

MINUTES

BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS CITY OF LOS ANGELES

June 22, 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:**

Present:	President	Bích Ngọc Cao
	Vice-President	Kathryn Eidmann (Via Zoom)
	Commissioner	Linda Blank
	Commissioner	Hiram Sims
Absent:	Commissioner	Valerie Lynne Shaw

Also present: City Librarian John F. Szabo; Deputy City Attorney Josh Templet; Library staff and members of the public.

2. **Opening Remarks:** None.

3. **Approval of the Minutes:** Regular Meeting - May 11, 2023

It was moved by Commissioner Blank and seconded by Commissioner Sims to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held on May 11, 2023. The motion passed with 3 Ayes (Cao/Blank/Sims); Abstained: 1 (Eidmann); Noes: 0. Absent: 1 (Shaw).

4. **Public Comments on Matters**
Within the Board's Jurisdiction: None.

5. **City Librarian's Comments**
and Announcements: City Librarian John F. Szabo provided the following information:

Stop the Summer Slide Press Conference: The Library Partnered with the LA Unified School District (LAUSD) to promote our Summer Reading Program and Student Success Card at a press conference at Alma Reaves Woods-Watts Branch Library. City Librarian John F. Szabo and Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho read stories to students from the Beyond the Bell program at Barrett Elementary school. Library Commission President Bich Ngoc Cao and Commissioner Blank were in attendance as well. Each student received their own Student Success card. KNBC, KTLA, Univision, Spectrum TV, and Channel 35 covered the press conference.

Diversity and Inclusion Apprenticeships: For the sixth year, LAPL's Diversity and Inclusion Apprenticeship program will host 12 apprentices who will be mentored by staff throughout the system. The program kicked off last week with an in-person orientation program at Central Library. The apprentices will also attend weekly workshops that include days with directors, divisions or departments, field trips, and collaborative learning and training. This paid internship program seeks to encourage young people to consider librarianship as a career and will run for 10 weeks until August 19.

June Jubilee/Celebration of Black Excellence: LAPL held its first annual June Jubilee in recognition of Juneteenth and to celebrate the rich culture and contributions of African Americans. The opening ceremony included a libation ceremony, West African Drummers and dancers, and a performance of "Lovely Day" by the Faithful Central Choir. Visitors engaged in a host of activities. Commissioner Shaw spoke at the event, and Board President Cao and Commissioner Sims were in attendance. Mr. Szabo thanked staff members from Central Library and branch libraries, and the award-winning Changing Tones Advisory Committee for organizing the event.

Pride Parade Success: More than 80 staff members, family members and volunteers marched in the annual Pride Parade that drew thousands to Hollywood. The Library's contingent included Street Fleet vehicle Ginger, the library minivan Sassafras, the Book Bike, and the Library's *Pride Parade Prancers* with their synchronized book carts. More than 500 promotional items were distributed to parade attendees.

Summer Reading Program: LAPL is off to a strong start with Summer Reading. This week, registration climbed to more than 14,500 participants who have read 4,416 books so far and have earned 34,185 badges. Mr. Szabo commented that the design of this year's canvas tote bag is very popular.

ABC Coverage of the Zoo Pop-up: Eva Mitnick, Director of Engagement and Learning Division, joined Renae Cotero from the LA Zoo on air and in studio during the ABC7 Morning show yesterday. Host Tony Cabrera interviewed Eva and Renae to discuss the series of LAPL/LA Zoo programs hosted at libraries this summer, Explore LA partnership, and the Summer with the Library program.

"Dear Cairo...My Dear Cairo" Photography Exhibit at the Venice - Abbot Kinney Memorial Branch: Zeena M. Pliska, an Egyptian/American artist and children's book author, shared photographs for the exhibition, which is being presented in conjunction with the release of her picture book, *Egyptian Lullaby*.

6. City Librarian's Reports:

Consent Item(s)

It was moved by President Cao and seconded by Commissioner Sims to approve the following resolutions. The motion passed with 3 Ayes (Cao/Blank/Sims); Abstained: 1 (Eidmann); Noes: 0. Absent: 1 (Shaw).

**a. Acceptance of gift from the
Friends of the Platt Branch Library**

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2023-27 (C-20)

RESOLVED, That a gift of \$3,000 received from The Friends of the Platt Branch Library for the benefit of the Platt Branch Library be accepted and deposited into Trust Fund 831, Account 257; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, That a letter of thanks be sent to The Friends of the Platt Branch Library, expressing the grateful appreciation of the Board and staff for the generous gift.

