

# MINUTES

## BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS CITY OF LOS ANGELES

**December 14, 2023**

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Commissioners was held at the Central Library starting at 11:03 a.m. on the above-written date.

### 1. Roll Call:

<b>Present:</b>	President	<b>Valerie Lynne Shaw</b>
	Vice President	<b>Linda Blank</b>
	Commissioner	<b>Kelly Besser</b>
	Commissioner	<b>Hiram Sims</b>

**Absent:** None.

**Also present:** City Librarian John F. Szabo, Assistant City Librarian Susan Broman; Deputy City Attorney Josh M. Templet; Administrative staff and members of the public.

2. Opening Remarks: Board President Shaw welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. Approval of the Minutes: Regular Meeting - November 9, 2023: APPROVED.

It was moved by Vice President Blank and seconded by Commissioner Sims to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meetings held November 9, 2023. The motion passed with 4 Ayes (Besser/Blank/Shaw/Sims); Noes: 0. Absent: 0.

### 4. **Public Comments on Matters**

Within the Board's Jurisdiction: None.

### 5. **City Librarian's Comments**

and Announcements: City Librarian John F. Szabo reported the following:

**LA Comic Con:** LAPL returned to L.A. Comic Con as a sponsor and served as judge of the Kids Costume Contest. The LAPL booth had 5,185 visitors over the three-day event and 645 library cards were issued.

**Street Vendor Clinic:** LAPL's Office of Civics and Community Services (OCCS) held its first Street Vendor Food Handling Workshop in Spanish at the Pio Pico-Koreatown Branch to offer information on the requirements, permits and training necessary to become a successful street vendor in the City of Los Angeles. This event helped 26 street vendors obtain their food handler certificates and benefited from information on using computers and Cell-Ed classes on mobile devices to enhance their financial literacy. Inclusive Action for the City, Community Power Collective and ELACC (East Los Angeles Community Corp.) collaborated with the Library for this event.

**Read LA! Literacy and Justice for All initiative:** Last month, LAPL's Education and Literacy Department partnered with Families in Schools on the campaign to launch Read LA! Guests gathered at the Central Library's Mark Taper Auditorium and they included LAUSD Superintendent Alberto Carvalho and actor, literacy advocate, executive producer and friend of LAPL, LeVar Burton. LeVar previewed clips from his new documentary, *The Right to Read*, which the Library will screen in its entirety at Central Library on February 3.

**Central American Celebration:** Last month, the Library in partnership with the Central American Federation of California (COFECA) held the first-ever Day of the Central American Celebration in Los Angeles at the Central Library. The event showcased the contributions of Central Americans and Caribbeans to communications, music, sports, science, gastronomy, philanthropy, and performances of Folkloric dance representing the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

**2023 FOCAL Award:** The Friends of Children and Literature (FOCAL) presented author Ernesto Cisneros with the 2023 FOCAL Award for his book "*Efren Divided*," which also won the Pura Belpré Award from the American Library Association in 2021. Board President Valerie Lynne Shaw welcomed guests to the event. This Award is given to a book that enriches a child's knowledge and understanding of California and its history, and includes a custom-made puppet modeled on a character in the book. One puppet goes to the author and a second to the Children's Literature Department for display. Three student winners of a FOCAL essay contest read their winning essays at the event.

**Leo Politi Artwork Exhibit:** For many years, LAPL has had a collection of paintings of original artwork by Los Angeles children's author Leo Politi whose art can also be found in many LAPL branch libraries. The purchase of the artwork was approved by the Board of Library Commissioners in 1965. An exhibit has been created with 14 of these original paintings, and is on display in the Children's Literature Area. Tina Princenthal, Senior Librarian, Children's Department, wrote a wonderful blog post about Leo Politi, his artwork and contributions to the Library, and to Los Angeles.

**Swing Dancing in Westwood:** The Westwood Branch Library recently transformed into a glamorous Swing Era dancing venue. The Pepper Moons, a six-piece swing band, got everyone dancing. Vice President Blank attended the event, which was sponsored by the Friends of the Westwood Library and the Los Angeles Musical Salon.

