

MINUTES

BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS CITY OF LOS ANGELES

April 10, 2025

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Commissioners was held at the Central Library starting at 11:07 a.m. on the above-written date.

1. Roll Call:

Present:	President Commissioner Commissioner	Valerie Lynne Shaw Hiram Sims Mayra Valadez
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Absent:	Vice President Commissioner	Linda Blank Kelly Besser
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Also present: Asst. 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 - February 13, 2025.

It was moved by Commissioner Valadez and seconded by Commissioner Sims to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held on February 13, 2025. The motion passed with 3 Ayes (Sims/Shaw/Valadez); Noes: 0. Absent: 2 (Besser/Blank).

4. Public Comments on Matters

Within the Board's Jurisdiction: None.

5. Staff Recognition: Administrative Team Retirements

The Board presented certificates of appreciation to Eva Mitnick, Director of Lifelong Learning, and to Eloisa Sarao, Director of Facilities, for serving the city for over 35 years each. The Board congratulated them on their retirements and for leaving a legacy at the Los Angeles Public Library.

6. City Librarian's Comments and Announcements:

Asst. City Librarian Susan Broman reported on past and upcoming library events, and provided the following updates on the Palisades Branch:

- City Librarian John F. Szabo was with the Mayor today at a press conference at the Palisades Branch Library to address a public private partnership and recovery efforts for the recreation facilities that are next to the library.

- The Army Corps of Engineers have completed debris cleanup at the Palisades Branch. The patio structure that contains some of the public artwork was basically undamaged. They were able to retrieve a few of the items such as plaques, metal numbers and letters; however, the contents of the metal time capsule were ash.
- The Library Foundation of Los Angeles collected more than \$200,000 for Wildfire Relief. A little more than \$50,000 of the funds have been distributed to the staff that were most severely impacted by the fires.

7. City Librarian's Reports:

Discussion Items

a. Award a contract to Kajeet, Inc. for the Library's Wi-Fi Hotspots E-Rate Project

Asst. City Librarian Susan Broman recommended approval to award a contract to Kajeet, Inc. to manage the Library's Wi-Fi Hotspots E-Rate Project. She said that of the three proposals received, Kajeet, Inc. is the vendor that, in addition to lowering costs, provides some of the best tools for managing large numbers of hotspots. She said this contract is for 3,000 hotspots for a term of 3 years.

Discussion

President Shaw noted that this vendor is located in Virginia and it is a \$1.5 million dollar contract, and asked why a local entity couldn't provide the services. Ms. Broman replied that staff does their best on outreach, and this vendor scored the highest and the best fit for LAPL.

Commissioner Valadez noted that it was mentioned that a reason for going with this vendor was due to the lower cost and better tools, and asked if there were any other differentiating factors that made this vendor stand out.

Jené Brown, Director of Emerging Technologies and Collections and Edwin Rodarte, Senior Librarian and Manager for this project, responded that there were two additional factors. One of them was that this vendor also included additional packaging that usually they have to purchase in house, which is a cost savings of about \$20,000. They are also a service-agnostic vendor, which means that LAPL can use either AT&T, Verizon, or T-mobile as service providers, depending on the geographies of patrons.

Ms. Brown stated that they were looking for that level of flexibility based on past experience as well as working with vendors providing packaging for hotspots so that they come ready for check out to the patrons. She noted that around 900 patrons are on hold waiting for hotspots, and this vendor was the one that could help get the hotspots out to the community as quickly as possible.

President Shaw asked if any of the three proposals submitted were local. Ms. Brown replied that all three were major companies, such as T-Mobile and AT&T. Mr. Rodarte mentioned that they did send out the proposal call to local organizations that could potentially serve them, but they didn't receive a proposal from them.

President Shaw asked if they knew why no local companies had responded. Mr. Rodarte replied that it was possible that for the smaller companies or smaller organizations, the process of filling out all of those documents is just too cumbersome or very daunting.

President Shaw requested a report on Library contracts with a breakdown on which contracts went to local vendors and which one went outside of the county and state. She said that it seems that there is an extraordinary amount of contracts that go outside of the state, and that's not really serving local businesses; and perhaps, a better recruitment effort is needed in terms of reaching out to local businesses to make them aware of the kind of contracts available with the Library Department.

Commissioner Valadez asked if LAPL had worked with this vendor before and what previous vendor has sort of served this purpose. Ms. Brown replied that LAPL has not worked with Kajeet before, but Kajeet has worked with other library systems. She said currently LAPL's hotspots are being serviced by T-Mobile.

It was moved by Commissioner Valadez and seconded by Commissioner Sims to approve the following resolution. The motion passed unanimously with 3 Ayes (Shaw/Sims/Valadez); Noes: 0. Absent: 2 (Blank/Besser).

