Present: Pat Craig, Joan Carrillo, Jennifer Anderson, Melinda De Los Santos, Alice Hawkins, Carroll Matthews, Dolores Rabon, Dora Wilburn

Present Virtually: Carrie Moore

Absent: None

C. Public Comment

- Daniel Resley is thrilled with the proposed changes to the Collection Development Policy and would like to see it implemented.
- Donna Meble said she is a former teacher and currently a consultant for an educational nonprofit. After reviewing the proposed Collection Development Policy, she urges the board to trust young people, their parents, and the citizens of Corpus Christi, and keep the current policy in place. Adolescents crave relevancy and hunger to learn about events that impact their lives, as well as issues about identity and sexual orientation. What safer way to approach these topics than between the covers of a book? When we scrub any references to equity, diversity, and inclusion, which the proposed revisions do, we risk robbing our teens of their right to find themselves in our stacks. Trust young people to learn and grow safely through providing access to books that can help them navigate their journey through adolescence. Trust parents to make decisions about what their individual children will and will not read. The current Library Collection Development Policy does just this. The proposed revision would delete this entirely. Finally trust the citizens of the city, a review of recent City Council Library Advisory Board meetings public comments reveal the vast majority of residents do not want restrictions on what is available at our public libraries. We recognize that the freedom to read is protected by the 1st Amendment of the Constitution of the United States. We know this freedom is

essential to our democracy even if the writers of the proposed revision prefer not to say so.

- David Cobb is not thrilled with the proposed revisions to the Collection Development Policy. He thought the matter had been resolved. The board is chasing problems that do not exist. Your obsession with removing DEI and defining pornography is an embarrassment to this board and to the community as a whole. You claim that you are protecting our children and our parental rights, well, it's my responsibility to protect my grandchild as his parents see fit. That is my right as a parent and grandparent and no other person's responsibility. I support that age-appropriate material is available in the safe confines of public libraries. I want to emphasize "safe". Our libraries are safe havens for our youth, and for adults as well. Again, it is my responsibility, not yours or anyone else's to monitor what my child has access to. Regarding removal of DEI, I ask that you think of DEI from the perspective of the community at large. Diversity is just recognizing and respecting people of all backgrounds and experiences. Inclusion, from a library perspective, means that our collection includes materials that reflect everyone in our community. Equality simply means that everyone has equal access to the entire collection of the library. These are simple principles that I believe we can all agree to. With that in mind, we must stop this misguided effort today and start focusing on real problems facing our library system.

- Tom Tagliabue stated that just once he wants the board to publicly stand up and explain how the Collection Development Policy revision addresses a real-life problem in the Corpus Christi Library system. In all the months we have been coming here we have heard your supporters about not letting pornography in the children's section of the library. Not once have you ever produced a shred of evidence that this exists. Not one time have you cited an example of a library employee putting the health and safety of a child at risk. No once have you shown where Diversity, Equity and Inclusion has harmed a library patron. You never explain why you think you should be able to tell parents what their kids can and cannot read. Why? It's because you are making this whole thing up or you are following the direction of outside interest. Who could that be? You have created controversy, division, mistrust, and anger for no reason whatsoever. What is your motivation? The library staff are doing their job well in keeping age-appropriate content where it belongs and ensuring access for all. Why are we here again today? Because instead of being open, transparent, and honest about policy deliberations with legal and professional guidance from city staff, you continue to operate in an echo chamber of biased, hateful, bigoted, uniformed radical extremism. Any study of Collection Development Policy requires qualified, unbiased professionals doing real research at the appropriate time. Not because you, your hate group bosses, and a couple of City Council members have a political agenda. Instead of doing what is necessary to assist in a chronically underfunded library system, you are wasting resources creating a storm of controversy for your own political myopic views. Stop it and resign immediately.