**b. Approval to accept a gift from the
Friends of the Chatsworth Branch Library**

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2023-28

RESOLVED, That a gift of three new Sandusky storage cabinets for the Chatsworth Branch Library to be used to store program materials, valued at \$2775.67, received from The Friends of the Chatsworth Branch Library be accepted; and

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

**c. Approval to approve the General Manager's
Expense Account for Fiscal Year 2023-24.**

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2023-29 (C-21)

RESOLVED, That the Board of Library Commissioners hereby authorizes the City Librarian or designee to receive an advance or be reimbursed for miscellaneous business-related expenditures such as business meals, taxi fares, parking fees, etc., in an amount not to exceed \$3,500 for the period of July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, That said amount be encumbered in the Office and Administrative Expense Account No. 6010, Library Fund No. 300.

Discussion Items

**d. Approval to authorize the City Librarian or designee
to approve transfers of funds of \$50,000 or less
within Fund 300 Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget**

It was moved by Commissioner Blank and seconded by Commissioner Sims to approve the following resolution. The motion passed with 3 Ayes (Cao/Blank/Sims); Abstained: 1 (Eidmann); Noes: 0. Absent: 1 (Shaw).

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2023-30 (C-22)

WHEREAS, Library Staff requested that the City Librarian or Library Business Office Manager have authority to transfer amounts of \$50,000 or less between Accounts within the Library's Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget, Fund 300, Department 44:

THEREFORE, RESOLVED, That the Board of Library Commissioners hereby adopts the recommendations and findings in the City Librarian's Board Report and grants authority to the City Librarian or Library Business Office Manager to transfer amounts of \$50,000 or less between Accounts within the Library's Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board hereby authorizes the City Librarian and City Attorney to make technical corrections as deemed necessary.

e. Approval to award Contract for the After-Hours Use of the Woodland Hills Branch Library Parking Lot

It was moved by President Cao and seconded by Commissioner Blank to approve the following resolution. The motion passed with 3 Ayes (Cao/Blank/Sims); Abstained: 1 (Eidmann); Noes: 0. Absent: 1 (Shaw).

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2023-31 (C-23)

WHEREAS, on April 27, 2023, the Board of Library Commissioners ("Board") approved the release of a Request for Bids for After-Hours Use of the Woodland Hills Library Parking Lot (RFB) located at 22200 Ventura Boulevard, Woodland Hills, CA 91364, which contains 43 spaces and includes ingress and egress through a single driveway on San Feliciano Drive (Library Resolution No. 2023-17);

WHEREAS, the RFB was released on April 28, 2023 with a proposal due date of May 26, 2023;

WHEREAS, Addendum No. 1 to the RFB was released May 2, 2023. It included notice that the Business Inclusion Program had been waived and removed the "mandatory" status of the Pre-Bid Conference. The Pre-Bid Conference was held on May 10, 2023;

WHEREAS, On May 24, 2023, the Library received one bid. Library staff reviewed the bid and found it to be responsive to the RFB submittal requirements;

WHEREAS, funds will be deposited into Fund 831, Code 246, Woodland Hills Parking, and will be used for facility maintenance and improvements:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board adopts the recommendations and findings of the City Librarian's Board Report and approves the contract with Estate 1519, Inc., dba Casalena, for the use of the Woodland Hills Library Parking Lot; and

Library Resolution
No. 2023-31 (C-23) Cont.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board authorizes the City Librarian and the City Attorney to make technical and clerical changes, if needed, to the contract; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board authorizes the Board President and the Board Secretary to execute the contract upon completion of all required approvals.

**f. Approval to award a contract to Haworth, Inc., to provide
furniture and related products and services to the Library Department**

It was moved by Commissioner Blank and seconded by Commissioner Sims to approve the following resolution. The motion passed with 3 Ayes (Cao/Blank/Sims); Abstained: 1 (Eidmann); Noes: 0. Absent: 1 (Shaw).

