

# MINUTES

## **BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS CITY OF LOS ANGELES**

**June 26, 2025**

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Commissioners was held at the Central Library starting at 11:08 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>
	Commissioner	<b>Mayra Valadez</b>

**Absent:** None

**Also present:** City Librarian John F. Szabo, Asst. City Librarian Susan Broman; Deputy City Attorney Josh M. Templet; and staff.

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

**3. Approval of the Minutes:** Regular Meeting - May 22, 2025

It was moved by Commissioner Valadez and seconded by Vice President Blank to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held on May 22, 2025. The motion passed with 5 Ayes (Besser/Blank/Shaw/Valadez); Noes: 0. Absent: 1 (Sims).

*(Commissioner Sims arrived.)*

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

**5. City Librarian's Comments**  
**and Announcements:** City Librarian John F. Szabo reported on past and upcoming library events.

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

### **Discussion Items**

**a. Adoption of the Library Department's**  
**Operation Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26**

City Librarian John F. Szabo recommended adoption of the Library Department Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26 in the amount of \$269,765,136. He noted this was an increase of \$13,263,206 from the previous year's Charter-mandated appropriation, and provided an overview of the budget, which includes funding for four new positions that were requested in the budget, as well as \$93,873,728 (34.80%) for Related Costs, and adds \$9,455,482 million in funding for Alterations and Improvements (A&I) projects at branch

libraries and Central Library, pointing out that it was still not enough to meet all of the deferred maintenance needs in the library. He reported that due to anticipated CAP rates adjustments, \$668,000 were moved from an integrated library automation system project as contingency and were used to adjust direct related costs.

Mr. Szabo also reported that due to pending staff layoffs at other departments; particularly, General Services, which provides maintenance and custodial services to LAPL, the Library had agreed to fund dedicated General Services maintenance staff, who will be exclusively assigned to the Library. He also mentioned that initial city-wide layoff projections of 1,600 were reduced to 573 positions following the mayor's budget release, and that the Library had identified several vacancies where it could potentially place employees

### **Discussion**

Commissioner Valadez said she was very pleased to see that funding for alterations and improvements for Central Library and branches had increased and asked if those funds were already dedicated or if they were going to identify projects. Mr. Szabo replied that there is a list of projects that are already associated with these dollars.

It was moved by Vice President Blank and seconded by Commissioner Besser to approve the following resolution. The motion passed with 5 Ayes (Besser/Blank/Shaw/Sims/Valadez); Noes: 0. Absent: 0.

### **LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2025-17 (C-13)**

**WHEREAS**, On November 14, 2024, the Board of Library Commissioners (Board) approved the Library Department Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26 in the amount of \$269,765,136 to fund Library services and programs (Library Resolution Number 2024-37 [C-33]); and

**WHEREAS**, Staff recommends the adoption of the Library Department Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26 as approved by the Mayor and City Council in the amount of \$269,765,136:

**THEREFORE, RESOLVED**, That the Board of Library Commissioners hereby adopts and certifies the Adopted Library Department Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26 in the amount of \$269,765,136, as approved by the Mayor and City Council.

#### **b. Adoption of the Library Department's Personnel Resolution for Fiscal Year 2025-26**

City Librarian John F. Szabo recommended the Board adopt the Library's Personnel Resolution for Fiscal Year 2025-2026, and it contains the list of all of the classifications and the number of positions that the Board is authorizing for the library department.

It was moved by Commissioner Besser and seconded by Commissioner Valadez to approve the following resolution. The motion passed with 5 Ayes (Besser/Blank/Shaw/Sims/Valadez); Noes: 0. Absent: 0.

**LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2025-18 (C-14)****PERSONNEL RESOLUTION****A RESOLUTION FIXING PERSONNEL IN THE LIBRARY DEPARTMENT OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026.**

**WHEREAS**, this Board has considered the various classification of employees and the number of positions in each classification approved by the City Council as part of the Library Department's Budget for the fiscal year 2025-2026; and

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with the City Charter, Section 511(a), it is the desire of the Board to adopt a resolution authorizing personnel for fiscal year 2025-2026 to include both positions approved by the City Council and those authorized by the Board of Library Commissioners.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

1. Effective July 1, 2025, the following classes of positions are hereby authorized in the Library Department, and the number of positions, and code numbers and titles as set forth in the attached schedule "A" are hereby fixed for such classes of positions and shall be known as the 2025-2026 Library Personnel Resolution.
2. Memoranda of Understanding approved by the Board of Library Commissioners, and the City Council where appropriate shall be considered to be incorporated into this resolution. The provisions of each of the Memoranda of Understanding shall take precedence over any conflicting provisions contained in this resolution, but only for those employees in classes and/or positions within the employee representation unit to which the various Memoranda of Understanding apply.
3. It is the intent of the Board that all City Council actions relating to salaries and benefits and affecting classes in the Library Department will become effective on the same basis and date as those approved by the City Council for council-controlled employees.

