

MINUTES

BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS CITY OF LOS ANGELES

March 27, 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	Valerie Lynne Shaw
	Vice President	Linda Blank
	Commissioner	Kelly Besser
	Commissioner	Mayra Valadez

Absent:	Commissioner	Hiram Sims
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Also present: City Librarian John F. Szabo, 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 Approval of the Minutes: Regular Meeting - February 13, 2025: Withdrawn.

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

5. Staff Recognition: The Board presented certificates of appreciation to the following Library staff who have served the City of Los Angeles 40 years and above. Present were Robert Anderson (45), Madeleine Rackley (41), Jade Vuong (40), and Joyce Wright (40). Unable to attend were Manuel Bueno (44), Tomas Gesinski (50), Gilbert Jones (49), Maria Novoa (41) and Loretta Ortiz (41).

**6. City Librarian's Comments
and Announcements:** City Librarian John F. Szabo reported on past and upcoming library events and provided updates on the City Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26, the recent elimination of the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) by the Federal government, and the status of the Palisades Branch Library.

Institute for Museum and Library Services: Mr. Szabo noted that in 2015, IMLS awarded LAPL the National Medal for Museum and Library Services. He said IMLS grants helped LAPL establish the Full STEAM Ahead program and most recently a \$100,000 IMLS grant for Sensory Spaces was received through the State Library. Currently, two IMLS grant proposals totaling \$150,000 are in jeopardy; one is an expansion of the Sensory Spaces program, and the other is for the We Read Together program.

Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget: Mr. Szabo reported that the city is going through the Budget process for Fiscal Year 2025-26 and it is dealing with a billion dollar budget gap, largely due to decreased revenue from various revenue sources for the City's General Fund, as well as increased expenses. He pointed out that the Library's proposed budget of \$269 million stays the same due to Measure L, but services received from other departments might be affected. He said the Mayor will release the proposed budget on April 20th.

Discussion

Vice President Blank asked what percentage was the Library entitled to from the budget of what is collected from property taxes.

Mr. Szabo replied that the formula is 0.03% of assessed value of property in the city. Madeleine Rackley, Business Manager, added that properties are assessed by the County Assessor and the amount calculated for the Library for the upcoming fiscal year is provided in the fall. For instance, the Library will know by September or October the amount for the 2026-27 Fiscal Year budget, which allows the Library to calculate its budget.

Palisades Branch Library: Mr. Szabo reported that the Library is participating in the weekly Wildfire Recovery Coordination meetings. The LAPL is in communication with the Army Corps of Engineers regarding debris removal and recovery of items such as plaques, a time capsule from when the building was built in 2003, among other things. The Library is working with the Department of General Services (GSD) on FEMA reimbursement and on preliminary estimates, and having early conversations with the Bureau of Engineering (BOE) on the steps to get into the design phase including input from staff, community and PPLA Friends on what they would like to see differently than it was before.

Mr. Szabo reported that he had met with the Pacific Palisades Library Association (PPLA) who is also coordinating with the Library Foundation of Los Angeles (LFLA) on donations and philanthropy. He said over \$200,000 had been collected for the Palisades Branch, which will be used to provide temporary services and to rebuild; however, to rebuild, they are looking at possible state funding.

Mr. Szabo underscored the commitment of Library staff who are still at the Disaster Recovery Center in Westwood and continue to provide services through the end of the month with checking out laptops, mobile Wi-Fi hotspots, issuing library cards, answering questions, and also providing the printing service.

Discussion

President Shaw asked who had raised the \$200,000. Mr. Szabo stated the Library Foundation of Los Angeles had raised the funds for library staff affected by the fires and to fund library services for the Palisades community.

7. City Librarian's Reports:**Discussion Items****a. Acceptance of gift from the Friends of the Studio City Branch Library**

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/Valadez); Noes: 0. Absent: 1 (Sims).

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2025-7

RESOLVED, That the gift of a 43-inch Indoor Digital Signage Touchscreen Standing Kiosk, valued at \$1,658.36, for the Studio City Branch Library received from The Friends of Studio City Branch Library be accepted; and

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

b. Approval to award contracts for the acquisition of library materials and services

City Librarian John F. Szabo recommended approval to award contracts to Baker & Taylor, LLC; Brodart Co.; Children's Plus, Inc. DBA Libraria; Ingram Library Services LLC; Midwest Library Service Inc.; and Midwest Tape, LLC for library materials services.

Discussion

President Shaw asked if these vendors compete with one another and whether the department had used any of these vendors before. Mr. Szabo replied that they do compete because the Library has a variety of types of material that it acquires and this procurement allows staff to go to these various vendors to acquire materials. He said that five of the six vendors were currently being used to buy materials in volume, for software resources and to provide shelf ready services.

President Shaw asked if any of the vendors were local. Mr. Szabo replied that there were no local vendors in LA or LA County that could provide these services.

Commissioner Valadez commented that previous contracts submitted had included a table of vendors and the services they provide, which is useful to have and see information like fees and discounts.