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2023-32 (C-24)

WHEREAS, the Library owns various facilities throughout the City of Los Angeles and requires the expertise of a professional contractor to design office space and install office furniture and equipment;

WHEREAS, the City of Charlotte, North Carolina (Charlotte) awarded contract number 202000606 to the Contractor in connection with Charlotte's Request for Proposals No. 269-2019-105 issued on June 19, 2019, for furniture, installation, and related products and services;

WHEREAS, pursuant to Charter Section 371(e)(8) and Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 10.15(a)(8), the Library may use or "piggyback" on the existing Charlotte Contract, because contracts for cooperative arrangements with other governmental agencies for the utilization of the purchasing contracts and professional, scientific, expert, or technical services contracts of those agencies are an exception to the City's competitive bidding requirements;

WHEREAS, funds are available to compensate Haworth, Inc., for materials and services in accordance with the contract:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Library Commissioners (Board) adopts the recommendations and findings of the City Librarian's Board Report and approves the contract with Haworth Inc., to provide furniture, installation and related products and services for the Library;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board authorizes the City Librarian and the City Attorney to make technical and clerical changes, if needed, to the contract;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board authorizes the Board President and the Board Secretary to execute the contract upon the completion of all required approvals.

7. PRESENTATION: The Library Experience Office

Karen Pickard-Four, Principal Librarian, and Edna Osepans, Supervising Social Worker III, from the Library Experience Office (LibEx), provided an overview and update on the Library Experience Office.

Ms. Pickard-Four stated that starting in 2017, City Librarian John Szabo, Assistant City Librarian Susan Broman and staff started to look for alternatives to address safe and welcoming library spaces to make sure everyone is able to use the library in an equitable fashion. The Library hired a consultant to work on the Safety and Security Project that included staff at all levels, and began to explore different strategies for working with patrons in crisis in libraries. She said LibEx has engaged with library staff and experts from around the country, who are facing similar challenges.

Ms. Pickard-Four introduced the Library Experience Office staff, including Community Service Representatives (CSR), a new classification of staff that will be working in libraries to help staff when LAPD doesn't need to be called. They are currently in training learning de-escalation, how to work with people who possibly have mental health concerns or substance use, and other skills. A new social worker has been hired and will begin at the end of July.

Ms. Pickard-Four reported that some of the projects they've been working on since 2021 include office hours for staff to contact them one-on-one; a speaker series to hear from individuals who work with people in crisis, the unhoused, and people with substance use; and creation of the Safety Chronicles, a monthly newsletter with staff-written best practices on safety. They have provided training for over 420 staff members in responding to possible opioid overdoses using NARCAN. Once a branch is trained they receive a supply of NARCAN. She said that three to four lives have been saved because of this training. The LibEx staff does branch and department visits for debriefing after incidents, and uses a book called Trauma-trauma, a framework for supporting patrons.

Ms. Pickard-Four stated that part of LibEx's focus is training on de-escalation and boundary and staff has to be trained and trained again, and has sent a small cohort of four to the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI), a nationwide organization that does training around crisis intervention, and another cohort of four will be trained in December and continue until all LAPL staff is trained. She reported that LibEx has been working on contracts for Mental Health and Social Services providers as part of the three-prong approach to support staff.

Edna Osepans, Supervising Social Worker III, talked about her background as a licensed clinical social worker and has about 20 years of experience in the field of social work. She noted that she is the supervising social worker for the entire Library system and one of the major parts is to provide clinical support and consultation to staff. Along with her colleagues, they offer staff weekly office hours to address challenges or safety concerns staff is experiencing. They also attend staff meetings and visit the branches to meet staff, and offer them support and intervention techniques such as how they engage patrons who are experiencing a mental health breakdown.

Ms. Osepans said another part of her duties is to work closely with our contracted agencies in an effort to provide mental health services and community resources to patrons. Currently, the library has two contracted providers (Constellation Therapy Group and SISTAHFRIENDS, and more contracts are in the approval process. She said Constellation Therapy Group and their licensed clinicians work out of the Central Library and SISTAHFRIENDS are trained community healthcare workers who work out of the Central-Southern region. She also meets with their teams daily to talk about patron needs, intervention techniques, and challenges the communities or neighborhoods are having such as the increase in evictions or the shutting down of Juvenile Hall detention centers in LA County, and strategize on how to best help patrons in our communities.

Ms. Osepans stated that another big part of her job is to establish a network of reliable community resources to develop a list of resources for patrons. She reaches out to different agencies in the community to invite them to do an in-service for staff and develop collaborative relationships among community resources. She also attends SPA4 weekly meetings, and Neighborhood Connect days, which are similar to The Source at Central Library. The resources at these events seek to meet the needs of patrons and community members, and a good way for her to meet different agencies and make those really important connections and advocate collaboration to better serve patrons.