*(The entire resolution will be included in the official Minutes Book records.)*

**c. Approval to initiate the process to consider naming the Central Library Board of Library Commissioners Meeting Room in recognition of Leontyne Butler King**

City Librarian John F. Szabo recommended approval to initiate the process to name the Board of Library Commissioners meeting room in recognition of Leontyne Butler King, who was the first African American to serve on this board. She was appointed in 1961 by Mayor Sam Yorty; then, in 1968, she became the first African American elected President of the Board of Library Commissioners.

Mr. Szabo stated that Commissioner King was very dedicated to improving library service throughout Los Angeles; particularly, underserved communities in African American neighborhoods, and she was a great advocate for standalone library buildings in the 1960s, when LAPL had many storefront libraries in rented spaces. Commissioner King was also

appointed to the American Library Trustees Association Board of Directors in 1969 and she advocated for public libraries in several States in the American West Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. She worked with the American Library Association on Library Advocacy as well as the California Library Association to support libraries nationwide.

Mr. Szabo mentioned that the meeting room at the Vernon Leon H. Washington, Jr. Memorial Branch Library had been named the "Leontyne B. King Community Room"; nevertheless, Commissioner King was someone who was very invested in libraries and a great local and national advocate; therefore, it would be appropriate to name the Board Room in her honor and recommended initiating the three-month process of soliciting input from the community on the LAPL website. He stated that staff would bring back a report upon conclusion of the input period.

### **Discussion**

President Shaw thanked Mr. Szabo for championing this effort. She said the King family were a prominent family in the African American community and that her husband was the creator of the King parade that's been going on for the past 30 years on King Boulevard. He also served for many years as head of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), which was part of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Vice President Blank asked if this request had been initiated by the library or if someone in the community had asked that it be done. Mr. Szabo replied that this request had been initiated in the library, but items like this can be initiated by anyone.

Commissioner Valadez stated that it was wonderful that a black woman at that time was in a leadership role, but she was also someone that was seen as a socialite and a fashion icon. The fact that she was highlighted in the California Eagle and Jet Magazine also highlights the importance of ethnic media and black media, as well as local public media. She stated that this request is a great idea and thanked Mr. Szabo for bringing it forward.

It was moved by Commissioner Sims and seconded by Commissioner Besser to approve the following resolution. The motion passed with 5 Ayes (Besser/Blank/Shaw/Sims/Valadez); Noes: 0. Absent: 0.

### **LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2025-19**

**WHEREAS**, Leontyne Butler King was appointed to the Board of Library Commissioners by Mayor Sam Yorty in August 1961. Ms. King was the first African American to serve on the Board of Library Commissioners, and in 1968, she was voted the first African American President of the Board; and

**WHEREAS**, her dedication to improve library services to underserved communities in Los Angeles' older and mostly black neighborhoods was strong, most notably in the Vernon–Leon H. Washington Jr. Memorial Branch Library, which was within walking distance of her home. The meeting room at the branch is officially named the Leontyne B. King Community Room. She also advocated for library budgets, permanent library branch locations (not rented) and library collections; and

Library Resolution  
No. 2025-19 (Cont.)

**WHEREAS**, in addition to her service with the Los Angeles Public Library, Ms. King was appointed to the American Library Trustees Association Board of Directors in 1969 where she advocated for public libraries in several states, representing libraries in Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. She also worked with the American Library Association and the California Library Association to support libraries nationwide:

**RESOLVED**, that the Board of Library Commissioners initiate in accordance with Board Policy 1:312, the process to consider naming the Central Library Board of Library Commissioners meeting room in recognition of Leontyne Butler King, the first African American appointed to the Board of Library Commissioners.

**d. Approval of Memorandum of Agreement between the Library Department and the Friends of the Library**

*(Vice President Blank recused herself for this item, due to her affiliation with the Friends of the Westwood Library).*

City Librarian John F. Szabo recommended approval of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Library Department and the Friends of the Library groups. He noted that this is a template agreement that will be used for each group.

Madeline Peña, Interim Division Director, Engagement and Learning Division, stated that the MOA allows the Friends to engage in activities that increase community awareness of the Los Angeles Public Library, provide volunteers and program support, raise funds to enhance services of a branch, department or special service, and to advocate for the Library.

Ms. Peña reported that the updated MOA with the Friends of the Library groups contains new elements needed to better align the MOA with current City of Los Angeles contract procedures, noting that the existing MOA dates back to 2005. The MOA also incorporates language from Board Policies on volunteer guidelines and other Library documentation, and aligns with up-to-date support group procedures established by the City as well as input received during sessions with the Friends groups and staff.