- Shawn Flanagan stated that there are a lot of red herrings going on around here. Let's talk about what the proposed changes actually do. First thing, it defines specifically and legally what pornography is. Get out of the business of "it looks like porn to me" "well it doesn't look like porn to me", if it meets the definitions, it is pornography. If it doesn't, it doesn't. As to it not existing, that's the reason the City Council were actually able to see

what is on the shelves of the library, not so much anymore. It was explicit, that's reality. Second thing it does is remove DEI. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion does not mean Diversity or Inclusion, it is a political agenda, this is why the State of Texas has removed them from public universities. Public universities have been instructed by the State of Texas to remove DEI from the hiring processes, this is because DEI divides people into classes, doesn't treat them as individuals, treats them as categories and then treats them unequally. Some are privileged, some are punished. Eliminating the DEI policy does not eliminate one diverse thought, person, or book in the library, it removes an institutional problem the State of Texas sees that exists in its state universities. Last thing is the red herring about book banning, that's bologna. Corpus Christi Public library does not have every book on its shelf. Does that mean that the books not on the shelf have been banned? No, it does not, they are readily available. A decision has been made to select some books and not others. If a book meets the definition of pornography and it is not on the shelf, has it been banned? No, it is readily available elsewhere.

- Mark Gonsoulin stated that he has lived in Corpus Christi his whole life. He thinks that most of his neighbors think like him and want to restrict some material from young kids. He thinks parents should release that information and educate them based on that child and not a cookie cutter lesson where they can grab whatever they want. The State of Texas enacted the SCOPE act which restricts internet access to children and needs an age requirement. This dovetails with the proposed changes, which he agrees with and supports.
- Tina Butler is a lifetime resident of Corpus Christi and a recent retiree from Del Mar College where she worked with African American and Hispanic men with 2.0 GPA. She stated she is against the proposed changes to the Collection Development Policy. As a taxpayer, public libraries should be public. Everyone pays taxes so the public libraries should be public to everyone. As far as DEI, Senate Bill 17 has been instituted in September 2023 to take effect in January 2024 and it has put people in categories. She personally knows 40 people who have lost their jobs because of that bill. She did not like that the library does not want to include DEI and books that relate to that. This is where the public can come to read books that cannot be found elsewhere. You should not have to go to Amazon or Half Price Books to get a book that should be found at the library. These proposals are like a kid who is allergic to ice cream so nobody can have ice cream. Access should be made available to everyone, and parents should make the decision about what their children can and cannot have. It should not be the city or the Library Board. The original policy that is in place is great and she does not think it need to be changed.
- Julie Rogers stated she is representing 284 people who could not be at the meeting. They want the Corpus Christi Library Advisory Board to cease their attempts to restrict books, censor information in our libraries, and leave the Collection Development Policy alone since it is up for review in August 2025. Trust and allow professional public library staff to do the job for which they were hired and trained. Help Corpus Christi Public Libraries to be funded in a manner comparable to communities of similar size to Corpus Christi since our public library system is chronically underfunded and it is a stated goal and objective in the 2024 Library Advisory Board annual report. Today City Council is voting on the budget, and she has not heard one word about our chronically underfunded

libraries.

- Robert Kymes thought that the proposed policy changes were a resolved issue since the subcommittee could not agree and disbanded, so why is it on the agenda? He is tired of coming to the board to talk about it and would much rather talk about what can be done to get city residents excited about reading again. What can get more people coming and interacting with libraries again rather than having the same conversations over and over. Let's move on. He thinks the Collection Development policy is just fine. It is not up to be talked about until August 2025 so why are we talking about it now? We have time to take recommendations and debate it later. He does not understand why people are trying to remove DEI. He thinks that is what is wrong with our city, that people are looking at it through an outdated lens. DEI is very important; it makes sure that people are heard. It feels like we are moving in the wrong direction, with removing it from policies and entities. Just try to keep citizens in mind no matter who they are. We all have different backgrounds and different stories. We all need to be safe and secure. I really hope we can refocus on getting programming and better funding here at the library.

- Barb Craig-Schniepp loves the libraries, she has been a lifelong library user every place she has been. I don't understand why the city and the Library Board is spending so much time on this issue when we hire trained professionals. This is part of their job. Trust them, if they have the training, let them deal with this. She wanted to address two issues with the proposed changes to the Collection Development policy nobody has addressed. One is taking out the reference to the Texas Library Association and the American Library Association. Those are nationally recognized and respected oversight agencies that help our librarians do their jobs better. Are we saying that we, the citizens of Corpus Christi know better? That's like saying I know better than the AMA about my doctor or the state licensing board about my hairdresser. I think that is a waste of energy. What concerns her even more is taking out where it says the Freedom to Read is essential to our democracy. You have proposed taking out essential to our democracy. If the Library Board believes that the freedom to read is not essential to our democracy, then this is insanity, and it terrifies her.