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

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2025-8 (C-5)

WHEREAS, The Library requires the services of qualified entities to ensure the timely acquisition of books, non-book materials, and audio/visual materials for adults, young adults and children. The Library also requires qualified entities to provide a wide range of cost-effective services, as well as a selection of tools, physical processing, cataloging, and other value-added services; and

WHEREAS, on November 14, 2024, the Board of Library Commissioners (Board) approved a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the acquisition of library materials and services. The RFQ was released on November 15, 2024 and a pre-proposal conference was held on December 18, 2024; and

WHEREAS, on January 31, 2025, the Library received six proposals. Library staff reviewed the proposals and found all six proposals to be responsive to the RFQ requirements. A panel of Library employees reviewed and evaluated the proposals and determined that all six proposals fit the needs of the Library; and

WHEREAS, on March 27, 2025, the Board approved the award of six contracts for the acquisition of library materials for the Library on an as-needed and as-requested basis to Baker & Taylor, LLC, Brodart Co., Children's Plus, Inc. DBA Libraria, Ingram Library Services LLC, Midwest Library Services Inc., and Midwest Tape, LLC:

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 six contracts listed on the report to provide for the acquisition of library materials and services for the Library on an as-needed and as-requested basis; 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 contracts.

8. Staff Presentations:**a. Library Funds**

Madeline Rackley, Business Manager, provided an overview of the Library Department's main five accounts and their purpose: Library Fund 300; Fund Library Budget Reserve Fund 58N; Library Services Trust Fund 419; Library Education Trust Fund 420, and Library Trust Fund 831.

Ms. Rackley reported that Fund 300 is the Library Department's Operating Budget Fund, which was established by the Los Angeles City Charter, and this is the account where appropriated budget funds are kept for the operation of the Library, such as salaries, security, custodial services, maintenance, utility costs, library materials, etc. She said that expenditures that are not completed within the budgeted fiscal year remain in Fund 300 and do not accrue interest.

Ms. Rackley stated that Library Budget Reserve Fund 58N was established in 2015 by the Board of Library Commissioners at the request of City Librarian John F. Szabo to deal with unforeseen circumstances. This fund is not part of the regular operating budget. Library Services Trust Fund 419 was established in 1965 to be used as a depository for all Federal and State grants received by the library. The Library Education Trust Fund 420 is a special fund established in 1967 to assist patrons who want to borrow materials from other library systems. This fund accrues interest.

Ms. Rackley noted that Library Trust Fund 831 is also a special fund that the Library uses to hold money received from donations, trusts, mitigation fees, and the sale and use of library properties. She said that funds are allocated into separate accounts or codes. This fund currently has 100 active codes and many of the accounts in this fund have had restricted uses by the donors and are accepted by the Board with those restrictions.

Discussion

Vice President Blank asked how librarians access funds from Trust Fund 831. Ms. Rackley replied that her office distributes reports to the Division Librarians, Branch Library Services, and Central Library Services, which contain the balances that apply to their facilities or programs and make requests to spend the funds.

President Shaw asked if there were any old accounts that are so specific that they can't be used. Ms. Rackley replied that the money is accessible and funds go in and out frequently.

b. Youth Empowering Sensory Spaces (YESS)

Kadie Seitz, Librarian, Youth Services Department, and project manager of the Youth Empowering Sensory Spaces (YESS) project, reported that she had applied and received a \$100,000 grant from the California State Library's Local and Collaborative Grant Opportunities, funded by IMLS, to create sensory friendly spaces at four library locations. She noted that in addition to the grant funds, the Venice Branch provided additional funds from the John David Waldron Fund, bringing the total budget to \$120,000 and five locations (Arroyo Seco, Canoga Park, Central Library's Children's Literature and Teen'Scape; Harbor City-Harbor Gateway, and Venice Branch).

Ms. Seitz stated YESS spaces are specifically designed to minimize overwhelming sensory input to better accommodate the needs of neurodivergent people. Meredith Sires, Children's Librarian from the Arroyo Seco Branch; Luz Sandoval, Young Adult Librarian, Canoga Park; and Elaine Levia, Children's Librarian from the Venice Branch spoke about the implementation process of the YESS spaces at their locations, which included receiving training from the Center for Connection to learn about universal design and the best practices for working with neurodiverse youth; acquiring sensory kits and special furniture, and sought community input and feedback through surveys, small group conversations, and outreach. The presenters showed before and after photos of the transformation of all five YESS locations.

Ms. Seitz stated that every YESS space is required to hold a number of programs, and YESS programs have a sensory friendly tag on the website calendar listing. Ms. Seitz closed by stating that future plans are to continue this work and expand it to more locations.

Discussion

Vice President Blank asked if any funding had been received from groups that support neurodivergent students. Ms. Seitz replied that they apply for grants that may be targeted towards specific populations, but in terms of Federal or State funding for special education, libraries are not necessarily qualified.

Vice President Blank asked if there were any private groups that could provide funds. Ms Seitz said that they are definitely looking at all of their options in terms of grants and opportunities.

9. Commissioners' Comments and Announcements

President Shaw reported the following:

- Visited several libraries including Pio Pico-Koreatown, Washington Irving, Vernon, and lastly, Eagle Rock, where she participated in their pin ceremony this week with 60 to 70 people in attendance.
- Encouraged commissioners to visit their libraries and your council districts, and also provide any other ideas for briefings like this wonderful briefing we had today.

Commissioner Valadez commented on the following:

- Thanked the Library Foundation of Los Angeles for their incredible work on the "Night at the Library" event, which she attended with several friends. She said it was wonderful to see the diversity and talent in our city.
- Congratulated the PR & Marketing Team for the collaboration on Instagram with "L.A. in a Minute" highlighting Angel City Press, and passing the word out that LAPL has a printing house at the Library.

Next Board Meeting Notice: The next Regular Meeting of the Board is scheduled for Thursday, April 10, 2025, at 11:00 a.m., at the Central Library.

10. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

ATTEST:

Valerie Lynne Shaw
President

Raquel M. Borden
Board Executive Assistant

Approved: 5/8/2025