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2025-9 (C-6)

WHEREAS, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) makes funding available to schools and libraries for telecommunication projects through the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) under the Category 1 Information Technology Projects Program known as the E-Rate Program (E-Rate). The Library's Wi-Fi Hotspots E-Rate Project meets the requirements for E-Rate and is eligible for FCC funding; and

WHEREAS, on December 12, 2024, the Board of Library Commissioners (Board) approved the release of a Request for Proposals (RFP) to find a qualified entity to manage the Library's Wi-Fi Hotspots E-Rate Project (Library Resolution No. 2024-42); The RFQ was released on December 13, 2024 and received four responses on February 17, 2025; and

WHEREAS, Library staff reviewed and evaluated the proposals and determined that the proposal submitted by Kajeet, Inc. best met the needs of the Library; and

WHEREAS, on December 12, 2024, the Board found, in accordance with Charter Section 1022, that the services to be provided are professional, expert, and technical services of a temporary and occasional nature, and that it is more feasible to have this work performed by an independent contractor than by City employees; and

WHEREAS, on April 10, 2025, the Board approved the award of a contract to Kajeet, Inc. for a term of three years to manage the Library's Wi-Fi Hotspots E-Rate Project:

Library Resolution
No. 2025-9 (C-6) Cont.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board adopts the recommendations and findings of the City Librarian's Board Report and authorizes the award and execution of the contract with Kajeet, Inc. for the Library's Wi-Fi Hotspots E-Rate Project; 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.

8. Staff Presentation: Social Media @lapubliclibrary

Lauren Skinner, Director of Public Relations and Marketing, introduced Keith Kessler, Senior Librarian, and Crystal Ruiz, Public Relations Specialist, to provide an overview of the Library's social media work through various platforms to promote and raise awareness of what the Library offers.

Keith Kessler, Senior Librarian, stated that he and Crystal Ruiz, Public Relations Specialist, manage the LAPL's Instagram, Twitter, X, Facebook, Tiktok, and LinkedIn platforms on social media. They also help staff that manage accounts for the 72 branches and Central Library departments, noting that there are over 200 accounts across the system. Additionally, they do photography for Library events and programs, which helps them capture a range of stories happening every day in the city and in the library system. He mentioned that the Library had received two Webby awards and was a Webby Honoree this year.

Crystal Ruiz, Public Relations Specialist, provided several examples of their accomplishments in social media. She said they want to entice people to come to events and programs and to boost attendance, and short form video has allowed them to dive into series that show viewers what's available in our collections. For instance a video post by *LA Times* 404 directly led to 968,981 views and more than 800 signups at the Octavia Lab in only a month.

Mr. Kessler highlighted that posts about the Dodgers are always a hit and when 2024 MVP Freddie Freeman was on ESPN, they mentioned one of LAPL's tweets to him and it became national conversation; and the Dodgers World Series championship parade culminated at the Central Library. He also talked about a video he created spoofing an episode of *The Bear* with staff of the Studio City Branch as the cast brought in more than a million views and several of the television show's cast members commented or gave it a like.

Discussion

Commissioner Valdez asked about the demographics of the followers that watch LAPL's content. Mr. Kessler replied that in previous comparisons between millennials and Gen. Z groups, it was leaning more millennial, but most recently, it was pretty equal between them.

Commissioner Sims asked what was the right length for a short form video. Ms. Ruiz replied that a minute to a minute and a half is great, but anything over that you need a very meaty piece people would want to watch for an extended period of time.

Mr. Kessler added that viewership drops off dramatically after 6 seconds so they are always thinking about how to get people's attention in the first 6 seconds.

Commissioner Sims asked what they find more engaging, or that people are liking more when promoting an upcoming event or showing what happened at an event recently. Mr. Kessler replied that it is really the upcoming events.

Commissioner Valadez asked if the team had ever done any paid content, and whether they had seen success in that. Mr. Kessler replied that that's the direction they're going and they are talking to a vendor about it and getting an influencer to promote the library..

Commissioner Valadez commented that the micro influencer industry is booming but it also costs money. Mr. Kessler said that some of LAPL's most popular videos are with people who are not celebrities, but it's the content that they're putting out there that is important. He said a micro influencer who can speak legitimately would be much more influential than one with 5 million followers but doesn't know what they are talking about.

9. Commissioners' Comments and Announcements

President Shaw reported that she had visited Jefferson Branch Library, and was briefed by Ani Boyadjian, Manager, Research & Special Collections, regarding oral history, and also was briefed by Lauren Kratz, Manager of the Octavia Lab regarding the podcast process.

Commissioner Valadez reported that she had started reaching out to council offices in the San Fernando Valley and thankfully through a lot of civic volunteer work and having been a field deputy for a State Assembly member in the Valley, she knows about their work. She said tomorrow she will be meeting with a deputy from Council District 2, which is the council district she lives in and she is looking forward to reporting on those conversations.

Next Board Meeting Notice: The next Regular Meeting of the Board is scheduled for Thursday, April 24, 2025, at 11:00 a.m., at the Cypress Park Branch Library.

10. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 12:32 p.m.

ATTEST:

Valerie Lynne Shaw
President

Raquel M. Borden
Board Executive Assistant