- Vickie Natale stated that many things are wrong with the proposed changes to the Collection Development policy. The proposal removes parents as the responsible party for what their children are checking out, putting this on the librarians. Using the Texas penal code instead of the Miller test would make librarians criminals if a book that has been judged by some unknown entity as violating Texas penal code makes it into the hands of a teenager. The proposed policy removes the content "patrons are free to choose to reject what they read but they do not have the right to restrict what others can have the freedom to read". Instead, there is a vague exclusion allowing some material to be kept for research but not accessible by minors. As I asked last month, how are you going to keep anything from a 17-year-old unless you lock it away. The proposed policy removes the criteria that the book in question must be read in its entirety. Supporters of this change assert that even one page in a book makes it too graphic for teenagers. Yet even the scary board realized that the book brought before them was not sufficiently egregious to be removed from the library after you took the opportunity to actually read the book before making a decision on it. The proposed policy states that the Library Board's decision about a book challenge is final. This changes the scope of the board

from an advisory capacity as designated by city charter to that of a policy decision making board. In other words, the Library Board will be debating and ultimately rule on the fate of each book, making decisions instead of an advisory capacity. She thinks that city lawyers will say this equates to making policy which is beyond the authority of an advisory committee.

- Victoria Holland wanted to thank the members of this board for making sure the collection contains materials that represent people of diverse populations such as ages, races, and ethnicities, abilities, disabilities, and sexual orientation and recognizing that some materials present alternative viewpoints. She wants to say thank you for enshrining this in the body of our Collection Development policy. It is important to have a diverse representation in our libraries. Thank you so much for decoupling that from the politically fraught and charged phrase DEI. We all see in here that there is inclusion for diversity, and a sense of equity in the words written here. By decoupling that from politically charged rhetoric that specifically calls out to one political party rather than another, we are able to better institute what is important in our Collection Development policy. I think that is very wise. I also note that many of those who equate the phrase DEI to the books themselves might want to take a step back and question for themselves if they are indeed trying to protect diversity of material in libraries or if they are trying to protect political posturing in the libraries. She stated that she is a mother, and she is being told on one hand trust librarians and she is being told on the other she shouldn't trust librarians to keep pornography out of her kid's section. Having something in place that generously and easily defines what sexually explicit is, what pornography is for minors and moves it to a section where she as a parent can access it and better make decisions for her kids is something appreciated.

D. Approval of Minutes and Action on Absences

1. [24-1484](#) August 9 Library Board Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [August 9 Library Board Minutes - Draft](#)

A motion to approve the August minutes was made by Melinda De Los Santos and seconded by Jennifer Anderson. The motion passed unanimously.

E. Friends of CCPL Liaison Report

2. [24-1485](#) Friends of CCPL Liaison Report

- The Friends are getting ready for their annual meeting on October 12th, 1pm, at La Retama Central Library. There will be speakers at the meeting.

F. Director's Report

3. [24-1486](#) Director's Report

- The library operating hours are back to those prior to the summer. Garcia Library is closed from 4-6pm but opens again until 8pm. They are open for 6 hours on Saturdays

and close at 4pm on Fridays.

- September is Library Card Signup Month. Parents signing up are given a parental awareness brochure.
- The programming brochure is limited to events in September since operating hours will be determined by the proposed budget.
- FY2025 Budget Update- the alternate budget plan is \$192,329. This would lose 6 positions: 4 at Garcia Library, 1 at La Retama Central Library, and 1 at Harte.
- November 22 – December 2 – La Retama Will be closed.