It was moved by Commissioner Valadez and seconded by Commissioner Sims to approve the following resolution. The motion passed with 4 Ayes (Besser/Shaw/Sims/Valadez); Noes: 0. Absent: 0. Recused: 1 (Blank).

**LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2025-20 (C-15)**

**WHEREAS**, the Los Angeles Public Library, also known as the Library Department (Library), welcomes members of the numerous and diverse communities throughout the City of Los Angeles to participate in the successful operation and promotion of the Library; and

**WHEREAS**, Friends of the Library groups are non-profit public entities that support the mission of the Library and are willing to accept the responsibility to raise funds and participate in the successful operation and promotion of the Library; and

Library Resolution  
No. 2025-20 (C-15) Cont.

**WHEREAS**, both Parties desire to enter into an agreement to memorialize their respective roles and responsibilities, and to describe the financial relationship between the Library and Friends:

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board adopts the recommendations and findings of the City Librarian's Board Report and approves the Memorandum of Agreement between the Library Department and Friends of the Library and authorizes the execution of Memoranda of Agreements with Friends of the Library; 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 contract.

**7. Staff Presentation: Friends of the Library (Taken out of Order)**

Jennifer Claire Ciron and Isabella Ramirez Sandoval of the Volunteer Engagement Office provided an overview of the Friends of the Library groups. Currently, there are 63 active groups (58 branches, 5 Central Library), who are independent 501(c)(3) nonprofits distinct from the Library that support branches, departments, or services. Friends significantly contribute to the Library, with groups like BEST Friends supporting multiple departments; and historically, a support group existed as early as 1891 (Boyle Heights Library Association).

They reported that the 63 Friends groups vary in size, membership and the funding available, but they are all community-based and fundraise primarily through book sales, raising over \$687,000 and contributing more than 33,000 volunteer hours in FY 2023-24. The Library hosts an annual symposium every October for training and idea exchange. The 10th Annual Citywide Friends Breakfast Symposium will be held October 25th at the Central Library. They also reported that they are working with Council District 14 staff to establish an umbrella friends group for the three libraries in that district that are lacking a Friends group.

**Discussion**

Vice President Blank brought up that some Friends groups are having difficulty getting more members or they want to support in ways that are not just monetary. She mentioned that Panorama City Branch is trying to get its Friends group back on its feet and asked if the Volunteer Office helps with that because it falls on the Librarians to form the groups.

The presenters replied that they had noticed a need for more recruitment and they work with senior librarians on that and they use the online platform Volunteer Match, and suggest expanding beyond the immediate community to find volunteers and to connect different friends groups, like the ones in North Hollywood, who share ideas and cross-train. Additionally, they are looking for ways to help the Friends groups support programs in non-financial ways such as connecting with other community members and organizations like Kiwanis or Neighborhood Councils; and during training, they often focus on recruitment, including how to spark interest in younger generations, like millennials and they want people to know there's no age limit to be part of Friends groups.

President Shaw noted that the Westwood Branch's Friends group had around 500 members, while other Friends groups might have as few as 10. She also stated that the Library Foundation had secured funding for legal and accounting support for these groups. She noted that she had recently met with Madeline Peña, Interim Division Director, Engagement and Learning Division, and Lupie Leiva, Senior Librarian at Benjamin Franklin Branch and Council District 14 staff to discuss supporting the three libraries in that district that are currently without Friends groups with the objective to foster community engagement and support for those libraries.

Vice President Blank advised that if a Friends group wants to support a program without too much funding, they could focus on recruiting volunteers to create programs that their library desires but cannot afford, by finding individuals willing to offer their services for free or for a nominal fee. Staff replied that there are some Friends groups that are already reaching out and successfully engaging their communities. They said the upcoming symposium aims to connect Friends groups who believe every program incurs a cost with those who are already implementing community-driven initiatives.

#### **8. Commissioners' Comments and Announcements**

- President Shaw reported that the Board received a letter from Mayor Karen Bass, dated June 16, 2025 reappointing her to the Board of Library Commissioners for the term ending June 30, 2030.
  - Commissioner Besser commented that she had recently used LAPL's Special Collections to read an oral history transcript by Miriam Matthews. She also mentioned that in the archives of Wanda Coleman's papers that she's processing at UCLA's Library Special Collections, Raquel Borden's name appeared in Mr. Austin Strauss' (Coleman's husband) writings, where he advocated for a branch to be named after her and he mentions that Raquel was very helpful in that effort.
  - Commissioner Valadez stated that she had celebrated her birthday at the Central Library last week, bringing friends for a tour. She extended a special thanks to Madeleine Peña and Emmy, a docent, for the excellent tour.
- a. **Next Board Meeting Notice:** The Board meeting for **July 10, 2025**, is scheduled as a Board Retreat from **10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**, in the Central Library's Rare Books Room, 3rd Floor.

**10. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

ATTEST:

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Valerie Lynne Shaw  
President

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