Ms. Osepans also spoke about data collection and documentation to track progress, identify trends and determine if follow up is needed. Another project she is working on with the Library Experience Office to develop a social worker program to bring in social workers; and hopefully, one day bring social work interns into the library system to be able to provide support and as many resources as possible to staff and patrons, as well as to the community.

Ms. Osepans concluded with some examples of assistance provided to patrons and staff, noting that last month, SISTAHFRIENDS helped a couple who was living out of their car and connected them with a local shelter and provided a suitcase to take their belongings to the shelter. Another example, a single mom with three kids living in a shelter in Skid Row came into the library and was connected with interim housing specifically for families and children.

Discussion

Board President Cao thanked the presenters and said she was grateful for the work they are doing; this has been such a long time coming, and there's much more work to do, but it is great to see progress.

Commissioner Blank said she was thrilled that the Library has this new component, but she is concerned and remains concerned, because there are 72 branches, and many of them have the same problems that Central Library has; however, they have a lot less staff and a lot less support. She is hopeful that the library staff in the branches will get the kind of support that the people here get because problems arise frequently and librarians are the ones that have to deal with all of it.

Ms. Pickard-Four responded that LibEx has been providing training system-wide and they are placing resources as they come on board in as many libraries as possible. She said they are having mental health resources on site so they don't have to wait an hour or more.

Commissioner Blank asked if LibEx had considered using social workers that still need their hours to get their license. Ms. Osepans replied that the positions are open to both masters level and licensed social workers and she is able to also supervise licensed clinicians, but yes, they are welcomed as well.

Board President Cao commented the Mayor's Office has expressed support of this initiative, and is also hoping that other city departments, not just libraries in other cities, can also learn from this as well.

Commissioner Sims thanked the presenters for the incredible work they are doing and asked about what the goals were for 3 years down the road with social workers. How many social workers would you like to have per region?

Mr. Szabo replied that the staff is asking those very questions. Currently, they are just a few steps down this road, but he doesn't think that LAPL will have all of the services staff would like to have and that are needed in our community. That's a policy decision for this Board in terms of how much of the budget wants to bring to bear on this particular area. He said that down the line he sees having more social workers, both more positions funded to hire and partnering with contractual services, but he doesn't foresee having social workers at all 73 locations.

Vice President Eidmann stated that this has been a priority for the Library and the Board for a number of years and it's exciting seeing it actualized. She thanked the presenters for the way they framed the work around supporting patrons and staff and giving staff the tools they need to effectively engage with patrons and provide the strongest library services possible.

Vice President Eidmann added to Mr. Szabo's comment regarding the future and clarify that social workers aren't intended to be the sole first line of emergency response anytime an incident comes up in the library and the system was designed with the customer service representatives, who would be the first line responding to incidents that arise on the ground and third-party contractors for services such as mental health and wellness, etc. to try to meet longer term needs.

8. Commissioners' Comments and Announcements

Board President Cao - Farewell Announcement

Board President Cao announced that this is her last meeting with the Library Commission, since her term ends on June 30. She said this has been one of the highest honors of her life to serve on the Library Commission. She stated that she has had some really memorable moments with the Library, some wonderful, some difficult. We lost two commissioners to illness, lived through one global pandemic, a lot of Zoom meetings, and many librarians working in emergency situations.

President Cao said she was grateful that during the pandemic, one teenage punk band went viral and brought millions of people to the library and made us look

super cool. We had one young poet who grew up in our libraries become the President's inaugural poet; and last, but not least, LAPL won a gold medal from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

President Cao provided statistics that illustrated the work done together during her tenure on the Board. In 2022, the LAPL was the first library to hit 10 million digital media checkouts in a calendar year. During her tenure, more than 841 people have graduated from Career Online High School; more than 11,000 programs were conducted to assist with citizenship and immigrant integration and more than 80,000 applicants were helped with preparation for naturalization; nearly 900,000 students have received Student Success cards, and 600,000 ballots have been dropped off at ballot drop boxes at LAPL libraries. She said behind these stats are people whose lives have been touched and changed, including hers. She thanked staff for running the best and most innovative library system in America and said she was proud to know them and have worked with them.

Next Board Meeting Notice: The next Regular Meeting of the Board is scheduled for Thursday, July 13, 2023, at 11:00 a.m. at the Central Library, in the Boardroom. Public comment will be available via Zoom for those who cannot attend in person.

9. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned 12:18 p.m.

ATTEST:

Bích Ngọc Cao
President

Raquel M. Borden
Board Executive Assistant