G. Unfinished Business

H. New Business for Discussion and Possible Action

4. [24-1487](#) Collection Development Policy Discussion and Possible Action

Attachments: [CCPL Collection Development Policy Recommendations](#)
[CCPL Collection Development Policy SAMPLE](#)

• Collection Development Policy Discussion and Possible Action- Joan Carillo made a motion to submit the Collection Development Policy recommended changes and sample policy to Library Staff and City Council for review and further action. Melinda De Los Santos seconded the motion. Carroll Matthew made a Point of Order, stating that she thought the matter was settled, wanted to know how it was put on the agenda, who wrote it, and that they had no time to discuss the proposed changes, and thought that it should be removed from the agenda. Pat Craig opened the floor to discussion. Joan Carillo stated that she, Melinda De Los Santos, and Pat Craig worked on the proposed changes and took recommendations. Laura Garcia asked for clarification, she asked if the motion was to submit the proposal to staff and City Council. Jacqueline Salinas-Bazan assistant city attorney, stated that under the Library Board's policies and procedures any proposed policy changes must first go to staff, staff responds back to the board, and then after that it can go to City Council. Melinda De Los Santos asked where it says that, and Laura stated it was in the training presentation given by Jacqueline who also said it on the city secretary's website. Melinda stated that the manual says advisory boards can submit recommendations to City Council Jacqueline clarified that they can, but they must be given to staff first. Alice Hawkins made a motion to amend the motion to remove the phrase "and City Council". Carrol Matthews seconded the motion. Alice Hawkins called the question to vote on the amendment, and Carroll Matthews seconded. Jennifer Anderson, Alice Hawkins, Carroll Matthews, and Dora Wilburn voted in favor of calling the question, Pat Craig, Carrie Moore, Joan Carrillo, Melinda De Los Santo, and Dolores Rabon voted against calling the question. The motion to call the question did not pass and debate over the amendment continued. Alice Hawkins asked for clarification that policy recommendations must go to staff first, before going to City Council, Jacqueline Salinas-Bazan confirmed this. Sony Peronel, Assistant City Manager, explained the process of taking recommendations to staff and then to City Council. Carroll Matthews expressed concern that the board did not have enough time to review the proposed changes. Laura suggested reviewing the proposal and voting at the next meeting.

Melinda De Los Santos stated that the board members had the weekend to review. Jacqueline stated that if each member has not had time to review the changes thoroughly, the board should reconsider voting on them. Melinda asked how long City Council has to review agenda items, Jacqueline stated it is usually about a week and said each member needs to have ample opportunity to review agenda item, like every other board. Alice Hawkins stated that they just came off of a holiday weekend and that not everyone was going through e-mails and preparing for the upcoming board meeting. She felt that since the proposed changes were brought back up after disbanding the subcommittee since it could not come to consensus, they should come to the board for discussion before voting. She stated that the board was given instructions on proper procedures, including sending proposed changes to library staff first before going to city council and then asked where they were in this process. Pat Craig stated that everyone had a chance to review the proposed changes over the weekend and the motion is to pass the proposed changes on to library staff. She then stated that Alice Hawkins had previously motioned to amend the motion to remove the phrase "and City Council", and Carroll Matthews seconded the motion. Before voting, Jennifer Anderson asked if forwarding the proposed changes was on behalf of the board or those who wrote the proposal. It was clarified that this would be on behalf of the board. The motion to amend the motion passed unanimously. A motion to forward the proposed recommendations and sample policy to library staff was made by Joan Carrillo and seconded by Melinda De Los Santos. Pat Craig, Carrie Moore, Joan Carrillo, Melinda De Los Santos, and Dolores Rabon voted in favor of the motion. Jennifer Anderson, Alice Hawkins, Carroll Matthews, and Dora Wilburn voted against the motion. The motion to forward the proposed changes and sample policy to library staff passed.

5. [24-1488](#) Library Board Priorities Discussion and Possible Action

- Library Board Priorities Discussion and Possible Action- Laura stated that she will present priorities in coming months. Jennifer asked about the survey and stated we should be listening to active library users. Pat Craig suggested looking for grants and advancing digital resources, including the website. Laura explained why digital access is more expensive than print resources, and then gave the benefits and negatives of cloud library service. Joan Carrillo suggested partnering with food truck festivals, Laura stated that we have partnered with Teen Bookfest but we could look into that.

I. **Future Agenda Items**

None

J. **Adjournment**

Adjournment at 11:40 am.