**LA BioBlitz Challenge:** The Library recently completed participation in the annual LA BioBlitz Challenge. During the four-week challenge, 1,423 participants joined to help protect and support biodiversity in the City, recording a total of 9,087 observations. Observers helped reveal 412 new green grids on the map by uploading 988 observations in data cold spots. This crowdsourced data is critical in helping researchers and scientists at LA Sanitation & Environment (LASAN) better understand and protect biodiversity in Los Angeles.

**6. City Librarian's Reports:****Consent Items**

It was moved by Vice President Blank and seconded by Commissioner Besser to approve the following resolution. The motion passed unanimously with 4 Ayes (Besser/Blank/Shaw/Sims); Noes: 0. Absent: 0.

**a. Acceptance of gift from the Friends of the Sunland-Tujunga Branch Library****LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2023- 45 (C-36)**

**RESOLVED**, that the gift of an EIKI EK-700LU LASER PROJECTOR – WUXGA/7000 LUMENS, valued at \$4,588.84, received from the Friends of Sunland-Tujunga Branch Library to be utilized in the Sunland-Tujunga Branch Library to be accepted; and

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a letter of thanks be sent to the Friends of Sunland-Tujunga Branch Library, expressing the grateful appreciation of the Board and staff for the generous gift.

**Discussion Items****b. Approval of Gift Agreement with the owners of Angel City Press, Inc. for the management and operation of the Library's "Angel City Press at Los Angeles Public Library" ("ACP at LAPL") and related contracts**

City Librarian John F. Szabo recommended approval of a gift agreement consisting of the assets of Angel City Press, including the name, the inventory, intellectual property, website, social media accounts, etc. He said the agreement with the owners of Angel City Press, Inc. (ACP) is for the management and operation of the Library's "Angel City Press at Los Angeles Public Library," as well as related contracts and accounting transactions.

Ms. Szabo stated that Angel City Press is a local publisher of very high quality, nonfiction books, which was founded in 1992 by Paddy Callistro and Scott McCauley and has engaged more than 100 Southern California authors and produced more than 135 books focused on the art, architecture, history, and personalities of Los Angeles and Southern California. He mentioned that KCET had recently produced a short film about Angel City Press and its importance to Southern California.

Mr. Szabo reported that ACP owners had approached the Library with the idea of giving ACP to the LAPL, as they contemplated retirement, but they still wanted to preserve the legacy of ACP and continue telling the stories of Southern California. He said Library staff consulted with the City Attorney's Office as well as some outside counsel who were engaged with all the components of this gift; and the Mayor's Office staff have been kept informed of this transaction.

Mr. Szabo stated that this gift will help the Library continue its mission of preserving LA's history, Southern California history, telling the untold stories of Southern California. He pointed out that content from the LAPL collections have been used by Angel City Press authors in a variety of their books. He said this gift would allow greater opportunities to showcase LAPL collections and to expand digital access to ebooks and e-content and even children's books, which is something ACP has not done in the past, as well as provide opportunities to present programs on publishing and how the publishing process works and also continue a legacy of a very well regarded LA institution.

Mr. Szabo stated that this item also includes several contracts: A contract with Blackwood Books, who currently oversees ACP's editorial work; a contract with Gibbs Smith, ACP's publisher and book distributor who also manages author royalties; and all the current author contracts signed with Angel City Press that will need to be signed with the Library upon approval. He stated that the authors hold the copyright for their intellectual property, and that transfer of funds within the Library would allow to fund the initial operation of this gift.

### **DISCUSSION**

Vice President Blank asked if this gift would pay for itself over time. Mr. Szabo replied that he expects that it would pay for itself, but the goal and decision making will not be based on generating a particular amount of revenue.

Commissioner Sims asked about the assessed value of Angel City press as an entity. Deputy City Attorney Josh Templet replied that we don't have a formal evaluation because it's an operation and not an object; however, Library staff have been poring over the accounts ACP provided and have been looking at year to year profits and losses, which was the information needed to know as a business transaction.

Commissioner Sims asked if each author had to re-sign with ACP and then sign new contracts with the City. Mr. Templet replied yes and that this is the first stage of negotiations with the 86 authors and the proposed contracts. The Board would need to approve the contracts with the authors, and ask the City Council for approval as well. Ultimately the authors will have to sign the amended contracts.

Commissioner Sims commented that Angel City Press has an incredible reputation; they make the most beautiful books, and he doesn't think there is a publisher in LA that produces the quality that they produce and the Library would be blessed to have the press as a part of the library system.

Vice President Blank asked if the financial obligations that will be incurred had been budgeted for in the current budget or the proposed budget. Mr. Szabo replied that the Library has planned for that.

It was moved by Commissioner Besser and seconded by Vice President Blank to approve the following resolution. The motion passed unanimously with 4 Ayes (Besser/Blank/Shaw/Sims); Noes: 0. Absent: 0.

**LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2023-46 (C-37)**

**WHEREAS**, the owners of Angel City Press, Inc. (ACP) wish to irrevocably and unconditionally donate and transfer to the Library the right and obligations to the donated assets and assumed liabilities, subject to the terms and conditions of the Gift Agreement. The gift is a publishing operation and materials related to the art, history, and culture of Southern California, particularly of Los Angeles;

**WHEREAS**, on December 14, 2023, the Board of Library Commissioners (Board) approved a Gift Agreement to accept the ACP publishing operation and materials related to the art, history, and culture of Southern California, particularly of Los Angeles;

**WHEREAS**, on December 14, 2023, the Board approved a contract with Blackwood Books, LLC, to manage and operate ACP, renamed as the Library's "ACP at LAPL" publishing operation;

**WHEREAS**, on December 14, 2023, the Board approved a contract with Gibbs M. Smith, Inc., to provide printing services and distribution for "ACP at LAPL" materials;

**WHEREAS**, on December 14, 2023, the Board approved the transfer and amendment of the 86 author agreements, enclosed in Attachment D of the City Librarian's Board Report, to the Library for the exclusive license in the copyright of the authors' works;

**WHEREAS**, on December 14, 2023, the Board authorized Library staff to create Sub-Account 372 I Fund 831 to deposit and expend funds related to the operation and management of the Library's "ACP at LAPL" publishing operation;

**WHEREAS**, on December 14, 2023, the Board authorized Library staff to transfer the amount of \$300,000 from the Library's Fund 300 Account 1010 to Fund 831 Sub-Account 372 to compensate Blackwood Books, LLC, for services in accordance with the contract; and

**WHEREAS**, on December 14, 2023, the Board authorized Library staff to advance Blackwood Books, LLC, funds in the amount of \$120,000 from Fund 831 Sub-Account 372, upon commencement of its contract, to ensure a successful transition from ACP to the Library's "ACP at LAPL".

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board adopts the recommendations and findings of the City Librarian's Board Report, including the approval of the gift agreement with the owners of ACP; the award and execution of the contract between the Library and Blackwood Books LLC, for the management and operation of the Library's "ACP at LAPL" publishing operation; the award and execution of the contract between the Library and Gibbs M. Smith, Inc., for the printing and distribution of "ACP at LAPL" materials; the award and execution of amended versions of the 86 author

Library Resolution  
No. 2023-46 (C-37) Cont.

agreements enclosed in Attachment D of this report, for the exclusive license in the copyright of the authors' works; the approval to create sub-account 372 in Fund 831 to deposit and expend funds related to the Library's "ACP at LAPL" publishing operation; to transfer the amount of \$300,000 from Fund 300 Account 1010 to Fund 831 Sub-account 372; and, to advance the amount of \$120,000 from Fund 831 Sub-Account 372 to Blackwood Books LLC; and

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board hereby authorizes the City Librarian and the City Attorney to make technical and clerical corrections, if needed, to the gift agreement, the two contracts, and the 86 amended author agreements.

- **Staff Presentation: Photo Collection**

Ana Campos, Assistant Director of Central Library Services, provided an overview of the Central Library and its subject departments, which hold a Collection of 2.7 million books, 10,000 magazine subscriptions, 5 million US Patents, and more than 200,000 maps. She stated that the Central Library also has a Photo Collection Department that currently manages close to 4 million photos. This collection was started in the 1940's with mostly donated photos documenting life in Los Angeles. She introduced Senior Librarian Christina Rice, who provided an overview of the Photo Collection.

Christina Rice, Senior Librarian, Photo Collection, reported that for 15 years she had been overseeing the Photo Collection. She said that of the nearly 4 million photos in the collection, 139,000 are accessible around the world via Tessa Digital Collection. She stated that this collection documents the history of Los Angeles and it is made up of several major collections, which include: The Security Pacific National Bank Photo Collection, The Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) Collection, and the Luther Ingersoll Collection. It also includes *The Herald Examiner* (1870-1989) and *The Valley Times* (1946-1970) Newspaper Collections, as well as several smaller collections by individual photographers such as Lucille Stewart, Harry Quillen, Kelly Holiday, Herman Schultice, Mildred Harris, Annie Lasky, Ansel Adams, William Ray, and the Roland Curtis Collection.

Ms. Rice stated that the *Shades of LA* Collection was created by the Library and it is the legacy of Senior Librarian Carolyn Kozo Cole, who oversaw the Photo Collection in the 1990s and started the Photo Friends Group. She said Carolyn and Kathy Kobayashi launched the "Shades of LA Project" from 1991 to 1997, and they hired photographers to make copy prints of the photos brought in by people in the community, which resulted in an archive of approximately 10,000 photos that reflects the diversity of our city. She pointed out that the State Library launched the Shades of California project and helped fund other libraries to do their own shades project.

Ms. Rice reported that the members of the Photo Friends Group are very involved and they do fundraising and work on grants to fund cataloging and digitization projects, which helped her hire an archivist for three years and a cataloger for two years to organize and digitize the entire *Valley Times Collection*, which is now online. She stated

that the Library received a preservation award from the Los Angeles Conservancy and another preservation award from the Governor of California for this project.

Ms. Rice also reported about the most recent acquisition, which is a collection of about 12,000 photos taken by a postal worker named John Verzi, who in his spare time photographed A-list celebrities such as Marilyn Monroe and Jimi Hendrix. Mr. Verzi did not share the photos in his lifetime, but after he passed, the collection was made available and City Librarian John Szabo helped LAPL obtain it. She noted that it has received a huge amount of media interest and the Library received a front page feature in the *LA Times*, and KPCC as well as KCRW interviewed her for this story. She concluded by stating the photos get used around the world in a variety of ways, which makes it a world class collection.

### **DISCUSSION**

Vice President Blank asked if the use of the photos was free. Ms. Rice replied that LAPL has a fee structure for the use of the photos based on whether they would be used for generating revenue or not, but there is no cost for non-revenue use. For online images on Tessa, there is a charge for higher resolution files based on size.

In response to President Shaw's question to Ms. Rice about her job, Ms. Rice replied that her job gives her back so much, because she learns about the city on a regular basis and helps her connect with people around the city and around the world, and it also gives her opportunities to expand her creativity such as creating exhibits and publishing books using the Photo Collection.

Commissioner Sims asked in what forms does the Library accept photographs. Ms. Rice replied that because the photos are made available for reproduction and use, copyright is one of the considerations. She said the Library takes any photo donation if they are about Los Angeles; however, they don't take digital prints because LAPL is being entrusted with the originals and add that the donations need to be with no strings attached.

Commissioner Sims asked about a manual for the Shades of LA project. Ms. Rice said Carolyn and Kathy Kobayashi developed the "how to manual" and the Photo Friends Group had published a book a couple of years ago that reproduced that manual.

Vice President Blank inquired about the friends group. Ms. Rice replied that the Photo Friends Group is a small but very dedicated group. Over a decade ago, Photo Friends started publishing books and they have been so successful that they sustain the group financially and rely less on membership. They also curate exhibits and write books and assist in many other ways.

Commissioner Besser asked if there was a collection policy and what the appraisal process is like. Ms. Rice replied that the collection development policy is that they accept any photos as long as they are in or about Los Angeles, with no strings attached, because staff never knows what item will generate interest..

Commissioner Besser asked Ms. Rice if she had full time staff currently. Ms. Rice replied that she has a full time administrative clerk and a second messenger clerk. She pointed out that The Valley Times Archivist is now her full-time librarian.

**8. Commissioners' Comments  
and Announcements**

Board President Shaw thanked City Librarian John Szabo for his leadership, and thanked everyone for contributing to this entity and to the lives of everyone in the city. She said she was honored to be on this Board and wished everyone happy holidays.

**9. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 12:11 p.m.

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Valerie Lynne Shaw  
President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Raquel M. Borden  
Board Executive Assistant

Approved: 1/25/2024